FROM CONFLICT TO COEXISTENCE: A strategic approach to HEC mitigation

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Managing HEC

• Reactive approach to HEC management
• Sub-optimal outcomes & escalation of HEC
HEC Mitigation

• Understand elephants when making development decisions
• Elephant management should be an integral part of the project planning process – even prior to EIA
• Need a strategic approach to internalize elephant management
Sri Lanka’s proposed strategic frameworks

- Around 6000 elephants in the wild & highest density
- Human pop. density - excess of 300 persons/sq. km
- Highest incidence of HEC in the world
HEC Management

• 3 approaches:
  • Translocation
  • Large scale elephant drives
  • Confining elephants to PAs

• All approaches attempt to confine elephants only to PAs

Translocation of Problem elephants
HEC Mitigation

- Approach did not consider that 70% of elephants range outside PAs
- Same approach over 50 years with little success

*HEC situation in Sri Lanka*
Translocations don’t work

When the elephant cannot return, we have translocated the elephant and the problem
Effectiveness (or lack) of Translocations

- Homers – 25% ; Wanderers – 42%; Settlers – 33%
- Killed in new locations – 42%; Continued crop raiding – 84%
- Problem elephant translocation results in wider propagation of HEC

The destruction continues.....
Large Scale Elephant Drives into DWC Protected Areas
Effectiveness (or lack) of Large Scale Elephant Drives

Exceeding the carrying capacity of PAs
A Strategic Approach...

RED – Humans only
GREEN – Elephants only
YELLOW – Humans & Elephants
HEC Intensity

WHITE = No conflict
LIGHT PINK = Mild conflict
DARK PINK = Medium conflict
RED = Severe conflict
Strategic Framework

• Understand elephant habitat types, carrying capacities, map conflict zones & plan land use

• Elephant density:
  • Primary/secondary forests – 0.2 elephants/sq.km
  • Scrub/degraded/grasslands – 3 elephants/sq.km

• Re-locate development projects or include HEC mitigation in the surrounding landscape

• Community awareness and public responsibility
Collect ranging information before locating fences
Strategic Framework

• Locate fences on ecological boundaries
• Community based permanent electric fences
• Maintained by the affected community
Strategic Framework

• Community based seasonal agricultural electric fences
• Maintained by the farmer organizations
• Must be removed after the crop is harvested
➢ Community based elephant viewing tourism can provide additional revenue
➢ A development & conservation strategy with a landscape approach
This presentation was prepared in collaboration with the Center for Conservation and Research (CCR) - Sri Lanka

Thank you