



# African Elephant Social Behavior Ethogram

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Behavior name	Operational definition	Potential function
<b>TRUNK</b>		
Trunk toward	Extend trunk toward body w/in 2 elephant body lengths (8 m)	Affiliative
Trunk to mouth	Trunk touches mouth area	Affiliative
Trunk to gland	Trunk touches area between eye and ear	Affiliative / Investigatory
Trunk to eye	Trunk touches eye	Affiliative
Trunk to trunk	Two trunks touch or entwine	Affiliative
Trunk to body	Trunk to body other than mouth, gland, eye, trunk or genitals.	Affiliative
Flehmen	Trunk to genitals, urine or feces with trunk to own mouth	Investigatory
Trunk to genitals	Trunk to genital area (between legs or under body)	Investigatory
Trunk slap	Swing at and hit recipient with trunk	Contact aggression
<b>TUSKS/HEAD</b>		
Tusking	Poking or jabbing with tusk	Contact aggression
Pushing	Nudge or push with head, shoulders or side (not with butt) resulting in one step by recipient	Contact aggression
<b>BODY</b>		
Turn around	Turn 90° away from another elephant within ± 10 sec of an approach	Submission
Back towards	Take two steps (minimum) backward while another elephant is within 2 elephant body lengths (anytime during back towards)	Submission
Back into	Back toward and contact with butt	Unknown
Body contact	Non-aggressive body contact unspecified in other behavior (e.g. side-to-side rubbing or touching).	Affiliative
Approach	Move within 2 elephant body lengths of another	Proximity
In Proximity	Within 2 elephant body lengths	Proximity
Leave	Move out of proximity	Proximity
Displacement	One animal approaches and the other leaves within 10 sec	Dominance

**Main Sources:** Estes, R.D. (1991) *The Behavior Guide to African Mammals*; Langbauer, W.R. (2000) Elephant Communication, *Zoo Biology* 19: 425-445, 2000. Partan, S. (unpublished). **Other sources:** Payne, K. (1998) *Silent Thunder*; Buss, I.O. (1990) *Elephant Life*; Sikes, S.K. (1971) *The Natural History of the African Elephant*; Moss, C. (1988) *Elephant Memories*; Douglas-Hamilton, I. & Douglas-Hamilton, O. (1975) *Among the elephants*.