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ELEPHANT AND HUMAN CONFLICTS

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In the case of elephant and man we have one of the best examples known of two superficially dissimilar animals sharing common biological needs, and therefore competing vigorously whenever they contact other.

In northern Karnataka, Orissa and Jharkhand, elephants have last range chunks of habitat to mining and encroachment. Pachyderms in these states have dramatically expanded their range into neighboring areas that had no history of elephant presence of several decades. Local villagers say that in recent times, the pachyderms have begun to tarry up in the mountains well into autumn and sometimes even through the cold winter months.

Mislaying for both life (human and elephant).

The estimated 28000 wild elephants in India are distributed over an area of about 1,09,500 sq. km, about three percent of the country is geographical area. In some of these tracts a segment of the elephant population killed an average of 350 people annually over the last five years (2005-2010) and damaged an average of 330 sq. km crops every year for the last three years (2007-2010).

Elephant and their habitat also pay the price of conflict; while 40 to 50 are killed a year while crop riding, forests are destroyed in the belief that it will prevent them from using the area. Discontented local formers will frequently aid poachers in killing problem wildlife. Many elephants are caught in the pincer grip in of habitat loss/fragmentation and retaliation caused by increasing conflict. Unless, timely, effective mitigation measures intervenes, the conservation of elephants is in question throughout most of their range, in India and elsewhere in Asia.

Protect and conservation of human crop field and elephant

Human-elephant conflict mitigation measures fall under two categories; the short term (tactical) ones that symptoms and long term (strategic) solutions that address the underlying causes.

The majority of current solutions either target problem elephants or apply short term conflict mitigation at the interface between expanding agriculture and diminishing elephant range and therefore achieve only limited success.

Well maintained barriers serves to keep elephants away from farm land but may funnel them to unprotected adjacent villages. Fences and trenches are compromised by people who need access to forests. Badly planned barriers that do not take elephant behavior and use of land scope into consideration can be just as bad as development obstructions such as highways. Rail, roads or canals. For example, denying elephant access to a critical water source or foraging area can be detrimental to their survival. In Bandipur, a trench separates the reserve forests. From the national park and there are elephants on both sides. Instead of excluding

elephants from the human land scope. Such barriers prevent them from moving between forests. The west Bengal forest installed a 70km electric fence to stop the elephants from Dalma wildlife sanctuary (Bihar) from crossing the states boundary. The pachyderms that held in check damaged crops in Bihar until the local people surreptitiously cuts the fence to mitigate the problem.

The forest departments aids villagers by chasing away elephants using scaring squads, driving them across the landscape into forests, and removing those perceived to be dangerous, either by capture, translocation or killing. But either elephant numbers nor densities appear to have an effect on conflict.

For example in Assam while the elephant population is decreasing, conflict in escalation. Conversely the Nilgiri biosphere reserve has very high elephant densities but crop loss is consideration low.

Conservation action plan

In several areas, it is small isolated population of elephants causing conflict. They are sinks for conservation resources and may provide no long-term benefits for the species. A conservation action plan that priorities and recommends managements action for populations based on their long term viability in a necessity. It is essential that human elephant conflict mitigation becomes an integral part of the national elephant conservation policy.

Trans border cooperation is needed to manage elephant populations across India's international borders with Nepal Bhutan and Bangladesh. Development of a rigorous decision making framework will require the participation of social scientists and economists.

Elephant and human are intelligent mammals competing for resources and mitigation ought to involve and it enabling local people to withstand the costs of some level of conflict which will be inevitable.