



Loxodonta africana

Common name: African Savanna Elephant

Latin name: *Loxodonta africana*

Local name: الفيل



ECOLOGY

Type:

Wild

Role in Ecosystem:

Elephants help maintain forest and savanna ecosystems. They also clear paths for other animals. Elephants rub their tusks against trees to remove worn layers, which prunes trees naturally, and creates habitats for smaller species.

HABITAT

African elephants live in many habitats like wetlands, forest, grassland, savanna and desert. They are found in sub-saharan and southern Africa.



Food

Herbivore

Elephants feed on vegetation, including grasses, roots, bark, leaves, and fruit, and can drink 30 to 50 gallons of water.



Movement and Communication

Communication:

Elephants communicate by rubbing their bodies against one another, vocalizing which can be heard 10 km away, or body language. They have a very good sense of smell, hearing and can sense tremors and vibrations.

Movement:

Elephants walk on their toes and have a thick pad on the bottom of their feet that acts like a shock absorber. They can walk up to 195 km per day, although they usually only average is only 25 km on a daily basis. They can also run at speeds of up to 40 km/hr. Elephants are the strongest land animal, able to lift weights of up to 6000 kg.



Social Habits

Social

African elephants live in matriarchal groups comprised of female elephants and their calves. These range in size from 10-70 individuals, led by an older female. Male elephants tend to be solitary or may live in small groups. They also have excellent memories, including individuals and relatives, locations and routes. They can recall routes to alternate food and water sources if their usual one dries up.



Reproduction

Viviparous

A single calf is born to a female once every four to five years and after a gestation period of 22 months—the longest of any mammal.



Attributes



Appearance:

The African elephant is the largest land animal. It has large ears, small eyes, and a prehensile trunk, which can be up to 2 m long whilst the tail is short and ends with a tuft of hair. The skin is thick, grey and very wrinkled. It is sensitive to sunburn and stings so they use their truck to apply mud and dust. The large surface area also helps retain water, which helps keep the elephant cool. The tusks are curved forward, and may be up to 2.5 m long and weigh 45 kg each.

Size:

2.5 to 4 meters high at the shoulder

Weight:

2,268 to 6,350 kilograms

Lifespan:

60-70 years

INTRODUCTION

The African Elephant is the largest land mammal. It is characterized by its long prehensile trunk, large ears and large tusks.

While it used to be widespread all around Africa, it is now found in small pockets in sub-saharan and south Africa.

Elephants are hunted for their tusks, which has greatly affected their population.

LIVELIHOODS AND CULTURE

Human interaction

Elephants are hunted mainly for their tusks, which are used to make ivory items. Despite banning of ivory worldwide, there is still demand for it, which results in poachers killing around 20,000 elephants each year. The presence of elephants near human settlements may lead to distruction of property by the elphants, and therefore to increased conflict.

Cultural value

Many communities consider the elephant a symbol of strength and power.

There is some evidence that elephants were used in warfare in ancient Nubia. A large enclosure in Musawwarat al-safra, containing statues of elephants and other animals, is thought to have been built to hold elephants.

The Kingdoms of Kush traded ivory with Egypt and the rest of the Mediterranean.

Cultural expression

“عينك للفيل تطعن في ضلو”

Used to express when a person is ignoring the real issue (the elephant in the room) and focuses instead on minor .irrelevant problems

Khawatir Feel (Thoughts of an elephant) is a song by Alnoor Aljaylani from the point of view of a young .elephant that is captured and displayed in a zoo

THREATS

The African Savana Elephant is listed as endangered.

It is threatened by hunting and habitat loss due to agricultural expansion.

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