



Critical Evaluation of Elephant Corridor Report 2023

For Prelims: [Elephant Corridors](#), [Electrocution](#), Project Elephant, [Wild Life \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#), [Environment \(Protection\) Act, 1986](#), Elephant Reserves.

For Mains: Issues arising out of Design and Implementation of Government Policies and Interventions, Major Takeaways from Elephant Corridors of India, 2023 Report.

Source: [DTE](#)

Why in News?

Several discrepancies have been identified in the recently published [“Elephant Corridors of India, 2023”](#) report by the central government.

What are the Major Discrepancies Observed in the Elephant Corridors of India 2023 Report?

- **Corridor Definition Inconsistencies:** Critics argue that the **initial significance of corridors has been diluted**, as there is a trend to label any area where elephants move as corridors.
 - This has led to the **classification of landscapes and habitats as corridors in the report** and the subsequent surge in the number of elephant corridors.
- **North and Northeast Corridor Discrepancies:** Critics argue that while certain areas in **West Bengal are suitable for elephants** due to small forest patches, most regions elephants traverse in South Bengal are dominated by [agriculture](#).
 - The **report proposes linking these areas to other elephant landscapes**, a departure from the original intent of a corridor.
 - Expansive corridors might escalate human-elephant conflicts.
- **Dangers to Elephants:** Critics argue that the **expansion of elephant ranges** has also led to increased incidents of elephant deaths due to [electrocution](#) and falling into wells.

What are the Project Elephant Directives on Elephant Corridors?

- In **2005-06**, [Project Elephant](#) issued directives to states regarding elephant corridors. It stated that **corridors in forest areas should adhere to the rules outlined in the [Wild Life \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#)**.
 - Meanwhile, areas with revenue and private lands were instructed to comply with the [Environment \(Protection\) Act, 1986](#) as eco-sensitive areas, potentially prohibiting red-category industries.

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ELEPHANT



Drishti IAS

4 Main Species of Elephant

Species	Found in	IUCN Red List Status	Habitat
Indian	Asia	EN (CITES - Appendix I, WPA - Schedule I)	Subtropical broadleaf forest, tropical broadleaf moist forest, dry forest, grassland
Sumatran	Asia	CR	Broadleaf moist tropical forests
Savanna (Bush)	Africa	EN	All sub-Saharan Africa except for Central Africa's dense tropical forest
Forest	Africa	CR	Dense Tropical Forests

Indian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*)

Largest Land Mammal on Asian Continent
National Heritage Animal of India

Top 5 Indian States by Maximum Elephant Population: (As per elephant census 2017)

- Karnataka > Assam > Kerala > Tamil Nadu > Odisha

Social Structure:

- Female elephants are more social than males; form herd (generally 5-7)
- Led by the oldest female, the 'matriarch'
- Males usually live alone

Threats:

- Habitat Fragmentation
- Poaching for Ivory
- Human-Elephant Conflict
- Mistreatment in Captivity

Conservation Efforts:

- Gaj Soochna App (2022)
- Gaj Yatra (2017)
- Hathi Mere Sathi campaign (2011)
- National Elephant Corridor project (2005)
- Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme (2003)
- Project Elephant (1992)

What are Elephant Corridors?

About:

