

# ELEPHANTS: ENORMOUS & ELEGANT

LET'S EXPLORE THEIR SOCIAL LIVES  
AND HOW THEY SHAPE THEIR WORLD.

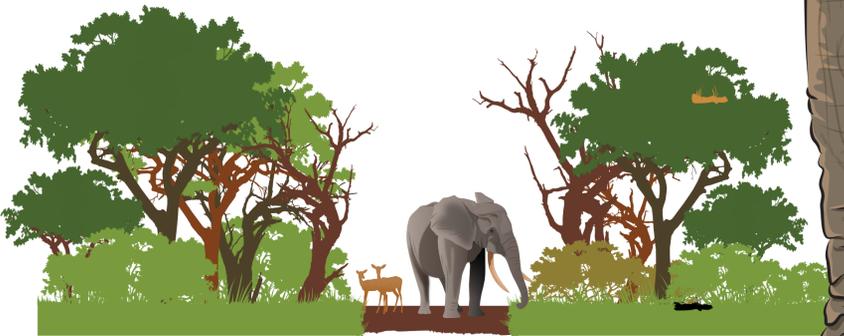
Elephants are "ecosystem engineers". They help shape and change the physical structure of the worlds that they live in the same way that we humans shape the world around us.

There are two species of elephants in Africa:

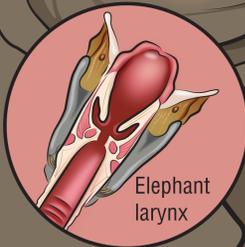
**African savanna elephants** (*Loxodonta africana*) help keep their savanna grassland homes open by knocking down trees and thinning out savanna woodland.



**African forest elephants** (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) create trail systems through their dense forest homes by knocking down trees.

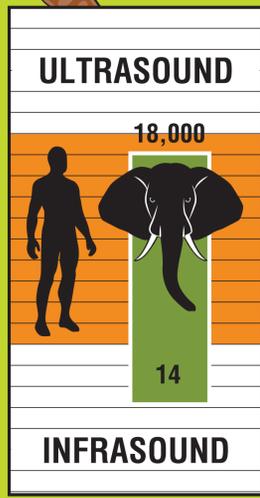


Red-billed oxpeckers search elephants for ticks to eat.



Elephant larynx

RANGE OF HUMAN HEARING



FREQUENCY (HERTZ)

## COMMUNICATION



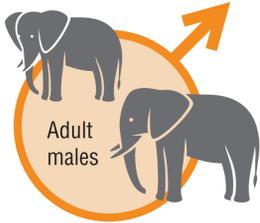
Elephants can hear and communicate in sounds that are too low for humans to hear. This sound is called infrasound.

Elephant infrasonic communications can travel for many miles through the air (16 km/10 mi) or vibrate through the ground (32 km/20 mi).

In a way elephants have built-in mobile phones. Like people using phones, elephants keep in touch with each other using their infrasound communications.

Social networks are the connections of social interactions and personal relationships that individuals have with each other.

An elephant can grasp objects as high as 7m (23 ft) with its trunk.



Adult males



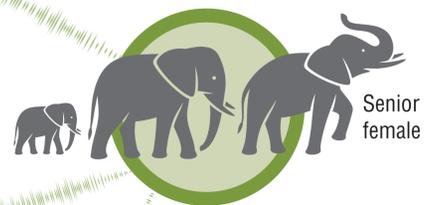
## KEEPING TRACK OF FAMILY

Humans maintain social networks with their families and friends, the people that they go to school and work with, and electronically with other people around the world. Elephants similarly have social networks with other elephants.

Elephants use their infrasonic communication network to keep in touch with their families and friends.

Elephants live in family units headed by a matriarch, a senior female elephant, and her sisters, daughters, and young male offspring. Adult male elephants live by themselves or hang out with other male elephants.

Elephant family units stay connected with each other like human families do. They exchange information on where food and water is, or if poachers and predators are around.



Senior female

Elephants have a flexible larynx and long, loose vocal cords. They can rumble them so that the sound waves produced travel longer distances than human-audible sounds do.



## POOP

Elephant poop is often full of seeds, which grow into new trees.



Banded mongoose

## RAISE THE ALARM

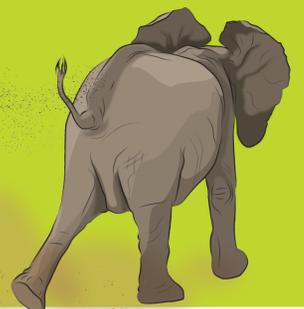
Rags soaked in ground-up hot chili peppers are strung up on fences. This stops marauding elephants by irritating their sensitive trunks.



Scientists have discovered that elephants also communicate about BEES! African honeybees are very aggressive and can kill people, and a swarm could be strong enough to kill or harm an elephant.

Elephants fear being stung in the face, around the eyes and up the trunk. They have learned to stay away from bees. Elephants have a special alarm call for bees. When an elephant trumpets the bee alarm, all elephants in the area scatter away.

To stop elephants from raiding crops, villagers put up fences of bee hives.



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