



WILD FACTS

ASIAN ELEPHANTS



Hi Example firstname

This is a BIG issue of Crew News as we're looking at Asia's largest living land animal. [Asian elephants](#) might be smaller than their African cousins, but a male can grow to three metres at the shoulder (how tall are you?). They weigh up to five tonnes, as much as five cars or 90 people!

These vast vegetarians eat grass, leaves, twigs and bark. They spend 75% of time feeding, eating up to 200kg each day (as much as 2,000 big bags of salad!). Elephants are jumbo gardeners, known as a 'keystone species', and help maintain their forest ecosystem. They disperse seeds through their dung, create vital pathways through trees and dig down to water in dry weather.

Elephants have complex social lives and remarkable memories. The three subspecies of Asian elephant – Indian, Sri Lankan and Sumatran – live in close-knit family groups. Males have small tusks, while most females have none at all. Ivory poaching is still a problem though and there is a gruesome new threat: demand for their skin, used for jewellery and traditional medicines. Born Free is working hard to protect these immense, intelligent animals!

From

Laura

Laura Gosset
Wild Crew



Elephants under threat

There are around 35,000 Asian elephants in the wild and they are officially listed as Endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Apart from the trade in ivory and skin, a big problem is loss of habitat – their forest homes are cut down for agriculture. As a result elephants and people increasingly come into contact, which can lead to problems such as elephants eating crops. Tragically both people and elephants can be injured and killed. Born Free promotes practical ways to help people protect their crops from elephants.

But that's not the only problem. People capture baby elephants and train them to carry logs, keep them in temples, send them to zoos and circuses worldwide, and use them for elephant-back safaris. You can imagine how upsetting it is for a calf to be separated from its mother and family in this way. It is important to know that elephants would not naturally allow people to ride on their backs so they need to be trained. Sadly the training process is cruel and emotionally damaging for the baby. Born Free does everything it can to fight this terrible trade.



Wildlife champion

Meet Bella Lack, one of Born Free's Youth Ambassadors and Twitter sensation (she has a staggering 140k followers!). An outspoken advocate for animals, at just 15 years old, Bella is devoted to animal welfare and conservation. She also recently met Prince William at the Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in London. You can find out more about Bella's work with Born Free [here](#) and read her recent article in our *Wildlife Times* magazine on page 19 [here](#).

In a recent BBC3 documentary, Bella visited Thailand to investigate and expose the cruel exploitation of elephants for the tourist industry [here](#).

We hope you find Bella as inspirational as we do.

How could you take action to help elephants and other wild animals today?
If you travel abroad for your holidays please think twice before riding an elephant or watching wild animals perform in a show.

Wild Crew survey
Thank you for everyone who responded. We'll be reporting back soon!

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