



Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary

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- Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary is the only sanctuary in **Andhra Pradesh** with a population **of Asian elephants**.
- The sanctuary is covered by **southern tropical dry deciduous and thorn forests**. Some of the important flora consists of Albizia amara, Acacia, Lagerstroemia, Ficus, bamboo, and a species which is a regeneration of Santalum album.
- Apart from **Elephant**, some of the animals found in the sanctuary are: sloth bear, panther, cheetal, chowsingha, sambar, porcupine, wild boar, jungle cat, jackal, jungle fowl, starred tortoise and slender loris.

Asian Elephant

- There are **three subspecies of Asian elephant – the Indian, Sumatran and Sri Lankan**.
 - The Indian has the widest range and accounts for the majority of the remaining elephants on the continent.
- Escalation of poaching, habitat loss, **human-elephant conflict** and mistreatment in captivity are some common threats to both African and Asian elephants.
- **African elephants are listed as “vulnerable” and Asian elephants as “endangered” in IUCN Red List of threatened species.**
- The elephant has been accorded the highest possible protection under the Indian wildlife law through its listing under **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**
- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) status- Appendix I.**
 - Appendix I lists species that are the **most endangered among CITES-listed animals and plants.**

- The Government of India has launched various initiatives for conservation of elephants. Few important initiatives are:
 - **Project Elephant** launched by the **Government of India in the year 1992** as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**. Elephant census is conducted once in 5 years under the aegis of Project elephant.
 - Establishment of elephant reserves and adoption of the **“World Elephant Day” (August 12)** to help conserve and protect elephants in India and improve their welfare.
 - **‘Gaj Yatra’** a nationwide awareness campaign to celebrate elephants and highlight the necessity of securing elephant corridors.
 - The **Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)**, had come out with a publication on the **right of passage in 101 elephant corridors** of the country in 2017, stressed on the need for greater surveillance and protection of elephant corridors.
 - The **Monitoring the Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme launched in 2003** is an international collaboration that tracks trends in information related to the illegal killing of elephants from across Africa and Asia, to monitor effectiveness of field conservation efforts.

Source: TH