



## Electrocution of Elephants

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Electrocution of elephants is turning out to be a critical area in the management of India's elephant population as 461 elephants got electrocuted between 2009 and 2017.

- States in the eastern and northeastern region of the country have accounted for most of these deaths. This is because elephants are expanding base all across the country and moving out of forests towards agricultural areas.
- For instance, there were no elephants in Chhattisgarh for centuries, and now human-elephant conflict is being witnessed there.
- There needs to be greater coordination between the Forest Department and different agencies, including the Power Department, as well as continuous monitoring of electrical wires passing through areas of elephant movement.
- Other measures to check electrocution of Elephants are:
  - stop illegal electrical fencing,
  - have proper guidelines for maintaining the height of high tension electrical wires,
  - proper zone-wise management plan for different elephant landscapes – where to allow elephants and where to restrict their movement.
- According to the all-India synchronised census of elephants in 2017, their population was 27, 312. The States with the highest elephant population are Karnataka (6,049), followed by Assam (5,719) and Kerala (3,054).

## Elephants

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- 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.
- IUCN Red List of threatened species status- African elephants are listed as “vulnerable” and Asian elephants as “endangered”.

- 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. They are threatened with extinction and CITES prohibits international trade in specimens of these species except when the purpose of the import is not commercial, for instance for scientific research.

### **Conservation Efforts**

- Project Elephant launched by the Government of India in the year 1992 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- 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.