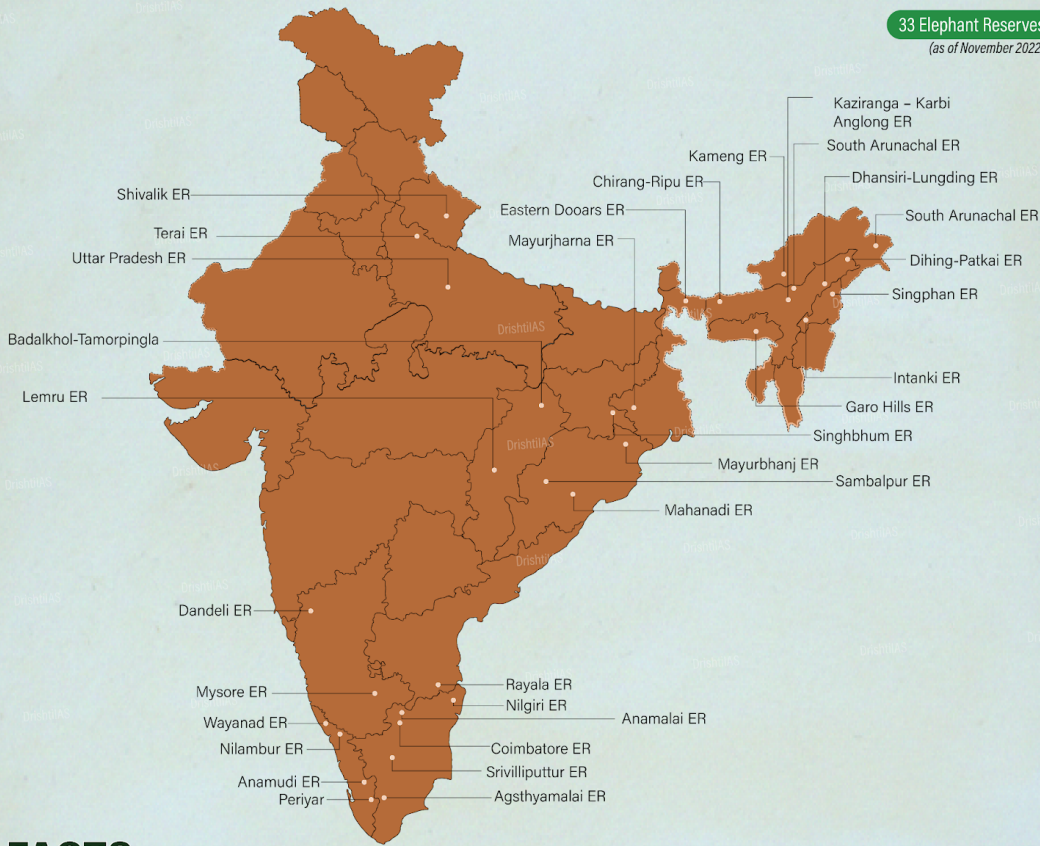
- Elephant corridors are **strips of land** that enable elephant movement between two or more friendly habitats.

Major Takeaways from Elephant Corridors of India, 2023 Report:

- The report highlighted a **surge of 62 new corridors**, marking a 40% increase since 2010, now **totalling 150 corridors across the nation**.
- **West Bengal** has the highest number of elephant corridors, totaling 26, constituting **17% of the total corridors**.
 - The **East central region contributes 35% (52 corridors)**, and the **North East region** follows as the **second-largest with 32% (48 corridors)**.
 - **Southern India** registered 32 elephant corridors, representing 21% of the total, while **northern India** has the lowest count of 18 corridors, amounting to 12%.
- Elephants have expanded their ranges in the **Vidarbha region of Maharashtra** and southern Maharashtra bordering Karnataka.
 - Their presence has also increased in areas such as **Madhya Pradesh within the Sanjay Tiger Reserves and Bandhavgarh**, along with expanded ranges in northern Andhra Pradesh, allowing movement from Odisha.

Elephant Reserves

33 Elephant Reserves
(as of November 2022)



FACTS

- Tamil Nadu and Assam have the highest number (5) of elephant reserves in India.
- The Indian elephant *Elephas maximus* is included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and in Appendix I of CITES.
- Indian Elephant has also been listed in the Appendix I of the Convention of the Migratory Species and as 'Endangered' in the IUCN Red List.
- The elephant was declared the National Heritage Animal of India in 2010.
- MoEFCC provides financial and technical support to major elephant range states in the country through Project Elephant. Project Elephant was launched by the Government of India in the year 1992 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.



UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. With reference to Indian elephants, consider the following statements: (2020)

1. The leader of an elephant group is a female.
2. The maximum gestation period can be 22 months.
3. An elephant can normally go on calving till the age of 40 years only.
4. Among the States in India, the highest elephant population is in Kerala.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 4 only
(c) 3 only
(d) 1, 3 and 4 only

Ans: (a)

PDF Referenece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/critical-evaluation-of-elephant-corridor-report-2023>

