



THE BIG GUYS: AFRICAN AND ASIAN ELEPHANTS

By Farah Farooqi

TABLE OF CONTENTS



CHAPTER ONE

Mega Mammals1

CHAPTER TWO

Cousins on Two Continents 5

CHAPTER THREE

Endangered Elephants13

CHAPTER FOUR

Heroes and Havens 16

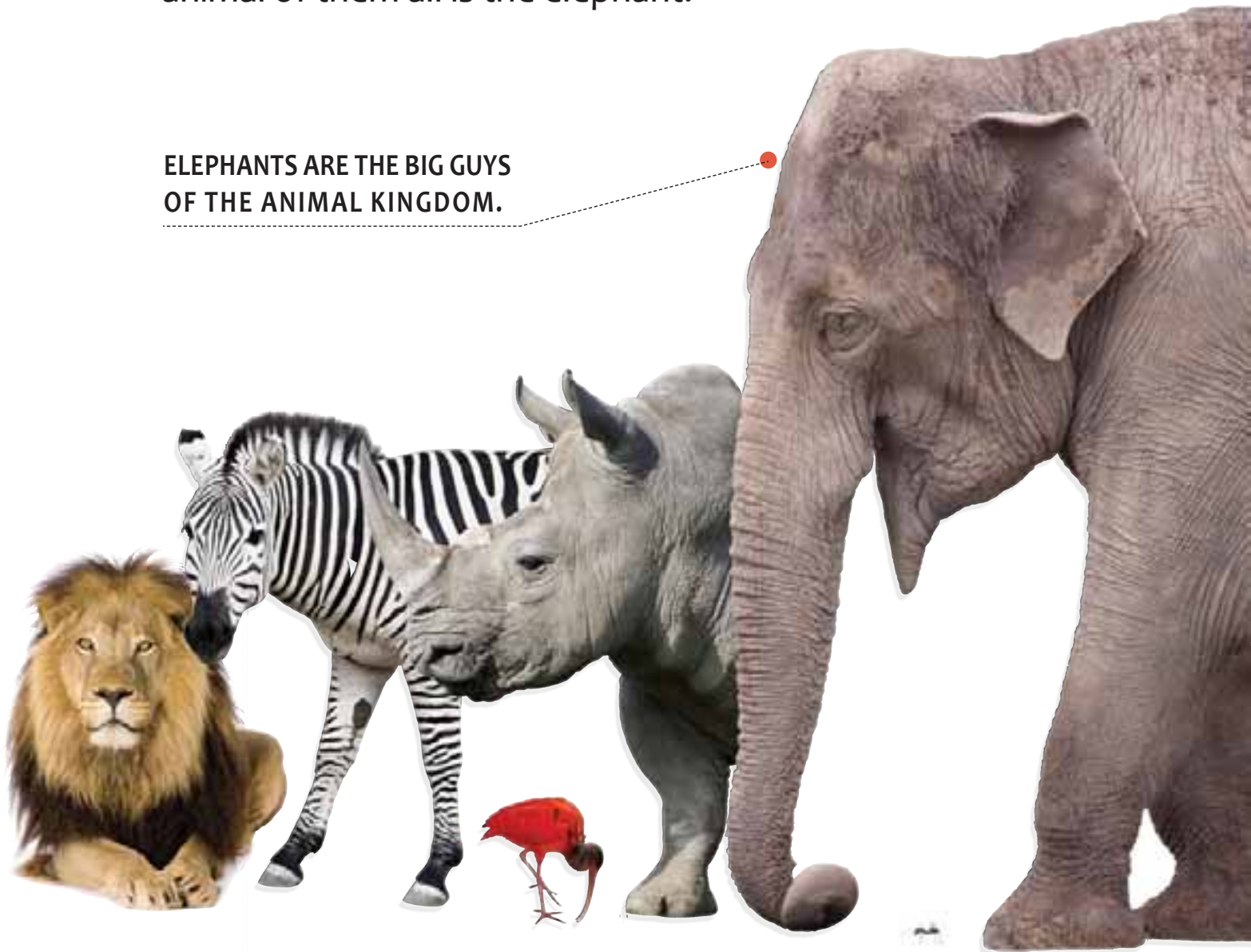
Glossary 20



CHAPTER ONE
MEGA MAMMALS

All kinds of insects, birds, and animals live on Earth. They come in many colors, shapes, and sizes. The biggest land animal of them all is the elephant.

