



# Asian Elephants

[Source: TH](#)

A study on [Asian Elephants \(\*Elephas maximus\*\)](#) reveals new insights about their vocalizations.

- **Key Findings:** Asian elephants communicate using **trumpets, roars, rumbles, and chirps** to seek attention and express emotions.
  - Earlier beliefs suggested **trumpeting was mainly a response to human disturbances**, but new findings show it is used in social interactions and play.
- **Asian Elephants:**
  - **Subspecies:** Three subspecies of Asian elephants include **Indian, Sumatran, and Sri Lankan**.
  - **Population:** Fewer than 50,000 remain in fragmented populations across 13 countries.
  - **Habitat:** Found in grasslands, scrublands, evergreen and deciduous forests.
  - **Size and Appearance:** Smaller than **African elephants** with proportionally smaller ears.
  - **Importance:** Elephants, **India's Natural Heritage Animal**, are a **Keystone Species** vital for forest health. They create clearings for forest regeneration and dig for water, aiding other wildlife.
  - **Protection Status:**
    - [IUCN Red List](#): Endangered
    - [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#): Schedule I
    - [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#): Appendix I
  - **India's Initiatives: Project Tiger & Elephant** was introduced by merging the previous [Project Tiger](#) and [Project Elephant](#) schemes, focusing on protecting elephants and their habitats.
    - **33 Elephant Reserves** have been established in **14 major elephant States** (highest population in Karnataka, followed by Assam and Kerala).

## ELEPHANT SPECIES

THERE ARE 3 DIFFERENT SPECIES OF ELEPHANTS:

### LARGEST LAND MAMMALS

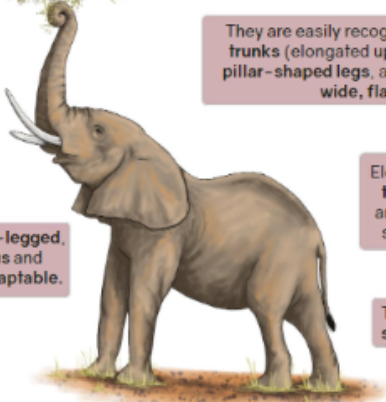
#### WHAT ARE ELEPHANTS?



Elephants are the **largest living land mammals** on earth – they belong to the family **Elephantidae**.

They are easily recognised by their **long trunks** (elongated upper lip and nose), **pillar-shaped legs**, and **huge head**, with **wide, flat ears**.

They are **four-legged**, **herbivorous** and **extremely adaptable**.



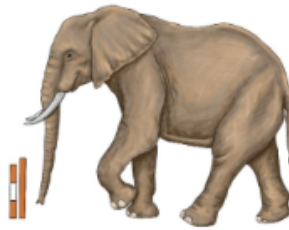
Elephants are **grayish to brown** in colour, and their body hair is **sparse and coarse**.

There are **3 different species** of elephants

- They are found most often in **savannas, grasslands, and forests** but occupy a **wide range of habitats**, including **deserts, swamps, and highlands** in **tropical and subtropical regions** in **both Africa and Asia**.
- Only **one hundred years ago**, there were **10 million African elephants** inhabiting the African continent. By **2016**, however, their numbers were reduced to only about **450,000**.

#### AFRICAN SAVANNAH ELEPHANT

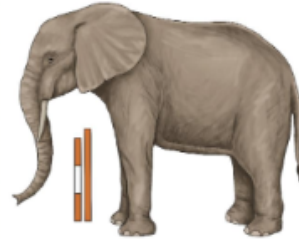
*Loxodonta africana*



- The **African Savanna elephant** weighs up to **7,000 kg** and stands **3.5 to 4 metres** at the shoulder.
- Adult bulls have **wide rounded heads** compared to **narrow pointed heads** of female elephants.
- They have **long curved tusks**.

#### AFRICAN FOREST ELEPHANT

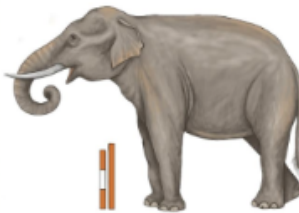
*Loxodonta cyclotis*



- Forest elephants** live in **rainforests**, and were recognized as a separate species in **2021**. They are slightly smaller than **Savanna elephants** and rarely larger than **5,000 kg**.
- They have **slender, downward-pointing tusks** and **rounder ears**.

#### ASIAN ELEPHANT

*Elephas maximus*



- The **Asian elephant** includes **three subspecies**: the **Indian, or mainland** (*E. maximus indicus*), the **Sumatran** (*E. maximus sumatranus*), and the **Sri Lankan** (*E. maximus maximus*).
- They weigh about **4,000 kg** and have a shoulder height of up to **3 metres**.

Read more: [World Elephant Day 2023](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiiias.com/printpdf/asian-elephants>