



## Elephant Corridors

**For Prelims:** [Elephant corridors](#), [Project Elephant](#), [World Elephant Day](#)

**For Mains:** Significance of elephant corridors in wildlife conservation, Initiatives related to elephant conservation.

**Source:** DTE

### Why in News?

Recently, the Indian government **identified 62 new [elephant corridors](#)**, marking a significant milestone in the nation's commitment to [wildlife conservation](#). This brings the total **number of such corridors to 150, a remarkable increase from the 88 registered in 2010.**

### What are the Key Highlights About Elephant Corridors?

- **About:**
  - Elephant corridors can be described as a **strip of land that enables elephant movement between two or more friendly habitats.**
  - The corridors were reported by **respective state governments** and ground validation methods were used to verify them.
- **State Wise Distribution:**
  - According to the report, **West Bengal leads with 26 corridors, constituting 17% of the total.**
  - East central India contributes 35% (52 corridors), while the North East region has 32% (48 corridors).
  - Southern India has 21% (32 corridors), and **northern India has the lowest with 12% (18 corridors).**
- **Status of Corridor Use:**
  - **Elephant corridor report released by the central government showed a 40% increase in elephant corridors across 15 elephant range states in India.**
  - **19% of corridors (29) show a decrease in use**, and 10 require restoration due to impairment.
    - Decreased use is attributed to **habitat fragmentation and destruction.**
- **Reasons for Increase in Corridors:**
  - Elephants have **expanded their ranges in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra and southern Maharashtra bordering Karnataka.**
    - Elephant corridors have increased in these areas.
  - Elephants have also been seen in **increased numbers in Madhya Pradesh and northern Andhra Pradesh.**

### Elephants

- **Elephants in India:**

- Elephants are **keystone species** as well as the **Natural Heritage Animal** of India.
- India has the **largest number of wild Asian Elephants**. The elephant population in the country is estimated to be over 30,000.

- **Karnataka has the highest elephant population in India.**

▪ **Conservation Status:**

- **Convention of the Migratory Species (CMS):** Appendix I
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I
- **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List** of threatened species:

- **Asian Elephant:** Endangered
- **African Forest Elephant:** Critically Endangered
- **African Savanna Elephant:** Endangered

▪ **Conservative Efforts:**

- **India:**
  - **Gaj Yatra**
  - **Project Elephant**
- **Worldwide:**
  - **Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme.**
  - **World Elephant Day**

# 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)**

**Exp:**

- The elephant herd is led by the oldest and largest female member (known as the matriarch). This herd includes the daughters of the matriarch and their offspring. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Elephants have the longest-known gestational (pregnancy) period of all mammals, lasting up to 680 days (22 months). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.** Females between 14 - 45 years may give birth to calves approximately every four years with the mean interbirth intervals increasing to five years by age 52 and six years by age 60. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
- As per the Elephant Census (2017), Karnataka has the highest number of elephants (6,049), followed by Assam (5,719) and Kerala (3,054). **Hence, statement 4 is not correct.**
- **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**