

# Endangered Wildlife

## Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*)



- The Asian Elephant is Asia's largest land mammal, reaching up to 6.4 metres in length and 3 metres at the shoulder.
- These elephants are smaller than African Elephants and have proportionally smaller ears, which they keep in constant motion, to keep themselves cool.
- Elephants need to eat an average of 150 kilograms of food a day to survive and can spend more than two thirds of each day feeding. They need to drink at least once a day so are always found close to a source of fresh water.
- This Asian Elephant used to roam throughout most of Asia, but is now restricted to just 15 per cent of its original range. The population has declined by at least 50 per cent over the last 60–75 years.
- The most recent estimate of the number of Asian Elephants is 41,430 and this continues to decline.
- Asia is the world's most densely populated continent, and as the human population continues to grow, the species' remaining habitat is shrinking fast.
- Wild elephant populations are now mostly small, isolated and unable to mingle as ancient migratory routes are cut off by human settlements.
- Elephants sometimes raid farmers' fields and damage their crops. They have also been known to kill people. As a result, farmers may kill elephants to protect their crops and families.



### Asian Elephant range



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- In Asia, elephant poaching is not as severe as in Africa, but Asian Elephants are still killed for their tusks, meat and leather. India, Vietnam and Myanmar have banned their capture in order to conserve wild herds, but illegal wildlife trade is still a problem.
- The Asian Elephant is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

### What is being done?

Asian Elephants can be found at Melbourne Zoo (nine animals), Perth Zoo (three animals), Taronga Zoo (four animals) and Taronga Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo (six animals). Calves have been born at Taronga and Melbourne Zoos.