ELEPHANTS ARE THE BIG GUYS OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM.

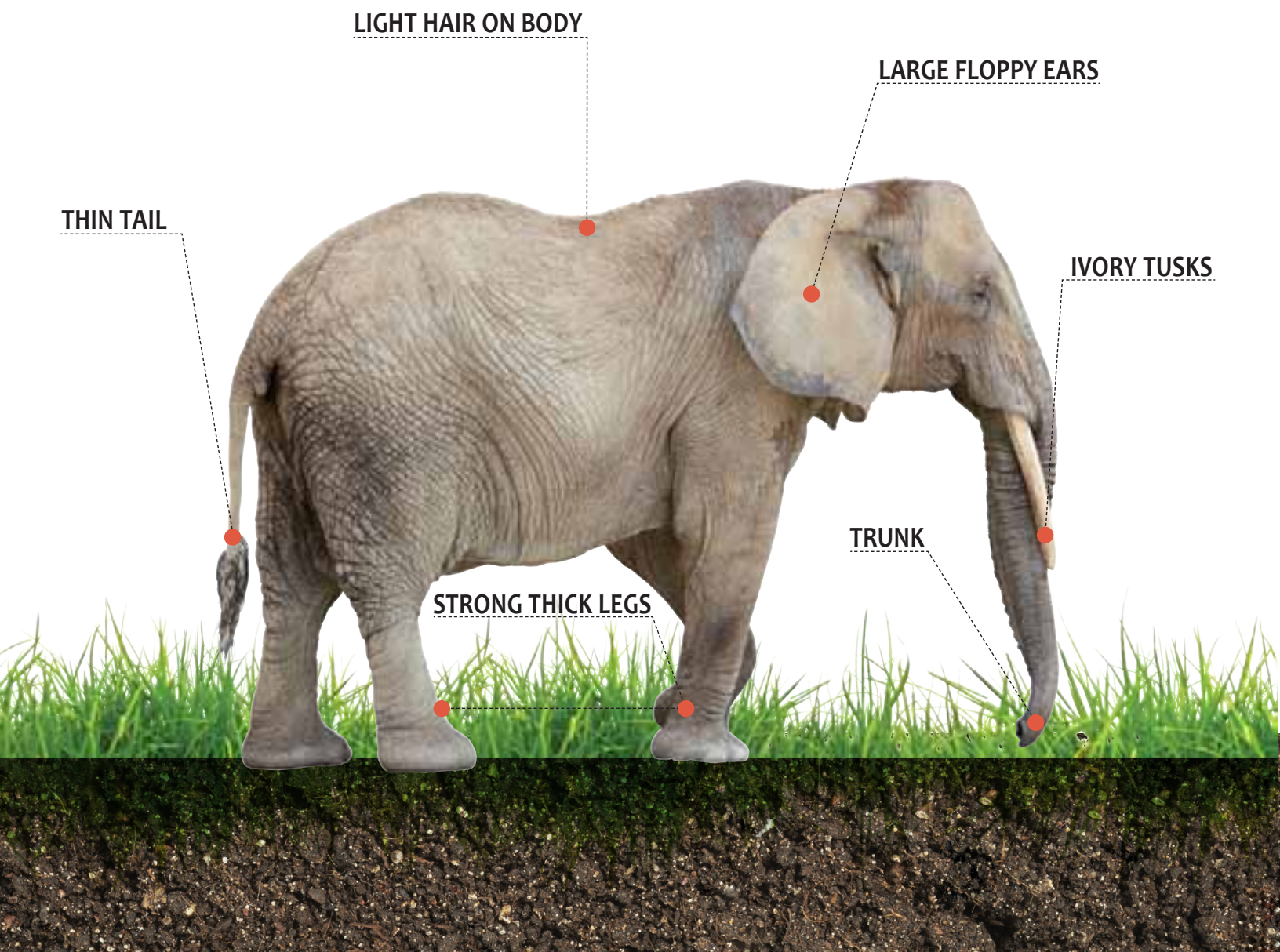


Elephants are the **mega** mammals of the earth. Baby elephants weigh 200–250 pounds. Grown-up elephants are up to 13 feet tall and up to 26 feet long from trunk to tail. They weigh 5,000–14,000 pounds. That’s heavier than a school bus!



