

Elephant Ethogram

An **ethogram** is a list of possible behaviors for a particular kind of animals, including descriptions of each behavior. Codes help scientists record data easily when they are observing animals in the wild. One way of using an ethogram is to observe a single animal's behavior at regular intervals, for example, every minute for 10 minutes or every 30 minutes for 10 hours. Below is a small sample of the hundreds of African elephant behaviors observed by scientists in the Gorongosa National Park in Mozambique.

Category	Behavior	Code	Description
Feeding	Eating	E	Eating food by picking it up with trunk.
	Drinking	D	Sucking up water, then pouring it into mouth
Social	Sparring	S	Testing strength playfully by pushing against each other's heads
	Playing	P	Pushing on each other gently or kicking objects playfully
	Let's Go	LG	A female "rumbling" to herd, facing in direction she wished to travel
	Head-raising	HR	Raising the head while greeting other elephants excitedly.
Protection	Head-shaking	HS	Shaking head and flapping ears to show annoyance
	Periscope-sniff	PS	Detecting predators or gathering information by raising trunk and sniffing the wind
	Trunk-twisting	TT	Twisting the tip of the trunk back and forth when nervous or unsure
	Defensive-circle	DC	Encircling young with head outs
	Charging	C	Running at a predator or rival aggressively (can be real or mock)

Source: Adapted from Poole, J.H., and P.K. Granli. 2009. Gestures database. Elephant Voices. www.elephantvoices.org
 Picture Perfect Lessons, 3-5
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