



## Survey Methods

### INTRODUCTION

The story of African elephants is a powerful example of how science can inform conservation. Knowing how many elephants are left and where they live can help us plan strategies to protect them. In the *Survey Methods* Click & Learn, you'll learn more about elephants and the methods used to monitor their populations. These methods can also be used to study many other large animals.

### PART 1: Why Study Elephants?

Open the [Survey Methods](#) Click & Learn and read the “**Why Study Elephants**” section under the “Where Are They?” tab.

1. Elephants are considered to be a keystone species. What does that mean?
2. Name three elephant activities or functions that justify why elephants are a keystone species. Describe how each activity or function changes African ecosystems.

Elephant activity or function	Change in ecosystem

3. Why have elephant populations been declining for the past several decades?

### PART 2: Survey Methods

Biologists weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different survey methods before choosing the appropriate approach. Read through each of the survey methods under the “**Where Are They?**” and “**How Many?**” tabs, and use the table on the following page to organize your thoughts.

Survey type	Information gathered	Methods used	Type of count (total/sample, direct/indirect)	Advantages	Disadvantages
Species range			N/A		
Individual range			N/A		
Aerial survey					
Individual registration					
Acoustic survey					
Dung transect					

