



World Elephant Day

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Why in News

The **World Elephant Day** is celebrated on **12th August every year** to spread awareness for the conservation and protection of the largest mammal on land.

The day was **launched in 2012** to bring attention to the urgent plight of **Asian and African elephants**.

Key Points

- **Asian Elephants:** There are **three subspecies** of Asian elephant which are the **Indian, Sumatran and Sri Lankan**.
 - **Global Population:** Estimated 20,000 to 40,000.
 - The **Indian subspecies has the widest range** and accounts for the majority of the remaining elephants on the continent.
 - There are **around 28,000 elephants in India** with around **25% of them in Karnataka**.
 - **IUCN Red List Status: Endangered.**
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I.**
- **African Elephants:** There are **two subspecies of African elephants**, the **Savanna (or bush) elephant** and the **Forest elephant**.
 - **Global Population:** Around 4,00,000.
 - **IUCN Red List Status: Vulnerable.**
 - Earlier in July 2020, **Botswana (Africa) witnessed the death of hundreds of elephants.**
- **Concerns:**
 - Escalation of poaching.
 - Habitat loss.
 - **Human-elephant conflict.**
 - Mistreatment in captivity.
 - Abuse due to elephant tourism.

- **Steps Taken for Conservation:**

- Plans and programmes to **arrest their poachers and killers.**
- **Declaration and establishment of various elephant reserves** across the states. For example, **Mysuru and Dandeli elephant reserves** in Karnataka.
- Clean areas from **lantana and eupatorium (invasive species)** as they prevent the growth of grass for elephants to feed on.
- Barricades to **prevent man-elephant conflicts.**
- Measures for establishment of a **cell to study forest fire** prevention.
- **Gaj Yatra** which is a **nationwide awareness campaign** to celebrate elephants and highlight the necessity of **securing elephant corridors.**
- The **Monitoring the Illegal 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.
- **Project Elephant:** It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** and was launched in February 1992 for the **protection of elephants**, their habitats and corridors.
 - The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** provides the financial and technical support to major elephant range states in the country through the project.
- Even **mahouts** (people who work with, ride and tend an elephant) **and their families** play an important part in the welfare of elephants.

Source: TH