

HUMAN- ELEPHANT CONFLICT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WEST BENGAL

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The ever-increasing anthropogenic pressure, illegal and unplanned developmental activities and construction, the socio-political unrest, ethnic conflicts and large-scale felling combined with encroachment of the forests in some part of India including West Bengal where forests and wildlife are located, drive to man-elephant conflict. Deforestation and human encroachment of critical elephant corridors essential for the movement of long-ranging animals is another cause of the man-elephant conflict. Ecologists and conservationists strongly feel the remaining forests and corridors are to be protected immediately otherwise the elephants and the rich bio-diversity may become a thing of past. Protection and regeneration of some critical habitat is necessary, immediate measures are to be taken to reduce both human and elephant casualties in the conflict. Though elephant numbers are not critical, the skewed sex ratio is a matter of concern. It should not be the wildlife that ends up paying the heaviest toll in the conflict. Measures to reduce crop depredations, dealing with the complex issue of illegal encroachments, and adequately compensating farmers for the losses they are incurring and involving them with proper awareness programs are the only solutions at present.