Elephants are the heaviest mammals on land. Their four thick legs help carry their weight. Elephants have a long **lifespan**. They can live up to 70 years. Elephants’ bodies help them live in the wild.

Their thick, **wrinkly** skin is gray or brown. These colors are great for hiding among trees or grass. Their floppy ears and light body hair keep them cool. Male elephants have horns called tusks. Tusks can grow to be 10 feet long. Tusks **protect** the elephants. Elephants' trunks are for breathing, smelling, grabbing, and putting food into their mouths.



Elephants are **herbivores**, or plant eaters. They eat grass, leaves, roots, fruit, and bark. Since elephants are big, they need lots of food. They use 16 hours a day just for eating. An elephant can eat 300 pounds of food a day. That's what a human eats in one month!

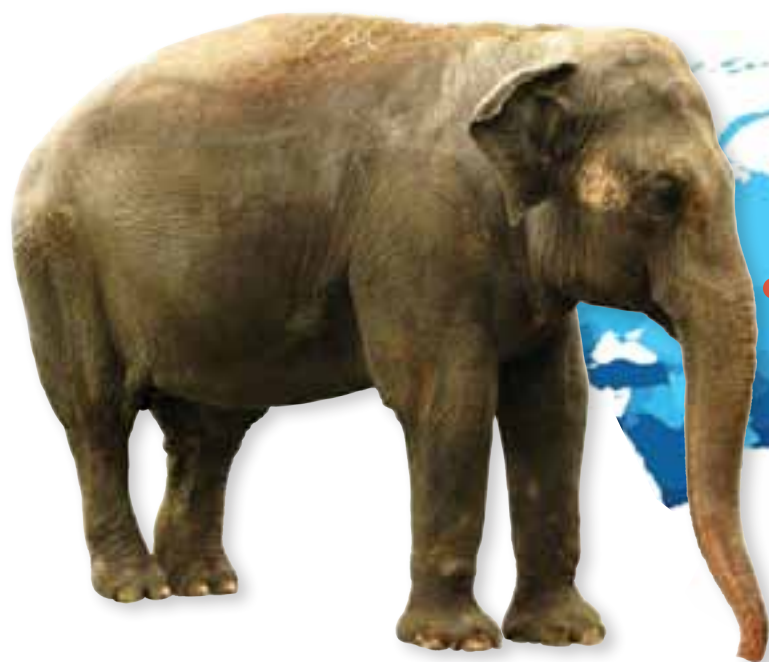
ELEPHANTS LOVE TO EAT
LOADS OF GRASS.



There are two kinds of elephants: African and Asian elephants. They live on different **continents**. African elephants live in the **savannas** and forests of Africa. Asian elephants live in India, Sri Lanka, China, and much of Southeast Asia.

CHAPTER TWO

COUSINS ON TWO CONTINENTS



ASIAN ELEPHANT



AFRICAN ELEPHANT



African and Asian elephants look the same in many ways. These two elephants are almost like cousins. They are both big. They both have wrinkly skin, floppy ears, long trunks, long tusks, strong legs, and thin tails. Both **species** also like to travel in big groups called **herds**. The oldest female in the group leads the herd. She is called the **matriarch**.

● THE MATRIARCH LEADS THE ELEPHANT HERD.



Elephants like to play. They also talk with each other. They speak through trumpeting sounds and rumbles. Elephants hear the rumbles through their feet and trunks. Elephants also have sharp memories. During the dry seasons, they remember where water is.

