

Stella fact file

- **COMMON NAME:** African Elephant
- **SCIENTIFIC NAME:** Loxodonta Africana
- **ORIGIN:** Savannas of Sub-Saharan Africa and the rainforests of central and West Africa
- **TYPE:** Mammals
- **DIET:** Herbivore
- **GROUP NAME:** Herd
- **AVERAGE LIFE SPAN IN THE WILD:** Up to 70 years
- **SIZE:** Height at the shoulder: 8.2 to 13 feet
- **WEIGHT:** 2.5 to 7 tons

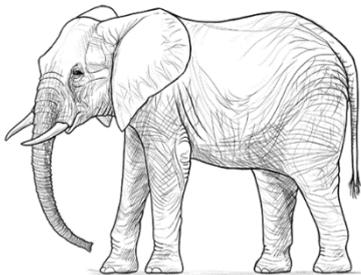
Where will you find African elephants?

African elephants range throughout the Savannas of Sub-Saharan Africa and the rainforests of central and West Africa. The continent's northernmost elephants are found in Sahel area of Mali. The small, nomadic herd of Mali elephants migrates in a circular route through the desert in search of water.



Food

African elephants are pure herbivores. They will eat leaves, fruits and mineral lick. Elephants consume as much as 220 to 660 pounds of vegetation each day. While they use their long flexible trunk to bring down tree branches or pluck leaves, they use tusks to tear at branches.



Communication

Although elephants can make a very wide range of sounds, they mostly communicate through low frequency sounds called "rumbling." In fact, elephants are capable of producing and perceiving sounds one to two octaves lower than the human hearing limit. Communication is vital to elephants, who rely on a social network for survival.

Group

Elephants are matriarchal, meaning they live in female-led groups. The matriarch is usually the biggest and oldest. She presides over a multi-generational herd that includes other females, called cows, and their young. Adult males, called bulls, tend to roam on their own, sometimes forming smaller, more loosely associated all-male groups.

Threats to survival

Poaching for the ivory trade is the biggest threat to African elephants' survival. Between 1970 and 1990, hunting and poaching put the African elephant at risk of extinction. Today, they are listed as vulnerable to extinction. As few as 400,000 remain today. African elephants are also losing their habitat as the human population grows and people convert land for agriculture and development.

Did you know...?

Elephants recognise themselves in a mirror, which is something few animals are known to do.