

All About Elephants



Elephants are the largest of all land mammals on Earth. With their lengthy trunks and sizeable ears, they are a distinctive sight in savannahs and rainforests across Africa and areas of Asia. Elephants are known for being clever and are one of only a handful of animals that can recognise themselves in a mirror. In addition, elephants have a famously impressive memory and can remember where different water sources are as they walk across huge distances.

Elephant Herds

Elephants live in large groups called herds. These herds are made up of female elephants and their calves and are typically led by a matriarch. Usually, the matriarch is the oldest and largest female elephant. Incredibly, herds of over 100 African savannah elephants have been spotted in the wild.

African Elephants

African elephants are the largest and heaviest species of elephant. Both male and female African elephants grow tusks which they use for a number of tasks, including lifting and gathering objects and defending themselves. If an elephant can't find any water nearby, they have also been known to dig a hole with their tusks to find water underground.

There are two different types of African elephants: these are the savannah elephant and the forest elephant. Both species of elephant can be found in different parts of Africa.

The savannah elephant, also known as the bush elephant, is the largest of all elephants and can be found in grassy plains and bushlands throughout Africa. Savannah elephants mainly eat grass but have also been known to eat other plants and fruit. On average, an elephant can spend up to 18 hours a day eating.



Smaller than the savannah elephant, the forest elephant can be found in wooded rainforests. Being among thick trees makes forest elephants more difficult to count than savannah elephants, who can be easily spotted on the vast plains. To keep an eye on their population, researchers often count the number of droppings to estimate how many forest elephants are in a specific area.

Retrieval

1. Give an example of something elephants can do which shows they are clever.
2. What do researchers do to help them estimate the number of forest elephants in a particular area ?

Words in context

3. ...*they are a distinctive sight in savannahs and rainforests across Africa...*

Which of the following words is closest in meaning to **distinctive** ?

- unimpressive
- unique
- enormous
- obvious

4. Find and copy a word which means '*female head of a group*'.

Inference

5. *Incredibly, herds of over 100 African savannah elephants have been spotted in the wild.*

Why do you think the author has used the word '*incredibly*' in this sentence ?