

TOPIC: PROJECT ELEPHANT

LECTURE NO:08

B.SC PART 1

ZOOLOGY(HONS.)-PAPER I-GROUP B

CHAPTER 3

DATE:28TH MARCH 2020

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Elephant – The National Heritage Animal

The government of India in the year 2010 declared Elephant as the national heritage animal of the country on the recommendations of the standing committee of the national board for wildlife. This was done to make sure that sufficient protection to elephants was provided before their numbers fall to panic levels like in the case of tigers.

A proposed National elephant conservation authority (NECA) on the lines with NTCA has been proposed to be constituted by amending the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

Project Elephant Objectives

- To ensure the Welfare of domesticated elephants
- Protection of elephants, their habitats and elephant corridors.

- Mitigation and prevention of human-elephant conflict.

Aims of Project Elephant

- Develop and promote scientific and planned management strategies for Elephant conservation.
- Prevent illegal trade of ivory and ensure elephant protection from hunters and poachers.
- Develop strategies to prevent unnatural causes of elephants' death in India.
- Ensure ecological restoration of the natural elephant habitats and their migratory routes.
- To mitigate and prevent the increasing conflict in elephant habitats between humans and elephants.
- Reduce and remove domestic livestock grazing, the pressure of humans and their activities in important elephant habitats.
- Promote scientific research on issues related to elephant conservation and educating the public on these issues.
- To facilitate veterinary care for proper breeding and health care of domesticated elephants and to facilitate Eco-development for the elephants.

Zone	State	Elephant Reserves
North-Western Landscape	Uttrakhand	Shivalik Elephant Reserve
	Uttarpradesh	Uttar Pradesh Elephant Reserve

East-Central Landscape	West Bengal	Mayurjharna Elephant Reserve
	Jharkhand	Singhbhum Elephant Reserve
	Orissa	Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve Mahanadi Elephant Reserve Sambalpur Elephant Reserve Baitami Elephant Reserve South Orissa Elephant Reserve
	Chhattisgarh	Lemru Elephant Reserve Badalkhol – Tamor Pingla Elephant Reserve
Kameng-Sonitpur Landscape	Arunachal Pradesh	Kameng Elephant Reserve
	Assam	Sonitpur Elephant Reserve
Eastern-South Bank Landscape	Assam	Dihing-Patkai Elephant Reserve
	Arunachal Pradesh	South Arunachal Elephant Reserve
Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong-Intanki Landscape	Assam	Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve Dhansiri-Lungding Elephant Reserve
	Nagaland	Intanki Elephant Reserve
North Bengal-Greater Manas Landscape	Assam	Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve

	West Bengal	Eastern Dooars Elephant Reserve
Meghalaya Landscape	Meghalaya	Garo Hills Elephant Reserve Khasi-hills Elephant Reserve
Brahmagiri-Nilgiri-Eastern Ghats Landscape	Karnataka	Mysore Elephant Reserve
	Kerala	Wayanad Elephant Reserve Nilambur Elephant Reserve
	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore Elephant Reserve Nilgiri Elephant Reserve
	Andhra Pradesh	Rayala Elephant Reserve
Annamalai-Nelliyampathy-High Range Landscape	Tamil Nadu	Annamalai Elephant Reserve
	Kerala	Anamudi Elephant Reserve
Periyar-Agasthyamalai Landscape	Kerala	Periyar Elephant Reserve
	Tamil Nadu	Srivilliputhur Elephant Reserve

Project Elephant: Sanctuaries & Elephant Reserves In India

As notified by the government, there are around 32 elephant Reserves in India. The very first elephant reserve or elephant sanctuary was the Singhbhum Elephant Reserve of Jharkhand.

The List of Elephant reserves in India is as mentioned below:

Along with enabling the set up of various elephant reserves in India, Project Elephant also lead to setting up of different programs and agencies such as MIKE- Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants and the Elephant Task Force.

Project Elephant – MIKE Programme

MIKE the abbreviation of the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants program was started in South Asia in 2003 after the conference of parties a resolution of CITES.

The aim of MIKE was to provide information required by the elephant range countries for proper management and long-term protection of their elephant populations.

The objectives of the MIKE program is as follows:

To measure the levels and trends in the illegal poaching and ensure changes in the trends for elephant protection.

To determine the factors responsible for such changes, and to assess the impact of decisions by the conference of parties to CITES.

Campaign Haathi Mere Saathi

The Ministry of Environment and forests in partnership with Wildlife Trust of India has launched a campaign Hathi Mere Sathi. The aim of the campaign was to increase public awareness and develop friendships between elephants and the local population. The campaign Haathi Mere Saathi was for the welfare of the elephants, to conserve and protect the elephants in India.

The campaign was launched in Delhi on 24th May 2011 at Elephant- 8 ministerial meetings. The countries that are a part of the Elephant-8 ministerial meeting are Kenya, Srilanka, Botswana, Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Indonesia, Thailand, and India.

Elephant Task Force

The increased tension due to rampant retaliatory killing of elephants and human-elephant conflict prompted the government to set up the Elephant Task Force along the lines of the Tiger Task Force. The focus of the Elephant Task Force was to bring pragmatic solutions for the conservation of elephants in the long-term.

The ETF was headed by a wildlife historian and political analyst, Dr. Mahesh Rangarajan. And the other members included were

conservation and animal welfare activists, elephant biologists, and a veterinarian.

India has around 25000 – 29000 elephants in the wild. However, the tuskers (male) in India are as threatened as the Tigers as there are only around 1200 tusker elephants left in India.

The Asian elephants are threatened by habitat degradation, man-elephant conflict, and poaching for the Ivory. This problem is more intense in India which has around 50% of the total population of the world's Asian elephants.

Project Elephant is considered a success in the view of many conservationists as it has been able to keep the population of elephants in India at a stable and sustainable level.