

Rhino and Elephant Conservation

Why in news?

Greens worldwide has called the Kaziranga National Park the greatest conservation success story and much of it is attributed to a rhino protection force that shoots alleged poachers at sight.

What is the picture of one-horned rhino?

Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam has the highest concentration of endangered one-horned rhinos in the world.

- **Scientific name** - *Rhinoceros unicornis*
- **Location** - The Greater one-horned rhino can be found in India and Nepal, particularly in the foothills of the Himalayas.
- **Habitat** - Greater one-horned rhinos are semi-aquatic and often take up residence in swamps, forests and riversides.
- **Sociability** - Greater one-horned rhinos are usually solitary, except for females with small calves.
- **Population** - The population of the one-horned rhino was about a dozen when Kaziranga became a protected area in 1905.
- According to the State of Rhino Report 2022, the poor-sighted herbivore's number in Kaziranga is an estimated 2,613.

ONE-HORNED RHINO

One Horned Rhino also known as Indian Rhino is a rhinoceros species native to the Indian subcontinent.

The Habitat of this species is restricted to small habitats in Indo-Nepal terai and northern West Bengal and Assam.

IUCN Red List : Vulnerable.

CITES : Appendix I.

Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 : Schedule I.



How have Anti-poaching measures helped in rhino conservation?

- **Key threats**
 - Poaching for horn

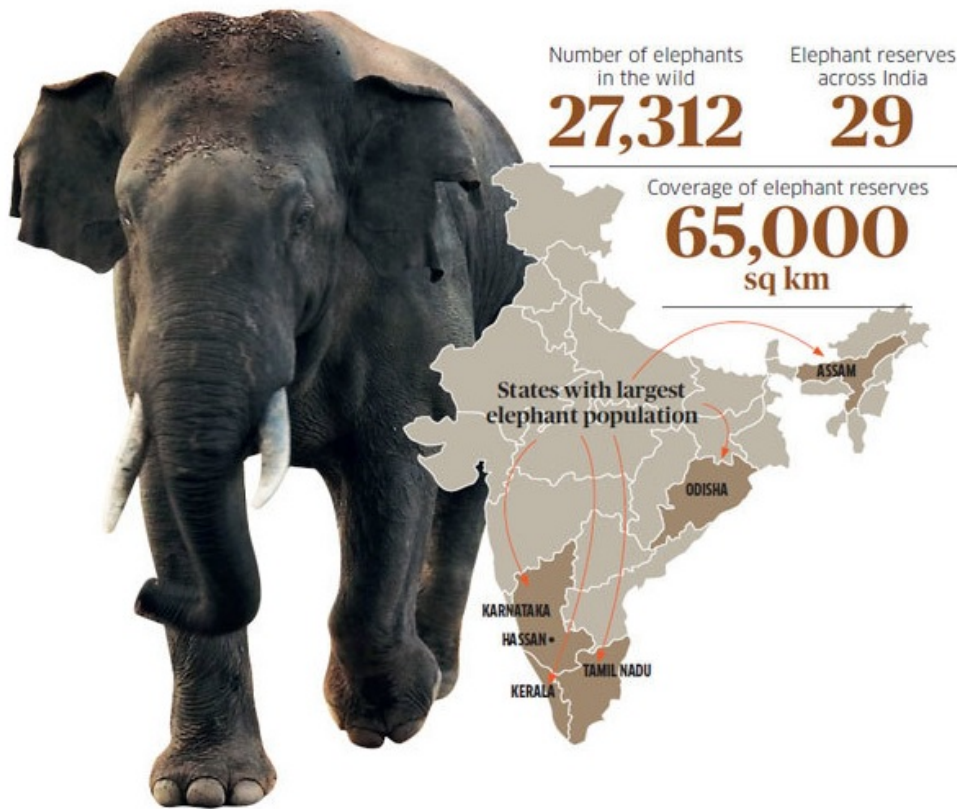
- Habitat loss and degradation
- Alien invasive plant species grabbing the key grassland habitats
- **Anti-poaching mechanism** - The anti-poaching mechanism have been strengthened by including more manpower, capacity-building of frontline staff and equipping forest guards with better fighting.
- The sentiments of local people attached to the rhino have been a factor in the sharp drop in the number of rhinos killed.

What about the picture of Asian elephants?

More than 60% of the world's elephant population is in India., Karnataka has the highest number of elephants (6,049), followed by Assam (5,719) and Kerala (3,054).

- Elephants are the **natural heritage animal** of India.
- The Asian elephant is the largest mammal living on the land of Asia.
- **Scientific name** - *Elephas maximus*
- **Gestation period** - 22 months
- Elephant calves are able to walk within one or two hours of birth.
- IUCN Red List - **Endangered**
- Wildlife Protection Act 1972 - **Schedule I**
- CITES - **Appendix I**
- **Population** - there are about 50,000-60,000 Asian elephants in the world.
- The number of elephant reserves in India is 32 with the latest addition being the Agasthyamalai Elephant Reserve in 2022.
- About 101 elephant corridors have been identified in the country which need to be secured for conservation of elephants.

ELEPHANT CONSERVATION



IUCN STATUS



Endangered

What are the challenges in elephant conservation?

- **Poaching** - The incidents of poaching for ivory have come down but the human-elephant conflict has been increasing.
- **Man animal conflict** - On average, about 500 humans and 100 elephants are killed every year across the country in such confrontations.
- **Habitat loss** - The fragmentation of elephant habitats and the construction of railways and roads and power infrastructure have led to many elephant deaths.
- The change in land use (bringing erstwhile forested areas under agriculture) has aggravated the conflict.

*The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched **Project Elephant in 1992** to ensure the long-term survival of elephants in their natural habitats.*

References

1. [The Hindu | Are rhino and elephant conservation efforts a success?](#)
2. [Savetherhino | Greater one-horned rhino](#)



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