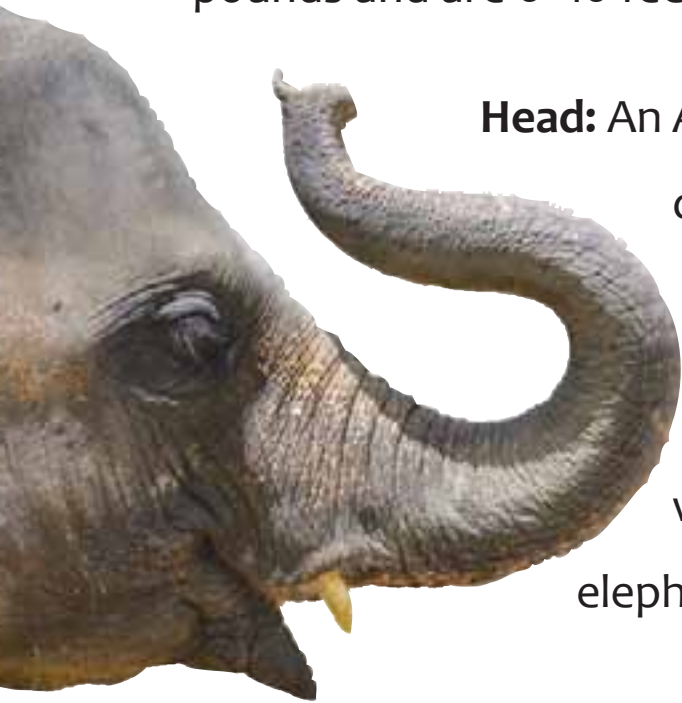
ELEPHANTS GATHER AT A WATERING HOLE.



African and Asian elephants also have differences that help us tell them apart.

Size: African elephants are bigger than Asian elephants.

African elephants weigh around 5,000–14,000 pounds and are 8–13 feet tall. Asian elephants weigh around 4,000–11,000 pounds and are 6–10 feet tall.



Head: An African elephant has one low lump or dome on its forehead. Asian elephants have two high domes.

Skin: African elephants are more wrinkly and darker. Asian elephants are smoother and lighter.

Ears: African elephants have large ears shaped like the continent of Africa. Asian elephants have small ears shaped like the country of India.

Tusks: African male and female elephants have tusks. Asian male elephants have tusks. Asian female elephants have small or no tusks.

Trunk: African elephants have two finger-like points on the trunk. Asian elephants have only one.

Back: African elephants have a dip in their back. Asian elephants have a high top.

Belly: African elephants have **slanted** bellies. Asian elephants have **sagging** or straight bellies.

Toes: African elephants have fewer nails than Asian elephants.





THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT

LIVES ON THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA

Head has one round dome

Back is concave

Ears are large and shaped like the continent of Africa

Both males and females have tusks

Skin is deeply wrinkled with light hair over the body

Tip of trunk has two finger-like points

Belly slopes down from front to rear legs

Usually have four toenails on each front foot and three on each rear foot

Height: 8 - 14 feet

Weight: 8,000-15,000 lbs



THE ASIAN ELEPHANT

LIVES ON THE CONTINENT OF ASIA

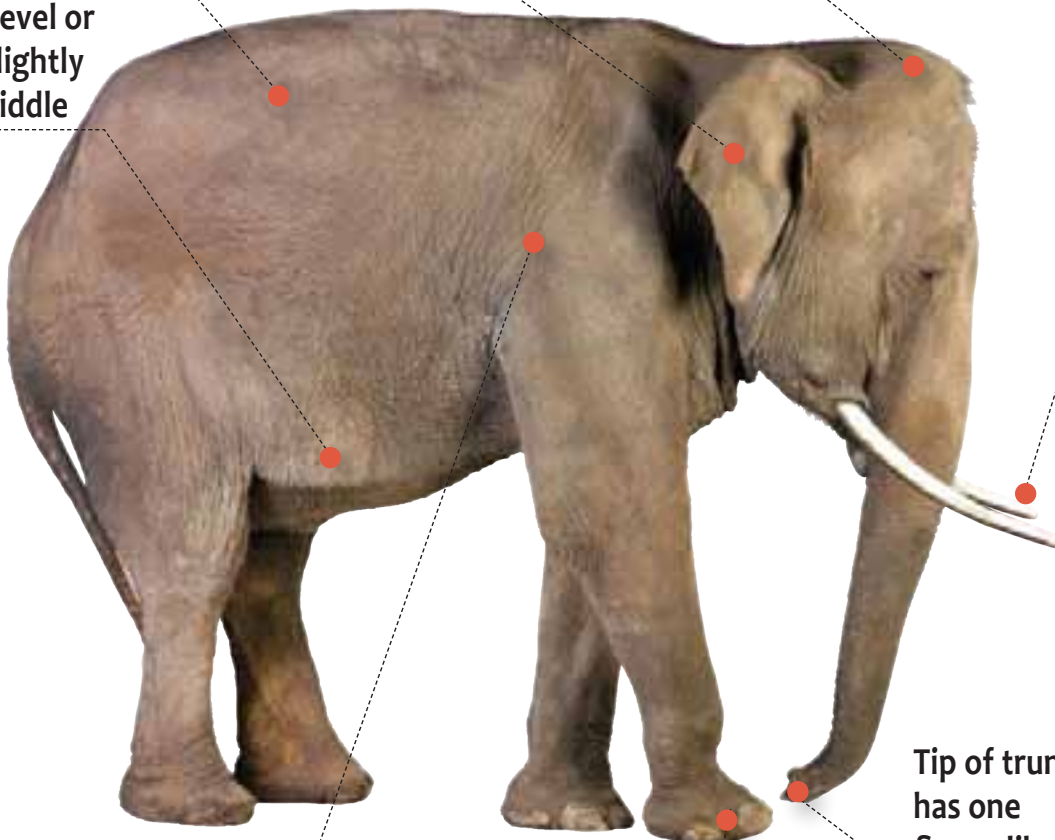
Rounded back

Ears are small and rectangular

Head has two round domes

Males have large tusks; females have small or no tusks

Belly is level or slopes slightly in the middle



Skin is deeply wrinkled with light hair over the body

Usually have five toenails on each front foot and four on each rear foot

Tip of trunk has one finger-like point



Height: 7 - 12 feet



Weight: 6,000-14,000 lbs

TO FIND OUT MORE DETAILS, LOOK AT THE CHART BELOW.

Differences Between African and Asian Elephants	African Elephant (<i>Loxodonta africana</i>)	Asian Elephant (<i>Elephas maximus</i>)
Weight	5,000–14,000 pounds	4,000–11,000 pounds
Height (at shoulder)	8–13 feet	6–10 feet
Skin	Darker/More wrinkled	Lighter/Smoother
Ears	Bigger	Smaller
Back shape	Dips in the middle	Straight or rises in middle
Belly shape	Slants downwards toward back of legs	Straight or sags in middle
Head shape	Not crumpled, one dome, no dent	Crumpled, two domes, dented forehead
Tusks	Male and females	Males; females have none or small
Trunk	More rings, two fingers	Fewer rings, one finger
Toenails	Four on the front feet, three on the back feet	Five on the front feet, four on the back feet

Now that you know the similarities and differences between African and Asian elephants, you will find it easier to tell them apart. The next time you see an elephant in a zoo or on television, try to guess which one it is!



