

Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
(Wildlife Division)

Advisory for priority actions for management of Human Wild Life Conflict

Repeated mentions have been made in the Parliament on the issue of human wildlife conflict. Reports of wild animals moving in non forest areas have also been increasing at times causing over reaction and panic, resulting in unpleasant situations like lynching of animals or law and order problems. A series of workshops has been organised on various aspects of Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) in the country recently.

While field level management of forest and wildlife is undertaken in the states and adequate laws and powers are available, preparedness for HWC situations is required as organised arrangement and action. It is in this context that following set of guidelines has been prepared for setting up of Human Wildlife Conflict mitigation and management plans in all the forest management units.

Conflicts occur more outside Protected Areas and reasons of this also are normally associated with the treatment of forests outside PAs. Intensity of human presence due to activities of harvest, regeneration and upkeep of forests, existence of human habitations as enclosures, grazing etc are some reasons for human presence in forests. Besides, human habitations along the forest fringes also face HWC.

In these circumstances, it is necessary that states institute a Human Wildlife Conflict Management Strategy on priority and in the first place, formulate Human Wildlife Conflict Management Plans (HWCMPs) for identified conflict zones, for primarily initial mitigation and quick response action. This can reduce the chances of HWC largely and can also inculcate confidence in forest administration apart from improving the interface with the communities.

Long term measures for mitigation of Human Wildlife Conflict include improvement of forest habitats, better protection, enhancement of information and knowledge on the wildlife through research and at times population management based strategies. Such action are part of forest management and policy and legal enabling arrangement for such strategies are to evolve with time and need. However, short term actions are needed for quick response if and when incidences take place involving human beings or wild animals.

In this context, following basic components are suggested in this regard in the interactions held so far, as the primary tenets of management of human wildlife conflict, and should be adopted at the earliest in the States, in the areas identified as most vulnerable to begin with.

Basic tenets of the management action on Human Wildlife Conflict, to be put in place in the localities identified as vulnerable to the Human Wildlife Conflict situations.

1. Quick Response logistics

- a. Publicity: Help lines; public information on help lines and other reporting places and means in case of any conflict situation requiring support of forest department.
- b. Hubs in place for receiving the information and onwards transmission for quick response – it can be set up in the easily accessible locations.
- c. Personnel; equipment; mobility and communication in places accessible to potential areas of conflict. These teams may be suitably titled for example “Wild Life Rescue Teams” for easy identification.
- d. Collaboration of local interested organisations should be welcome for such teams.
- e. Clear Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for personnel manning the quick response teams. This must include command control hierarchy, on the spot command delegation, delegation for procurement of goods and services if and as required in the operational exigencies.
- f. Intensive training for the personnel involved in this kind of tasks.

2. Rescue mechanisms

- a. In case of human victims, arrangements for quick transport of victims for treatment to nearest possible place. Standing arrangements for such eventualities in the hospitals/ PHCs of the potential areas.
- b. For animal victims, Rescue Centres for animals involved so that the victim can be treated/ rehabilitated immediately.
- c. Arrangements with veterinary services for quick movement for tranquilising, first aid treatments etc in potential areas. Every newly posted vet in the areas to be trained in these trades in Wildlife Institute of India.
- d. Stock of usually needed equipment and drugs either in forest offices or veterinary centres for cutting on response time.

3. Awareness

- a. Mobilizing volunteers like “Vanya Praani Mitra” programme of Gujarat Forest Department for interacting with public, interface with forest department and preliminary steps for mobilizing local help in case of emergencies. Local volunteers should also be trained to interact with people, handle the incidences of HWC according to the SoPs for reporting to appropriate contacts and organise locals on immediate initial steps, till the Wildlife rescue team arrives.
- b. Information campaign on conservation friendly practices, cultivation of suitable species which do not attract wildlife of the area, steps to be taken when one comes

across any wildlife, and encouraging human activities which may deter wildlife in proximity to human habitations.

- c. Regular meetings of field functionaries in localities on the status and difficulties related to HWC.
- d. Signages in the identified localities for occurrence, precautions and suggested actions in case of encounter with wild animals.

4. Forest management actions

- a. Clearing vistas along the boundaries of forests in close proximity of the habitations for avoiding chance encounters.
- b. Identifying regular movement corridors of large wild life and adequate publicity for avoiding disturbance in such areas.
- c. Upkeep of status of wildlife in the potential conflict areas, especially migration/ movement pattern.
- d. Maintaining information and data of HWC cases and also the developments in the area which may have bearing on HWC. This may include agricultural practices, NTFP collection, cultural religious or practices inside forests etc.
- e. Arrangements for deployment of personnel and quick action on cognizance on receipt of reports of conflict cases.
- f. Appropriate rules and procedure to be made for speedy and objective assessment of damage and providing relief.
- g. Sufficient delegation at field level for deciding and disbursing the ex-gratia amount for its effective use for addressing possible trauma due to HWC.
- h. Regular monitoring and review by Chief Wild Life Warden of the situation in all potentially conflict areas.

5. Researches

- a. Use of local data in spatial patterns – at Division/ range level with GIS based system.
- b. Radio telemetry for identification and pattern of movement of large wildlife in case of threat to humans.
- c. Compilation of animal behaviour in case of species likely to be involved in HWC for strategy for management.
- d. Compilation of comparable cases of conflict, reasons thereof and best practices for helping response decisions and for information of public.

6. For Herbivore conflict

- a. Maintaining foraging ground within the forest along boundaries, free of lantana and weeds, and by augmenting palatable grasses and other forage species.

- b. Helping locals in maintaining barriers and scaring away by possible non destructive methods.
- c. In extreme cases, removal of identified animals/ groups responsible for habitual crop raiding, preferably by capture and relocation and in rarest of rare cases, elimination.
- d. In case of species like elephants, maintain traditional migratory routes under forest cover or perennial tree crops to minimize damage. Payment of ecosystem services principles can be an option in identified areas, for encouraging land owners of such areas for adopting desirable land use practices in community interest.

7. Insurance for damage to life or property due to HWC

- a. States may consider insurance programmes for damage due to wild life
- b. For this purpose dialogue with insurance sector may provide ways to pursue this option for management of situations arising out of human wildlife conflict. Insurance can be considered for damage to standing crops besides that to life/injuries to human being. Modalities may vary for such programme from place to place based on assessment of risk by the Insurance companies. Feasibility may be explored at the state level.

The actions indicated above can be organised into a time-bound plan based on priority and need of locations.
