



## **AFRICAN ELEPHANT: ENVIRONMENT**

**NEWS:** *Alarming rate of decrease in African elephant count*

### **WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?**

A recent study reveals a sharp decline in African elephant populations, with savannah and forest elephants heavily impacted by poaching and habitat loss. While populations in northern and eastern Africa are most affected, southern Africa shows some recovery due to conservation efforts.

### **African Elephant Population Decline**

#### **Severe Population Decline:**

- Savannah and forest elephant populations have declined drastically due to poaching and habitat loss.
- Study covers 475 sites across 37 African countries over 50 years.

#### **Statistics on Population Drop:**

- Savannah elephants: Population down by 70% at surveyed sites.
- Forest elephants: Population down by 90% at surveyed sites.
- Total elephant population at surveyed sites reduced by 77%.

#### **Geographic Variation:**

- **Northern and Eastern Africa:** Most severe declines, with local extinctions in some areas (e.g., Sahel region).
- **Southern Africa:** Population recovery observed in countries like Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Namibia due to effective conservation efforts.

#### **African Elephant Species:**

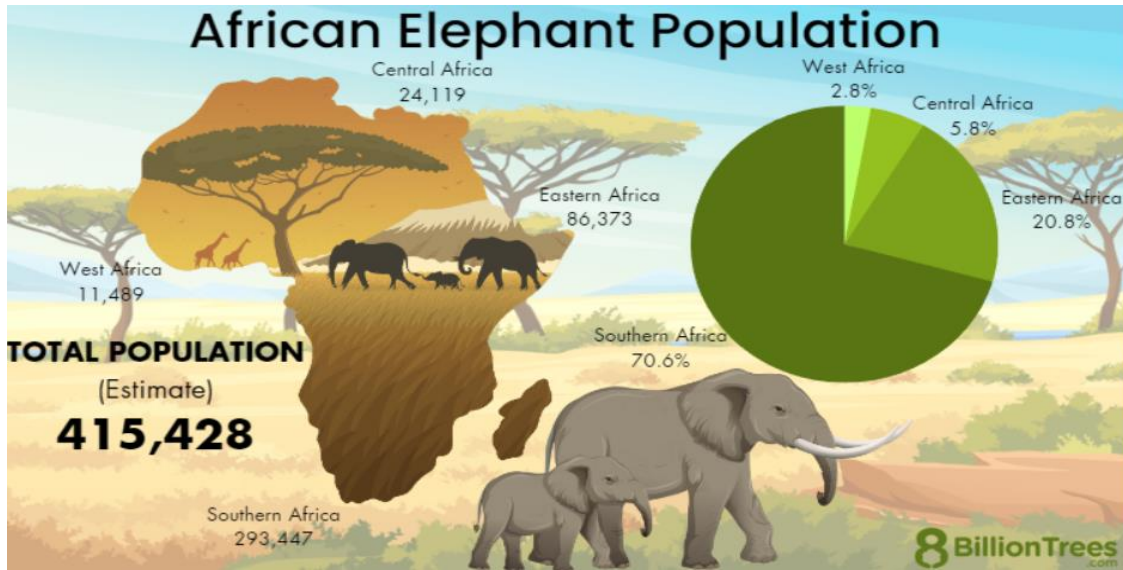
- **Savanna Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*):** Larger ears, larger body size.
- **Forest Elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*):** Smaller, found in dense forest habitats.
- **Habitat:** Distributed across various ecosystems in sub-Saharan Africa: savannas, forests, deserts, and marshes.
- **Physical Characteristics:** Largest land animals; distinct ear sizes differentiate the species.
- **Social Structure:** Matriarchal groups led by a female; strong family bonds; males are solitary or form bachelor groups.
- **Diet:** Herbivorous; consume up to 300 pounds of vegetation daily.

#### **Conservation Status:**

- **Forest Elephant:** Critically Endangered.
- **Savanna Elephant:** Endangered.

#### **Conservation Efforts:**

- African Elephant Action Plan.



- Protection under CITES Appendix I.

African Elephant Vs Indian Elephant		
Feature	Indian Elephant	African Elephant
Scientific Name	<i>Elephas maximus indicus</i>	<i>Loxodonta africana</i> (savanna) / <i>cyclotis</i> (forest)
Size	Smaller, up to 3.5 m tall	Larger, up to 4 m tall
Ears	Smaller, rounded	Larger, fan-shaped
Head Shape	Twin-domed, with an indent in the middle	Single-domed
Tusks	Only males have tusks	Both males and females may have tusks
Habitat	Forests and grasslands of South and Southeast Asia	Savannas, forests, and deserts across Africa
Conservation Status	Endangered (IUCN)	Endangered for savanna; Critically Endangered for forest
Social Structure	Smaller family units	Larger herds led by matriarch