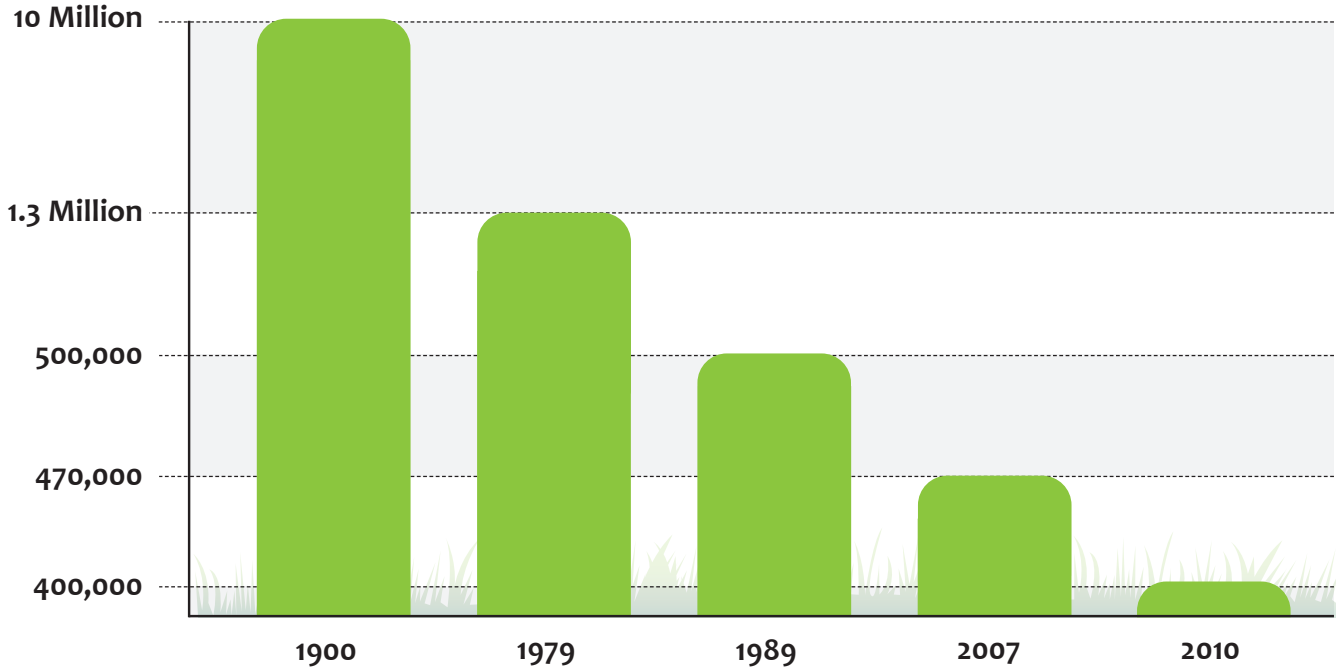
CHAPTER THREE

ENDANGERED ELEPHANTS

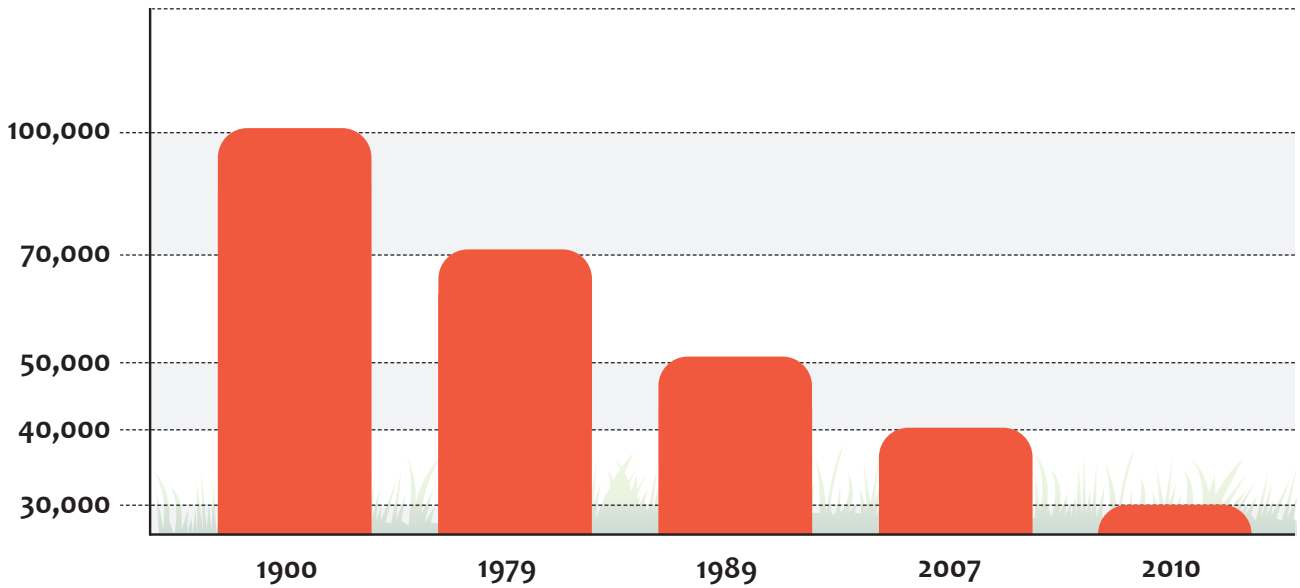
Once upon a time, millions of elephants lived on this planet. Over time, their **population** has **decreased**. Wild elephants are now highly **endangered**. They are dying out. In the 1970s, there were about 1.3 million African elephants. Now there are only about 400,000. We lose thousands of African elephants every year. The Asian elephant population has also dropped to 30,000.



