

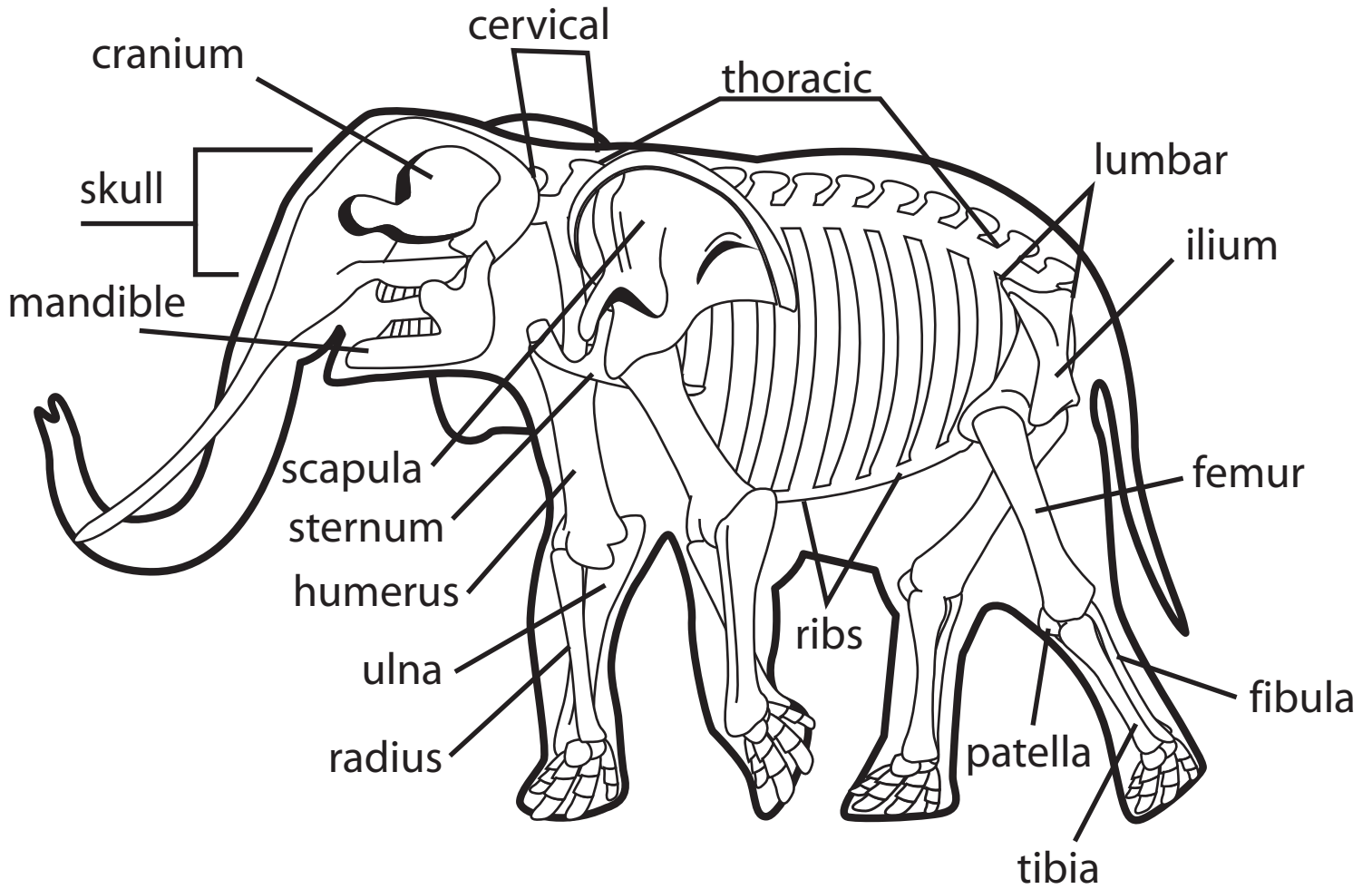


Asian Elephant

Family:	Elephantidae
Natural Habitat:	Asian elephants are found in the forests of India, Sri Lanka and South East Asia.
Status in the wild:	They have been largely domesticated and are used on forestry and logging plantations. Asian elephants are endangered due to competition with humans for space and habitat. Wild elephants that damage crops or come into conflict with humans are usually shot. With a rapidly increasing human population unfortunately conflict between elephants and humans is on the increase and contributing to their fast decline in numbers.
Size:	Asian elephants are generally smaller than African elephants that tend to grow to about 4 metres in height.
Weight:	Asian elephants weigh between 3 to 5 thousand kg.
Longevity:	Elephants can live to the ripe old age of sixty years!

SKELETON OF AN ELEPHANT

VERTEBRAL COLUMN





more facts!

Lifestyle:

Elephants are highly intelligent and able to communicate through infrasound over very long distances. Female elephants live in small groups with a dominant matriarch and the herd consists of female relatives – sisters, aunts, cousins, nieces and young males. Bull elephants are solitary and only come into contact with females when they are ready to mate. Younger bulls often form small bachelor groups until they reach maturity and venture off on their own.

Hide and appearance:

Asian elephants have smaller ears than African elephants and their backs have a more pronounced arch. The tops of their heads form two bulges while African elephants' heads are flatter. The colour of their hides are a darker brown, often having pink freckles around the edges of their ears and the ends of their trunks while African elephants have a steel grey hide. Both species have coarse hair dotted sparingly over their bodies. Unlike female African elephants, Asian female elephants do not have tusks.

Food Habit:

They eat 10 percent of their body weight each day, which for adults is between 170 - 200 kilos of food per day. The reason they consume such large amounts is because the vegetation they eat is not high in nutrition, so they need to eat a lot of it. They need to drink 80 - 200 liters of water a day and use more for bathing. Sometimes they scrape soil for minerals.


Breeding:

Asian elephants reach sexual maturity from 9 years. Females have a 20-22 month gestation period. They give birth to one calf, very rarely twins. Female calves stay with the herd but males are chased away when they reach sexual maturity.

Movement:

Elephant herds in the wild follow well defined seasonal migration routes. Migrations are made around the monsoon seasons, often between the wet and dry seasons, and it is the task of the oldest and most experienced elephants to remember the traditional migration routes.

Keeper Secrets



Elephant herds are matriarchal. The oldest female is normally the matriarch because she would know the migration routes which lead the elephants to the best food and water sources.

There is a very strong bond between our herd of female Asian Elephants and they constantly mind each other. Like all elephants they are extremely partial to bananas, which should not be over ripe.