

Annexures

Annexure I

A case study has been undertaken to analyse the condition of animals in the nearby forest. An interview with forest range officer M. Nazeer about the Mettupalayam wildlife provided insight into its biosphere reserve. He shared some interesting information and steps taken by the government to protect wild animals. Mettupalayam is situated on the banks of the Bhavani River closely nestled by the foothills of the Nilgiri Mountains.

Researcher: Can you elaborate on Mettupalayam forest wildlife?

Nazeer: It is richly endowed with hills, forests, river, and wildlife. Animals like chitals, sambars, gaurs, elephants, wild pigs, black napped hair, peacocks, monkeys, bison are the habitats of the forest. The thick forest and density of the animals are important to balance the ecosystem. The government has undertaken several precautions to save the life of animals.

Researcher: What kind of difficulties do the farmers who live in the jungles of the forest?

Nazeer: One of the significant issues which the forest ranger faces is due to wild animals, meandering outside the forest area and marching into the nearby villages and farmlands, which creates a great loss to the farmers. Monkeys, elephants, wild boar, deer, peacock are the main threat to the farmers. The impact of the crop damage due to these wild animals creates the conflicts between man and animal.

Researcher: Provide inputs on the elephant's behaviour and its etiquette.

Nazeer: Mettupalayam elephants typically use three corridors, particularly, the Jaccanari-Vedar Colony corridor, Kallar-Jaccanari corridor, and Kallar- Nellithurai corridor. Elephants use corridors of their transit routes among habitats because of the technological improvement and increasing populace level, the anthropogenic view which is aroused by the people.

The development of the forest area reduces the useful resource availability to elephants, which in turn leads to crop raiding and different human-elephant conflicts on the forest fringes.

Nazeer splits the elephants into two categories. One is wild, which would not emerge out of the forest regions whereas another one transgresses for migration. The latter creates man-animal conflict, snaps out from the forest and wanders in the nearby villages and harvests their cultivation and damages their livelihood. That is why it gets the name crop raider. Nobody can be blamed for the situation. The elephant would not sojourn in one place; it will always follow the migratory pattern.

Researcher: What do you think about elephants' intelligence?

Nazeer: As everyone knows, elephants are intelligent animals, they know how to handle the electric fencing, they easily break it and walk out of the forest. The fence proves effective for a few months and later due to little or no maintenance, the elephants have learned to break in. Indeed, even a few elephants discovered that their tusks do not lead to power and utilise them to break electric fencing.

Researcher: What do you think about elephants that come out from the forest?

Nazeer: Due to increase in human population many of the elephant's corridor was occupied, using the land for cultivation purposes, building houses, scarcity of water, drought, increase in wild animal population, road extensions which propel the animal in the wrong direction, habitat loss, ecotourism, variation in climate, human interference inside the forest area, are some of the predominant issues for the animal which enters human.

Researcher: What are the major threats being faced by the wildlife and control measures taken by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department?

Nazeer: He stated some of the initiatives one taken by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department to control the animals coming out of the forest areas and to avoid man-animal conflict. Due to the scarcity of water, the elephants started entering the village in quest of drinking water which creates anxiety to local people. To avoid this problem, solar pumps have been laid in the forest, which automatically fills the water tanks and few others are filled with the support of tanker lorries it is filled once in three days. A handful of elephant deaths are due to starvation in Coimbatore and the Nilgiris districts. To evade animals hunger, especially during summer, the forest department has implemented a project to planting saplings to enrich greenery in the forest.

The demise of wild animals has increased in number and this has raised concerns among wildlife and environmental activists as there could be more deaths due to accidents on roads which is due to the migratory habits of the elephants. It also not good for humans, because many people on walks in the early morning during which the elephants usually cross the roads, create chaos among the public. Sometimes elephants also meet with accidents with heavy vehicles or trains. Hence the forest department has taken many initiatives to keep the elephants inside the forest. One such initiative is the electric fence. It is a hindrance of electric stun to control animals from intersecting at the boundary. The voltage of the stun may have impacts extending from distress to death. We have introduced hanging fences which the elephants cannot break and when compared to normal electric fencing, hanging fences is more effective and comparatively less expensive. The agricultural and farmland owners have been asked to implement the hanging fences to avoid man-animal conflicts.

Some of the elephants die due to worms in the intestine. The forest department has taken initiatives like implementing deworming drive for wild elephants. We are arranging camps near Mettupalayam and Sirumugai where the necessary medical aids are provided to the elephants and their actions are monitored through cameras.

Researcher: Can you relate an incident involving the cruelty of man towards animals or the man-animal conflict?

Nazeer: On 17 January 2017, Palanisamy, a farmer from Thasampalayam who owns more than five acres near Nellimalai Reserve Forest area where he had grown more than three hundred coconut trees. Elephant crowds recurrently struck his farm for sustenance. To keep them away from his crop, he had illegally connected an electric fence enclosing his farm. Because of the electric shock, a thirty-year-old female elephant and its six-year-old calf were electrocuted. The forest officials have visited the spot and filed a case against Palaniswamy.

Researcher: What about poaching in the forest?

Nazeer: Poaching is under control and the elephants wander happily throughout the forest. Usually, the forest department removes the tusks of the dead elephant and burn it in front of all the officials, to avoid smuggling.

Researcher: Thank you, Sir, for your valuable inputs. I commend you for your efforts to save a life. I also wish you the very best in your future endeavours.

Nazeer: Thank you, it is my pleasure.



Brutus at Uday Hussein's palace. Checkpoint bomb smoke rises in the background



Anthony with Baby Thula outside the room she lived in following her rescue



Nana being overly friendly and nearly pushing Anthony over with her trunk.



Brutally murdered Heidi, she was the most gentle of giants, killed for her horn



The elephants at Thula Thula make their way to say goodbye to Lawrence Anthony, the man they loved. According to his son, the elephant herds arrived en masse and waited around the house for two days this week.