AFRICAN ELEPHANT POPULATION



ASIAN ELEPHANT POPULATION



There are a few reasons why the elephant population has lessened. The Earth is getting hotter. This may dry up water and land, and plants won't grow. Elephants cannot **survive** without food and water. Elephants are also hunted for their tusks. The **ivory** brings money, so hunters have been killing them. Humans also destroy the elephant's home by cutting down trees. If we want elephants to survive, we must start protecting them and their homes.



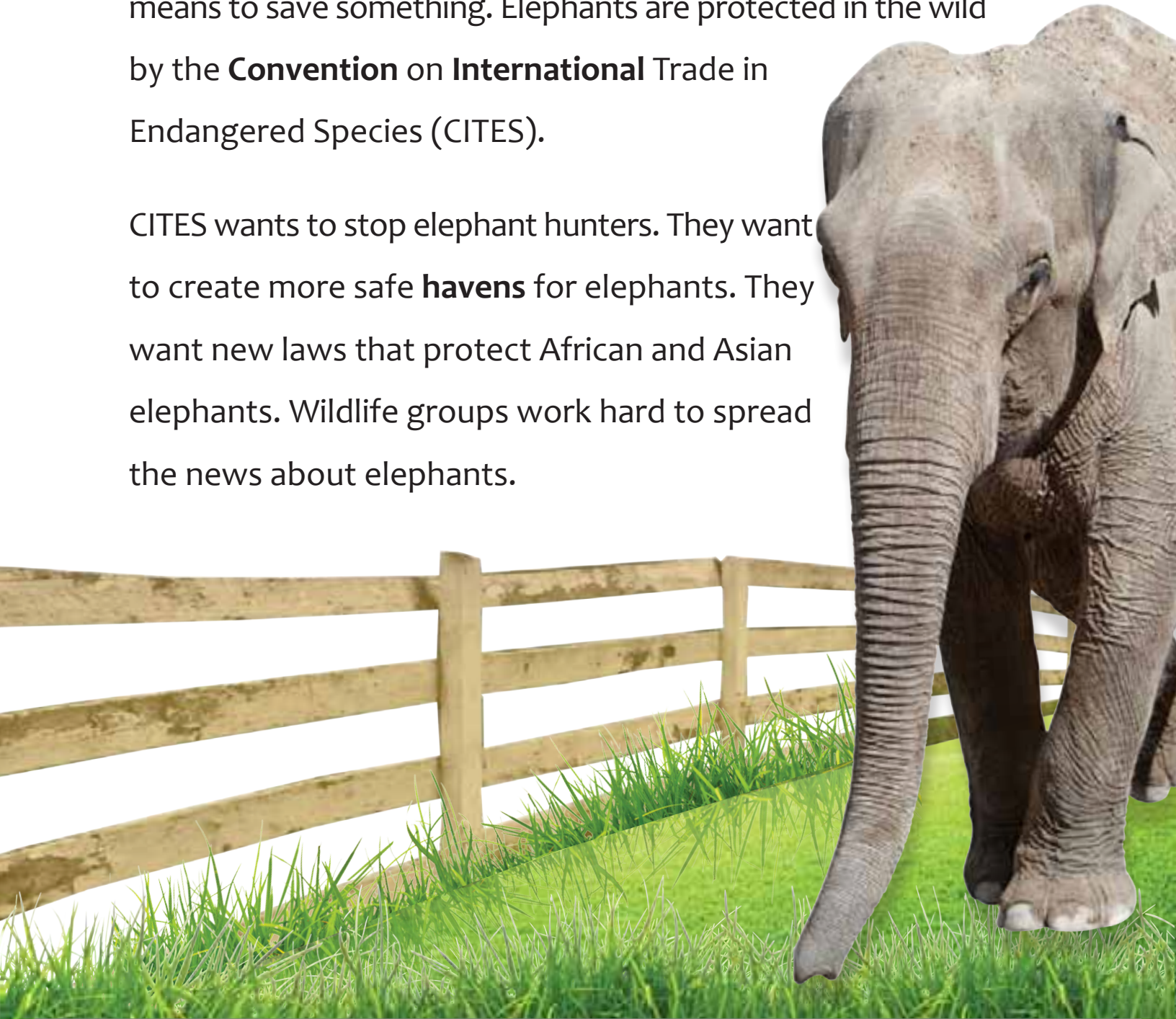


CHAPTER FOUR



HEROES AND HAVENS

Many groups find ways to help save elephants from endangerment and **extinction** through elephant **conservation**. Conservation means to save something. Elephants are protected in the wild by the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)**.

CITES wants to stop elephant hunters. They want to create more safe **havens** for elephants. They want new laws that protect African and Asian elephants. Wildlife groups work hard to spread the news about elephants.



Elephants are in danger. They need our help. Not everyone can go into the forests of Africa and Asia, but we can still do a lot to help.

HOW TO BE A HERO FOR AN ELEPHANT		
ADOPT an elephant at a zoo.	READ A BOOK about elephants.	VOLUNTEER at a zoo.
 AFRICA	SHARE elephant information with friends and family.	 ASIA
LEARN about elephants and their importance.	WRITE TO POLITICIANS to support elephant conservation.	DON'T BUY THINGS MADE from ivory.

With the help of local libraries, zoos, and conservation groups, we can help save elephants. In fact, one **organization** works very hard to help elephants. The Elephant **Sanctuary** in Hohenwald, Tennessee, is the largest natural elephant **refuge** in the United States. They take care of endangered, old, sick, or needy elephants. The sanctuary has three huge grassy areas for Asian and African elephants to **roam** and live freely on. This safe haven for elephants runs on **donations** from people, government, and wildlife organizations.



Elephants should have a natural protected environment; so, the sanctuary is not open to the public. Instead, the sanctuary has special programs that teach all about endangered elephants. Through video and computer technology, the sanctuary can connect live with schools, libraries, and community centers around the world. Their wonderful programs help both elephants and

people. By learning about

African and Asian elephants,
we will continue to see more
of these big guys of the
animal kingdom.





conservation: careful protection of an animal, place, or something else that faces the risk of destruction or neglect

