

Asian Elephant



Fast Facts



Other Names: Indian Elephant

Scientific Name: *Elephas maximus*

Conservation Status: Endangered



Body Length: up to 3.5 m

Weight: 2-5 tonnes

Gestation: 18-22 months

Number of young: 1 calf

Habitat: Forests, rainforests

Distribution: India, Sri Lanka, Burma, Indochina and South-east Asia



Description

Asian Elephants are smaller than African Elephants and have smoother, darker skin and smaller ears. They also have a single, finger-like projection on their trunks, whereas the African Elephant has two. Elephants have large, ridged teeth so they can eat coarse bark, leaves, branches and grass. They use their trunks to pull down branches and strip trees.

Diet

Elephants are herbivores, often eating up to 160 kg of vegetation per day.

In the wild

The basic family unit is made up of about six members and consists of a mature female, her current offspring and juvenile offspring. These groups join other related family units to create a herd. Male offspring leave the group when they reach seven years of age and join herds during the breeding season only. Because of their size, elephants don't have any natural predators.

Threats

There are two threats to their survival: habitat destruction from farming and logging; and poaching for the ivory trade.

At Perth Zoo

Perth Zoo's Asian Elephants can be seen in the Asian Rainforest. Come for the 'Elephants – Asia's Jungle Giants' presentation at 10 am (at the Bull Elephant exhibit) and 1:45 pm (at the Elephant Amphitheatre) every day.

Perth Zoo supports the conservation of Sumatran Elephants in the wild through its fundraising program, Wildlife Conservation Action.

DID YOU KNOW?

Elephants can use low frequency sound waves for communication between members of the herd and individuals outside the herd. These sounds may carry for distances of up to 15 km.