

World Elephant Day

August 12, 2020

On August 12, 2012, the inaugural World Elephant Day was launched to bring attention to the urgent plight of Asian and African elephants. The elephant is loved, revered and respected by people and cultures around the world, yet we balance on the brink of seeing the last of this magnificent creature.

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World Elephant Day was **co-founded on August 12, 2012, by Canadian Patricia Sims and the Elephant Reintroduction Foundation of Thailand, an initiative of HM Queen Sirikit of Thailand.** Since its inception of global awareness building, it has partnerships with 100 elephant conservation organizations worldwide and reaches countless individuals across the globe. Millions of participants worldwide have shown their concern about the plight of elephants through acknowledgement of World Elephant Day, proving that people love elephants and want to do whatever they can to help.

World Elephant Day is the **vehicle by which organizations and individuals can rally together to give voice to the issues threatening elephants.** Its vision of the “neutral” approach allows and facilitates all organizations and citizens to conduct campaigns under the auspices of World Elephant Day, permitting everyone to work together to support this critical global issue which demands cooperation across borders and political lines. This powerful, collective global voice provides citizens, policy-makers, politicians, and governments a way to create and support conservation solutions that will make the world a safe place for elephants, wildlife, and habitat for future generations to cherish.

The **escalation of poaching, habitat loss, human-elephant**

conflict and mistreatment in captivity are just some of the threats to both African and Asian elephants. Working towards better protection for wild elephants, improving enforcement policies to **prevent the illegal poaching and trade of ivory, conserving elephant habitats, better treatment for captive elephants and, when appropriate, reintroducing captive elephants into natural, protected sanctuaries** are the goals that numerous elephant conservation organizations are focusing on around the world.

On the occasion, the **National Portal on human elephant conflict called "Surakhsya" for collection of real time information & also for managing the conflicts on a real time basis** was launched. Elephant is the Natural Heritage Animal of India. The portal will help to **set the data collection protocols, data transmission pipelines and data visualization tools to enable policy-makers to leverage data for policy formulation and for preparation of action plans for mitigation of conflicts.** At present the beta version of the portal is being launched for data testing before the pan India roll out for adoption by the states, which is likely to be done before year end.

Asian elephants are listed as **Endangered on the IUCN Red List** of threatened species. The current population estimates indicate that there are about 50,000 -60000 Asian elephants in the world. More than 60% of the population is held in India. Indian Elephant has also been listed in the **Appendix I of the Convention of the Migratory species** in the recently concluded Conference of Parties of CMS 13 at Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat in February 2020.