



# Asian Elephants

[Source: TH](#)

A study on [Asian Elephants \(\*Elephas maximus\*\)](#) reveals new insights about their vocalizations.

- **Key Findings:** Asian elephants communicate using **trumpets, roars, rumbles, and chirps** to seek attention and express emotions.
  - Earlier beliefs suggested **trumpeting was mainly a response to human disturbances**, but new findings show it is used in social interactions and play.
- **Asian Elephants:**
  - **Subspecies:** Three subspecies of Asian elephants include **Indian, Sumatran, and Sri Lankan**.
  - **Population:** Fewer than 50,000 remain in fragmented populations across 13 countries.
  - **Habitat:** Found in grasslands, scrublands, evergreen and deciduous forests.
  - **Size and Appearance:** Smaller than **African elephants** with proportionally smaller ears.
  - **Importance:** Elephants, **India's Natural Heritage Animal**, are a **Keystone Species** vital for forest health. They create clearings for forest regeneration and dig for water, aiding other wildlife.
  - **Protection Status:**
    - [IUCN Red List](#): Endangered
    - [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#): Schedule I
    - [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#): Appendix I
  - **India's Initiatives: Project Tiger & Elephant** was introduced by merging the previous [Project Tiger](#) and [Project Elephant](#) schemes, focusing on protecting elephants and their habitats.
    - **33 Elephant Reserves** have been established in **14 major elephant States** (highest population in Karnataka, followed by Assam and Kerala).

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## ELEPHANT SPECIES

THERE ARE 3 DIFFERENT SPECIES OF ELEPHANTS:

### LARGEST LAND MAMMALS

#### WHAT ARE ELEPHANTS?



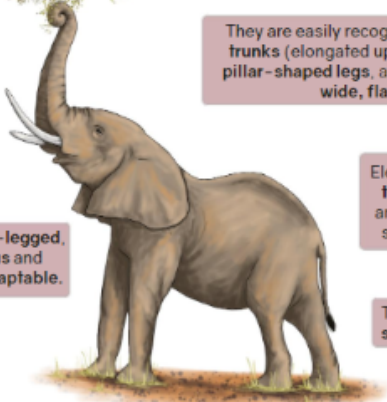
Elephants are the largest living land mammals on earth – they belong to the family Elephantidae.

They are easily recognised by their long trunks (elongated upper lip and nose), pillar-shaped legs, and huge head, with wide, flat ears.

Elephants are grayish to brown in colour, and their body hair is sparse and coarse.

There are 3 different species of elephants

They are four-legged, herbivorous and extremely adaptable.



They are found most often in savannas, grasslands, and forests but occupy a wide range of habitats, including deserts, swamps, and highlands in tropical and subtropical regions in both Africa and Asia.

Only one hundred years ago, there were 10 million African elephants inhabiting the African continent. By 2016, however, their numbers were reduced to only about 450,000.

#### AFRICAN SAVANNAH ELEPHANT

*Loxodonta africana*

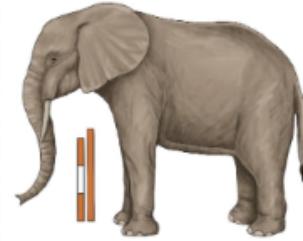
- The African Savanna elephant weighs up to 7,000 kg and stands 3.5 to 4 metres at the shoulder.
- Adult bulls have wide rounded heads compared to narrow pointed heads of female elephants.
- They have long curved tusks.



#### AFRICAN FOREST ELEPHANT

*Loxodonta cyclotis*

- Forest elephants live in rainforests, and were recognized as a separate species in 2021. They are slightly smaller than Savanna elephants and rarely larger than 5,000 kg.
- They have slender, downward-pointing tusks and rounder ears.



#### ASIAN ELEPHANT

*Elephas maximus*

- The Asian elephant includes three subspecies: the Indian, or mainland (*E. maximus indicus*), the Sumatran (*E. maximus sumatranus*), and the Sri Lankan (*E. maximus maximus*).
- They weigh about 4,000 kg and have a shoulder height of up to 3 metres.



Read more: [World Elephant Day 2023](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/asian-elephants>