

Sasmita Panda
Gagan Kumar Panigrahi
Surendra nath Padhi



Wild Animals Of India



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PREFACE

This book on “Wild Animals Of India” has been written with a motive to provide information at a glance to the readers interested in wildlife. The animals chosen for study were of greater interest because they have been declared endangered, critically endangered, vulnerable or priority species in the IUCN Red data book and most of the species are included as course material at undergraduate and post graduate levels in Indian Universities. Hence this is an endeavour to create awareness among student community on Wild Life Biology.

Efforts have been made to acquaint the readers with geographical distribution, habit, habitat, reproductive behavior and conservation measures of the animals. Help from different sources have been taken to collect information written in this book. We gratefully acknowledge all the sources.

We are indebted to our parents, teachers, friends and well wishers for their encouragement. The authors are grateful to Prof. Dr. A.K. Panda, former principal of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack and Prof. Dr. B.K. Patnaik, for their guidance. Dr. R.K. Mahapatra, Smt. Sunita Sarangi, Principal, Jatni College, Jatni deserve our gratitude for their technical assistance and encouragement.

We welcome suggestions from the readers for improvement of the book.

Authors

Sasmita Panda

G.K. Panigrahi

S.N. Padhi

Dedicated to

Our Parents and well wishers

Our teachers and students

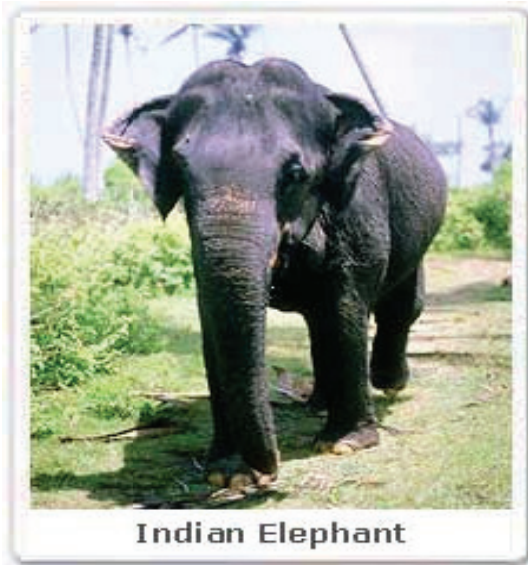
“Mini” – Who is no more to share the pleasure of this publication.

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CHAPTER 1

INDIAN ELEPHANT



CLASSIFICATION

Kingdom: Animalia, Phylum: Chordata, Class: Mammalia, Order: Proboscidea, Family: Elephantidae, Genus: *Elephas*, Species: *maximus*, Sub-Species: *indicus*

GENERAL CHARACTERS

The **Indian elephant** (*Elephas maximus indicus*) is one of three recognized sub species of the Asian elephant and native to mainland Asia, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, Malay Peninsular, Laos, China, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Since 1986, *Elephas maximus* has been listed as **endangered by IUCN**. Asian elephants are threatened by habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation. In general, Asian elephants are smaller than African elephants and have the highest body point on the head. The tip of their trunk has one finger-like process. Their back is convex or level. Indian elephants reach a shoulder height of between 2 and 3.5 m (6.6 and 11.5 ft), weigh between 2,000 and 5,000 kg (4,400 and 11,000 lb), and have 19 pairs of ribs. Their skin color is lighter than that of *maximus* with smaller patches of de pigmentation, but darker than that of *sumatranus*. Females are usually smaller than males, and have short or no tusks.

Indian elephants have smaller ears, but relatively broader skulls and larger trunks than African elephants. Toes are large and broad. Unlike their African cousins, their abdomen is proportionate with their body weight but the African elephant has a large abdomen as compared to the skulls.