



Teach elephants not to raid crops  
- use different methods to deter elephants from fields



Think about how live elephants and your knowledge and experience of living with elephants can bring more benefits



Avoid moving across elephant paths early morning (4-8am) and evening (6pm-12am), especially during the dry/winter season



Remember elephants are more active at night



Don't walk at night without a torch

## 14 Elephant Facts



The African elephant is the **largest living land mammal**.



The average mass of an adult **African elephant is 6000kg**.

Elephants grow throughout their life.  
**Average height to the shoulder of an adult bull is 3.2m.**



**An elephant eats 4% to 6% of its body weight per day.**

Elephants eat both grass and trees.



Gestation period is 22 months.

**A new born calf weighs ~120kg.**



An adult elephant can **drink 200L of water per day.**



An elephant can **live to up to 60-70 years.**



Elephants live in family groups **led by the oldest cow known as the MATRIACH.**

The tusks are upper incisors **which grow throughout the life of the elephant.**

**Hearing and smell are excellent,** eye sight is moderate.



Males form their herds **when they are 12-20 years known as BACHELOR herds.**



The estimated number of elephants in **northern Botswana is 130,000 and in the Eastern Okavango Panhandle 15,000.**



**Through sharp sense of smell,** an elephant will know where the fields are and may crop raid.



Elephants without tusks **are dangerous.**



ecoexist

## Field Guide 3

Protecting You

Elephants are intelligent animals and are similar to people in many ways. We all need water, food and space to live. However sharing a space with elephants can be difficult! These field guides aim to give some ideas and tips on how we can coexist together more harmoniously and reduce conflicts that arise between people and elephants.

## What do I do if I see an elephant?



Stay calm



Don't run



Wait for the elephant to move on or pass



Try to observe its behaviour



Don't shine a torch/headlights in an elephant's eye



Don't shoot an elephant (unless there is no other option)



Don't challenge an elephant (especially if you have alcohol or drugs in your system)



Don't beep your horn or drive aggressively towards elephants

## Elephant behaviour

**Elephants are herbivorous** (only eat plants) and can be found in different habitats including savannahs, forests, deserts and marshes. They prefer to stay near water. They are considered to be keystone species due to their impact on their environments.



**Females** (called "cows") tend to live in family groups, which can consist of one female with her young (called "calves") or several related females with calves. The groups are led by an individual known as the "matriarch", often the oldest cow.



**Males** ("bulls") leave their family groups when they reach puberty, and may live alone or with other males. Adult bulls mostly interact with family groups when looking for a mate and enter a state of increased testosterone and aggression known as musth, which helps them gain dominance and reproduce successfully.

Elephants are generally passive, but they can become aggressive when challenged or scared. **Therefore, they usually give warning signs before they charge/attack.**

## FOR MORE INFO CONTACT

Ecoexist Project

Tel: 683 0240 / 684 0290

Email: [info@ecoexistproject.org](mailto:info@ecoexistproject.org)

Department of Wildlife and National Parks

Tel: +267 687 6823 / +267 686 0368



ecoexist



## Elephant Warning Signs

- 1. EARS OUT**  
The first warning sign an elephant will give, is pushing ears out
- 2. HEAD SHAKE**  
The second warning is a head shake
- 3. SECRETION FROM GLANDS**  
When elephants are under stress they show signs of wet/dark patches between the ear & eye

## Elephant Charge

### 1. MOCK CHARGE

In most cases, when an elephant charges, screaming and with its ears out, it is mock charging. In a mock charge, the elephant may also initially display indecision by shuffling backwards or forwards or vocalising before it actually charges.

#### What to do:

- Don't run
  - Stay calm
  - Clap hands
  - Stay in a group
  - Wave your hands in the air and shout
- it will usually stop and go back

### 2. FULL CHARGE

In a serious charge, an elephant simply puts its head down, ears flat against its head and attacks with no hesitation and often with no vocalisation.

#### What to do:

- Get out of the way
- Make a loud sharp sound
- Try to get higher than the elephant – climb a termite mound or tree
- Throw a piece of clothing & run the opposite direction

### ELEPHANT IN MUSTH

A bull in musth may go through a whole set of demonstrations before charging. He may or may not follow through, but it is definitely best not to wait and find out. It's always alone and holds its head high. He will have large wet patches between his eyes and ears. He may be excreting urine and will have a strong smell.

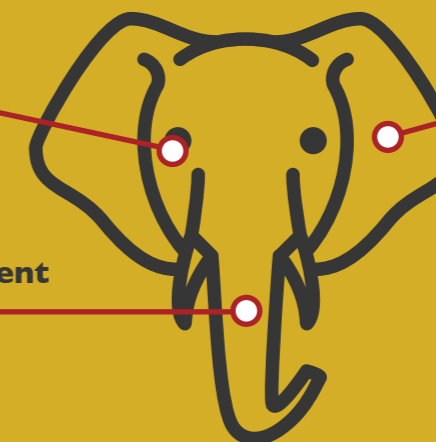
#### What to do:

- Keep your distance
- Take another route

## Key things to remember

Elephants have moderate eyesight

Elephants have an excellent sense of smell



Elephants have good hearing



In most cases wind direction will be an important element when you come across an elephant. It is best to approach elephants with the wind coming from the elephants to you, that is, downwind from them.

## The key is to be as non-threatening as possible.

### Try to follow these important rules:

- Always approach elephants very slowly.
- Give elephants space - do not try to get too close.
- Avoid surprise  
- when walking it is good to make a noise (talk/sing) so elephants know you are there.
- Do not approach elephants from behind – they cannot see behind them.
- Whenever possible, make a large detour around a group and approach the elephants from an angle or head on or, better yet, stop and let them come to you or move away on their own



Individual elephants are different. Many elephants probably do not want to meet people, but some elephants may deliberately want to hurt people/destroy property/eat crops.



Elephants learn from and remember past experiences. If an elephant has had a bad encounter with a person, it may become more dangerous to other people in the future.



Elephant breeding herds are very skittish and will avoid confrontations, but can be very dangerous if you get too close.



Elephant bulls can be very relaxed and difficult to chase off, but using passive techniques like chilli fences, tin cans, and electric fencing will reduce danger.

## How can we share space with elephants?

As people, there are certain things we can do to try and avoid encounters with elephants and make it easier to share space.



Avoid ploughing or building your home in elephant corridors



Respect elephants' needs – know where their movement routes are and where they go to drink and forage



Learn elephant behaviour – know the warning signs