continent: one of the great divisions of land (North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, or Antarctica) on the globe

convention: a meeting of persons for a common purpose

decreased: when something is lessened

donation: something given, such as money, to help causes, animals, places, or people

endangered: facing the threat or risk of dying out

extinction: to disappear or die out over time due to natural, climate, or man-made reasons

haven: a place of safety

herbivore: plant eater

herd: a number of animals of one kind that live and move together

international: involving more than one country around the world

ivory: the hard, creamy-white substance taken from the tusks of a mammal

lifespan: the average length of life of a living thing

matriarch: a female leader of a family, group, herd, or state

mega: very large

organization: a group of persons coming together for some purpose or cause

politician: person who is involved in government and law

population: a group of one or more species living in a particular area or habitat

protect: to cover or shield something

refuge: a place that provides shelter or protection

roam: to move around freely

sagging: drooping

sanctuary: a place that provides shelter or protection

savanna: grasslands containing scattered trees

slanted: not straight

species: a group of similarly classified animals

survive: the ability to live and exist

volunteer: to donate or give your free time

wrinkly: having wrinkles, creases, or folds



Worldswildlifewonders/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Page 4: Valdis Torms/ Shutterstock Images LLC; istockphoto,; Danny Smythe/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Page 5: Four Oaks/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Page 6: Johan Swanepoel/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Page 7: Richard Peterson/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Four Oaks/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Four Oaks/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Page 9: Villiers Steyn/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Page 10: FWStupidio/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Kletr/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Page 11: Talvi/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Page 13: pandapaw/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Viktor1/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Page 14: oversnap/ istockphoto; Four Oaks/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Page 18: Olivier Le Queinec/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Rusm/istockphoto; Page 20: Javarman/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Page 21: Theodore Mattas/ Shutterstock Images LLC; Talvi/ Shutterstock Images LLC