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# THE ELEPHANT FOUNDATION

*Junior Newsletter*



## **Co-existence of people and wildlife, a dream and nightmare.**

Welcome to Vol. 13 of our weekly junior newsletter.

In this edition of our junior newsletter, we discuss on the topic of human-wildlife conflict, and how this issue will impact the long-term survival of most of our world's endangered species. Please click ([here](#)) for previous editions.

### **Learning objectives:**

- **What is human-wildlife conflict**
- **Who is impacted by the current conflicts**
- **To preserve or not to preserve?**

# What is human–wildlife conflict (HWC)?

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## Scenario of real events.

In August 2022, a herd of starving elephants in India trampled 3 people to death while searching for food. In the state of Assam, elephants had entered a village near the Lakhipur forest.

It was during midnight at around 3am local time, a hungry herd of elephants (which may spend up to 18 hours a day eating between 200-600 pounds of food a day). Trampled across 3 victims, identified as Sarati Lama, her 4-year old son Sasit, and another villager Rai.



Elephants can pose a danger to humans when they feel threatened or provoked. Human and wildlife conflict has been increasing in rural areas of India due to a lack of resources. Animals will often wander into populated areas in search of food, when it is scarce in their own habitat.

## Human–wildlife conflict

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) arises when animals directly and repeatedly endanger human safety or livelihood, which results in the elimination of that species.

Retaliation (e.g., humans killing elephants or elephant killing humans) against the species blamed often ensues, leading to conflict about what should be done to remedy the situation. Human-wildlife conflict is not a new scenario, people and wildlife have been coexisting for a millennia.

It is with growing and expanding human population, we humans are taking up more of wildlife's land and resource, leading to a global concern for conservation and further developments.

# Who is impacted by the current conflicts?

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The correct answer is that - both humans and wildlife have been severely impacted by rising conflicts.

In the recent quarter from our non-profit partner Big Life Foundation, it is reported that between humans and elephants, there are:



# 65

Crop raids incidents involving elephants.

In the local community in the Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimanjaro ecosystem of East Africa, local communities livelihood -

depends on crops like corn, wheat and rice. As the population in the local ecosystem in Kenya grows, there is more competition and stress on land uses such as farming and cattle grazing.

Humans also compete for limited resources such as water, land and grass for livestock. All of which is shared by both wildlife such as elephants and humans. With crop raids, both humans and wildlife are impacted, this includes:

## Humans

- Allocating more financial resource for security (e.g., fence and maintenance) preventing wildlife from crop raids.
- Increased tension and fear of wildlife.
- Increased risk human-wildlife virus transmission.

## Wildlife

- Vulnerability of extinction from resource deprivation.
- Fewer available resource as as land, water and food.
- Increased risk of retaliatory killing in response to livestock depredation.

# To preserve or not to preserve?

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Efforts to conserve elephants in Africa are the subject of a global debate from two extreme ends of the conservation camps. Several countries in the continent are struggling to safeguard their elephant numbers. Still, many other countries are finding it hard to manage their vast population and reporting a rise in cases of human-wildlife conflict.

The uneven distribution of the jumbos on the continent appears to be the primary source of the disagreement between 19 countries with elephant ranges. While six southern African states have more than 70 percent of the total population, the rest are battling to save theirs from slipping into extinction. There are a total of around 450,000 elephants on the continent. About 130,000 of them are in Botswana and another estimated 100,000 in Zimbabwe. South Africa, Zambia, Namibia and Angola also have a huge number of jumbos. These southern African nations are struggling to manage the elephant population, while countries like Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda are anxiously trying to stabilise and even increase their dwindling elephant populations.

The huge elephant concentrations in the few countries are blamed for the increasing cases of human-wildlife conflict.

It is also important to note, however, that there has been a 50 percent decline in the African elephant population in the last 75 years, according to a 2021 assessment by International Union for Conservation of Nature's African elephant specialist group.

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## CONTACT US

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Please feel free to contact Colin or KC if you have any questions.

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## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE ELEPHANT FOUNDATION

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To help us continue our work TEF has launched 'Friends of The Elephant Foundation' to engage more with wildlife animal lovers in Hong Kong. Through a monthly donation, you will become a Friend of the Foundation and will enjoy benefits such as Ranger Insurance, Elephant Adoption, Weekly and Quarterly newsletter, the ability to work with us in our campaigns to raise awareness, take part in various activities and seminars and at the same time support our partnered charity on the ground in Kenya.

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