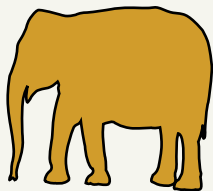


I AM NOT A TRINKET. SAY NO TO ELEPHANT IVORY.

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ELEPHANTS - THE FACTS



Once common throughout Africa and Asia, elephant numbers were severely depleted in the 19th century, largely due to the massive ivory trade. While some populations are now stable, poaching and habitat destruction continue to threaten the species. WWF and TRAFFIC are working to save these magnificent creatures.

DID YOU KNOW?

The elephant has the longest gestation period of any mammal at 22 months.

Healthy adult elephants have no natural predators.

The African elephant is the largest animal walking the Earth. Their herds wander through 37 countries in Africa.

In addition to being smaller, forest elephants are darker and their tusks are straighter and point downward.

Elephants need to eat an average of 150kg per day to survive.

Elephant herds follow ancient seasonal migration routes. It is the task of the eldest elephant to lead the herd along these routes.

Species	African elephant or <i>Loxodonta africana</i>	Asian elephant or <i>Elephas maximus</i>
Subspecies	Savanna (bush) elephants are larger than forest elephants and their tusks curve outwards. Forest elephants are darker and their tusks are straighter and downward pointing	Sumatran, Indian, Sri Lankan, Borneo Pygmy
IUCN Status	Vulnerable	Endangered
Size	Shoulder height 11ft / Weighs 6 tonnes / Length 19-24ft	Shoulder height 6.5-11.5 ft / Weighs 5 tonnes / Length 21ft
Social structure	In the savanna subspecies, each family unit contains about 10 individuals, although several family units may join together to form a 'clan' consisting of up to 70 members led by a female. Forest elephants live in smaller family units	Asian elephants are extremely sociable, forming groups of 6 to 7 related females that are led by the oldest female, the 'matriarch'. Like African elephants, these groups occasionally join others to form herds, although these associations are transient
Life cycle	<p>Usually, a single calf is born every 2.5 - 9 years at the onset of the wet season, after a gestation period of 22 months</p> <p>Young elephants wean after 6 to 18 months, although they may continue nursing for over 6 years. Male elephants leave their natal group at puberty and tend to form much more fluid alliances with other males</p> <p>This species lives up to around 70 years, with females mostly fertile between 25 and 45. Males need to reach 20 years of age in order to successfully compete for mating</p>	<p>Young Asian elephants are reported to stand soon after birth. After several months, the calf begins to eat grass and foliage. It stays under the supervision of its mother for several years, but begins making independent movements at 4 years. Full size is attained at about 17 years</p> <p>Both sexes may become sexually mature at as early as 9 years, but males usually do not reach sexual activity until 14-15 years, and even then they are not capable of the social dominance that usually is necessary for successful reproductive activity</p>
Tusks	Tusks, which are large modified incisors that grow throughout an elephant's lifetime, occur in both males and females and are used in fights and for marking, feeding, and digging	A significant number of adult male Asian elephants are tuskless, and the percentage of males carrying ivory varies by region

Population & distribution

The Asian elephant originally ranged from modern Iraq and Syria to the Yellow River in China, but is now found only from India to Vietnam, with a tiny besieged population in the extreme southwest of China's Yunnan Province. More than 100,000 Asian elephants may have existed at the start of the 20th century. The population is estimated to have fallen by at least 50% over the last 60-75 years.

The African elephant once ranged across most of the African continent from the Mediterranean coast to the southern tip. It is thought there may have been as many as 3 - 5 million African elephants in the 1930s and 1940s.

However, in the wake of intensive hunting for trophies and tusks, elephant numbers fell dramatically throughout the continent from the 1950s. In the 1980s, for example, an estimated 100,000 elephants were being killed per year and up to 80% of herds were lost in some regions. In Kenya, the population plummeted by 85% between 1973 and 1989.

The forest elephant is found in the tropical rainforest zone of west and central Africa, where relatively large blocks of dense forest remain.

The savanna elephant occurs in eastern and southern Africa, with the highest densities found in Botswana, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia and South Africa.

Elephant numbers vary greatly over the 37 range states: some populations remain endangered, while others are now secure.

For example, most countries in West Africa count their elephants in tens or hundreds, with animals scattered in small blocks of isolated forest; probably only three countries in this region have more than 1,000 animals.

In contrast, elephant populations in southern Africa are large and expanding, with some 300,000 elephants now roaming across the sub-region.

For more information

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Cameroon elephant slaughter Between January and March of this year, heavily-armed foreign poachers invaded Cameroon and killed over 300 elephants in Bouba N'Djida National Park.

Since the incident, which drew worldwide media attention, Cameroon has moved to bolster security in its protected areas, including deploying 60 new ecoguards to secure Bouba N'Djida and monitor the park's remaining wildlife. Two rangers recently received gunshot wounds while pursuing a potential poacher adjacent to the park.



Left to right: 1 MARTIN HARVEY/WWF-CANON 2,3 JAMES MORGAN /WWF-CANON

Africa - Asia

Elephants are a revered and worshipped species in Asia. However, it is the demand from Asia for raw ivory for jewelry, talismans and traditional medicine, especially from Thailand and China, which is driving current poaching levels.

January 2013- \$1.2 million (2 tonnes) worth of ivory headed for Asia was seized in Kenya

July 2012 – Thai officials seize half a tonne of ivory at Bangkok's international airport, which arrived on a flight from Kenya

April 2011 – Thai officials seize two tonnes of ivory found in a shipment of mackerel from Kenya



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