

## **The Subspecies of Asian Elephants**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The subspecies of Asian elephants can be classified under three main categories. Thereby the endemic species to Sri Lanka is named as *Elephas maximus maximus*. Also the subspecies of elephants that spread in the Indian sub-peninsula and indo-china territory are known as *Elephas maximus indicus*. Also the third group that spreads in a specific area of Sumatra Island is called *Elephas maximus sumatranus*. There is no considerable difference between the subspecies of Asian and African elephants.

Adapting to various environmental factors from the edge of the west of South-East and Asian regions depends on its intensive characteristics arisen in the region. Two subspecies can be identified in Sri Lanka situated in the edge of the western region and Sumatra Island which is situated in the edge of the eastern region.

Elephants that inhabit Sri Lanka and South India have the darkest and biggest auricles in their body. The spot spreads like depigmentation on their faces, auricles, trunk, feet and other parts in their body. Elephants who inhabit Sumatra and South Malesia have a small scale of body with light colour. Their auricles are smaller than other Asian elephants and depigmentation can be seen to an extent.

The scale, colour, depigmentation and the scale of auricles of elephants in India, China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Kambojiya between the edge of east and western regions have middle characteristics in above mentioned species. The Japanese elephant (*Elephas maximus maximus rubridens*) resembles elephants of Sri Lanka and it is also a subspecies of Asian elephants. These species merely date back 30000 years.

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