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Editorial...



The elephant is our favorite animal. It is also the largest land animal in the world. The elephant is loved and respected by people and cultures around the world. Yet it is a sad fact that we are on the verge of seeing the last of this magnificent creature. From young to old, there is no one who does not enjoy seeing an elephant. There are two species in the world:

African elephants (*Elephas africana*) and Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus indicus*). In parts of India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, Myanmar and Indonesia, elephants, which are smaller than their African cousins and are in danger of extinction, are struggling for space and survival. Rapid city development, road construction, deforestation, industrial and modern agriculture have destroyed much of the elephant's habitat. In India alone, elephants have lost more than 80% of their historical range. Migration is blocked by roads, railways, plantations and cities. Elephants are forced into human settlements in search of food and water. The resulting human-elephant conflict is severe. Elephants can live up to 65 years. Females reach puberty at 11 years of age, give birth after a 22-month gestation period, and remain fertile until their late 40s. Under ideal conditions, elephant populations can increase by up to 7% per year. What is needed to protect them is a truly long-term solution – coexistence. But this requires a paradigm shift in how we deliver conservation. A century ago, elephants roamed freely across East Africa. People lived on islands in a sea of elephants. Today, those islands have expanded and merged into a sea of people – while elephants have shrunk and been reduced to fragmented habitats. Poaching has contributed to their decline. The invisible conflict between farmers and elephants has farmers taking revenge on elephants with spears or poison. "We are not against elephants. We are against hunger," says a Tanzanian farmer. Many elephant conservation organizations around the world are focusing intensively on goals such as improving enforcement policies to prevent illegal poaching and the ivory trade, protecting elephant habitats, providing better treatment for captive elephants, and reintroducing them into natural, protected sanctuaries where appropriate. Elephants have very sophisticated intelligence. It is our primary duty to convey knowledge about elephants, information about their characteristics, and conservation awareness to the public. The first World Elephant Day was launched on August 12, 2012, to draw attention to the urgent plight of Asian and African elephants. In India, elephants are protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Further, social-based conservation studies on elephants should be conducted. This World Elephant Day 2025, let's stand with the mothers who keep the memory of the forest. The future of elephants depends on what we do now. Let's join the movement to protect elephants today – donate, share their stories, and create lasting change. IJONS is asking you to help protect elephants from the many threats they face.

Editor in Chief, IJONS

Cover Image : *Varanus bengalensis* – (Bengal monitor or Indian monitor),
Family : Varanidae, IUCN Near Threatened Species

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