Elephant census

Why in news?

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Four States — Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand which comprise India's most human-elephant conflict-prone region, have **decided to count elephants synchronously.**

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Why this census is significant?

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- This will be the first regional synchronous elephant census with an identical set of rules for direct and indirect counting methods.
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- The **direct elephant counting method** is based on sightings of elephants.
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- In the **indirect method,** surveyors follow a **dung decay formula** for arriving at population estimation which is being used by Tamil Nadu and Karnataka at present.
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- A variation of about 8% to 9% has been noticed between the two methods.
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What are the advantages of synchronised census?

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- According to the 2015 census, Odisha has 1,954 elephants, while Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal have approximately 700, 275 and 130 elephants respectively.
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- The synchronised census will indicate the size, distribution, structure and density of the elephant population in the region.
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- A simultaneously conducted census would **eliminate underestimation,**

duplication.
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- This approach helps to produce a good map on the distribution of elephants in different landscapes, highlighting the abundance and density of elephants.
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- Synchronisation in the elephant census will lead to **better regional planning.**
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- Elephants travel long distances and an exhaustive information base on regional elephant distribution will help plan a proper intervention for their conservation in the long run.
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- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has set up a committee that is trying to prepare a strategic action plan for the region.
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Source: The Hindu

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