

Balancing Act: The Ethical Dilemma of Capturing Elephants in Human-Elephant Conflict Management



10 mins presentation

15 mins Q&A and discussions
with videos

15 mins dialogues by
stakeholders

15 mins discussion



- We live in an anthropogenic age where humans interact with wildlife including large mammals on day to day basis
- Like leopard in Mumbai city or tigers in Bhopal
- None beats the elephant
- When these interactions turn negative - human elephant conflict
- Positive interactions also occur but are hardly reported









Other mitigation measures

- EPTrenches
- Bee - hive fencing
- Chili bombs
- Chili fence
- Lemon fence
- Compensation

Stakeholders role-play

- Introduce the game
- Identify people who want to participate as decision makers

- NGO – 1. Radio collaring
- NGO – 2. Animal welfare hospital
- NGO – 3. Research
- MLA representing local communities
- MP from national level (animal welfare)
- Local communities
- Local Newspaper
- National Newspaper
- Animal welfare group
- **DFO (Divisional Forest Officer)**
- **Director**
- Supreme court
- **Chief Wildlife Warden**

Situation

An elephant (tusker) named Maharaj born in 1986 has been identified to repeatedly entering ration shops and homes. No damage to life has been reported as of yet. But this has become a problem for local people. The local people want to get rid of this particular elephant.

This village was established in late 1980s, landless people due to some riots were given home in an undesignated elephant corridor.

How will this scenario play out?

Discussion

- How do we handle crisis situations with elephants, when they are significantly endangering human lives?
- Both in the (a) short term and the (b) long term.
- In long term, landscape specific mitigation measures to be tried.
- Make sure not more harm is done by the mitigation measure.

Position o (overarching): Undemocratic decision making process needs to change

Entire debate and final decision is highly dominated by the forest department, influenced by wildlife activists and the media, with no representation of the affected local communities or their elected representatives.

The decision making process has to change, if the problems of local people are unbearable, given our democratic framework, they have to have a much bigger voice in deciding what is done.

Position 1: Largescale, ongoing capture and captivity

Capture and move into captivity immediately, translocation only moves the problem to another place. Elephant numbers are going up - prefer human modified landscapes since more resources.

Position 2: Occasional, ongoing capture and captivity

Same as position 1, but in the long term only allow for the capture of the occasional damage causing male or individual elephant, do not attempt to remove entire herds.

Position 3: Capture and captivity as stop-gap crisis management, unacceptable long term

Capture the elephant and move into captivity immediately only in a crisis situation.

Position 4: Translocate first, captivity next. Other long term solutions

Capture and translocate (with radio collar) the elephant to a suitable region first, if it comes back then move to captivity.

Position 5: Translocate X number of times, then captivity

Capture and translocate the elephant to a suitable region first, if it comes back X number of times, then move to captivity.

Position 6: Continued translocation, captivity never an option

Capture and translocate the elephant any number of times, captivity can never be justified.

Questions?

