

Elephant Reserves

ELEPHANT, BEING A LARGE ANIMAL, moves over long distances from season to season to meet its large biomass requirement. For this reason, Project Elephant, seeking its conservation, is planned at a landscape level rather than aimed at individual protected areas. The habitat of elephants may often span over two or more states, and so to ensure their long term survival, Elephant Reserves have been proposed to cover as much of the important areas in the path and range of the elephants in the regions as possible which hold their major populations.

Elephant Reserves have been conceived to :-

- a) ensure long term survival of identified large populations; the first phase target, to protect habitats and existing ranges;
- b) link up fragmented portions of habitat by establishing corridors or protecting existing corridors under threat;
- c) improve habitat quality through ecosystem restoration and other measures keeping the main objective of range protection in view; and
- d) attend to the socio-economic problems of human populations living on the fringes, including man-elephant conflict.

There are eleven Elephant Reserves designated. These are :-

1

SOUTHWEST BENGAL - NORTH BIHAR - ORISSA

The reserve comprises moist deciduous and semi-evergreen forests. It covers, in southwest Bengal: Mayur Jharna Wildlife Sanctuary; in north Bihar: Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary, Saranda forest division, Kolhan forest division, Porhat forest division and Dhalbhum forest divisions; and in Orissa: Bonai forest division (part), Sambalpur forest division (part), Deogarh forest division, Keonjhar, Karanja, Simlipal, Angul forest division, Ushakoti Wildlife Sanctuary, Khalsuni Wildlife Sanctuary and Badampahar. Estimated elephant population 3000.

Major conservation and management problems are :

1. *Dam construction and large scale mining.*
2. *Natural sal forest replaced with teak.*
3. *Agricultural cultivation.*

(Source:

*Project Elephant; Publication
Min. of Environment & Forest,
Govt of India;
February 1993)*

These have forced elephants to do long distance migration towards Raigarh and Sarguja districts in Madhya Pradesh on the one side, and the Midnapore district in West Bengal on the other which, in turn, has resulted in increasing man-elephant conflicts.

2

KAMENG-SONITPUR

Estimated area 7500 km², extending over a long stretch of semi-evergreen forests in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam covering Kheolong forest division, Bandardeva forest division, Darang East and West forest division and North Kamrup forest division (part).

Major problems include :

1. *Forest denudation.*
2. *Human settlements.*
3. *Insurgency.*

3

DIBRU-DEOMALI

Spread over 5000 km², covering, in Arunachal Pradesh: Kamlong Wildlife Sanctuary, Turung reserve forest, Mamobhum reserve forest, Devmali Kanubari area (Khonsa forest division) and Namsai forest division; and in Assam: Dibru-Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, Digboi forest division, Dumduma forest division and Dibrugarh forest division (part). Estimated elephant population 1800.

Main problems are :

1. *Poaching, including capture of live animals.*
2. *Encroachment and overuse.*

4

KAZIRANGA-KARBELONG-INTANKI

Covers 4500 km², in Assam: Kaziranga National Park, East and West Karbelong division, North Cacharhills division and Golaghat division; and in Nagaland: Intanki Wildlife Sanctuary. Estimated elephant population 1500 - 2000.

Conservation and management problems are :

1. *Insurgency.*
2. *Encroachment and illegal timber extraction.*
3. *Poaching.*

The heavy use of the region by people, particularly encroachment, has resulted in elephants straying into agricultural fields. The migratory corridors between Kaziranga and Karbelong need to be restored, the Kaziranga National Park enlarged and Mikhir Wildlife Sanctuary created.

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BARAIL-SAIFUNG

Covers 1500 km² which includes, in Assam: Cachar and Karimganj (part) forest divisions and North Cachar forest division (part); and in Meghalaya: Saifung reserve forest and Norphu reserve forest including the proposed link between the two. Elephant population under 150.

Major problems are :

1. *Insurgency.*
2. *Shifting cultivation in some areas.*

As the objective of this reserve is to provide protection to the rich diversity in the area, hence the main task is to provide protection to the area.

6

BALPHAKRAM AND ADJOINING AREAS

Estimated area 1800 km² in Meghalaya, covering Balphakram National Park and its proposed extension, Dambu Sangsak-Darugia Rongangiri reserve forests, Bagmara and Cego wildlife sanctuaries and Rewok reserve forest. Elephant population is about 2500.

The problems besetting the area are :

1. *Insurgency.*
2. *Poaching from across the border.*
3. *Shifting cultivation and cultivation of cash crops*
4. *Man-animal conflict.*

7

NILGIRI AND EASTERN GHATS

The largest reserve, spread over 11,000 km² across a range of forest types from moist deciduous through dry deciduous to dry thorn, besides teak and eucalyptus plantations. It covers, in Tamil Nadu: Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Gudalur Nilgiris North (part), Satyamangalam, Erode, Dharmapuri and Hosur; in Kerala: Wynad sanctuary, Alattur reserve forest, Tirunelli, Judrakote, Hilldale, Trisshaleri, Harikara Shola; and in Karnataka: Hunsur, Nagarhole National Park, Mysore, Bandipur Tiger Reserve, Chamarajanagar, Kollegal and Bangalore (part). Estimated elephant population 5000.

Conservation and management problems comprise :

1. *Habitat degradation and fragmentation.*
2. *Man-animal conflict.*
3. *Poaching for ivory.*

Crop depredation and human injury/killing are common, but poaching is not so severe now as it was in the past.

8

NILAMBUR-SILENT VALLEY-COIMBATORE

Lying south of the Nilgiris and spread over 2500 km² across stretches of evergreen forests, montane shola grasslands, deciduous forests and plantation forests. It covers, in Tamil Nadu: Nilgiri South (part, including Mukurthi sanctuary) and Coimbatore; and in Kerala: Nilambur, Palghat and Kozikode including Silent Valley National Park, Attapadi reserve forest, Muthukulam, Kallady upto Walayar, ex-Manjeri Kovilakam and Nedunjechi. Estimated elephant population 500-600.

Conservation problems are :

1. *Human settlements.*
2. *Encroachment of evergreen forests.*
3. *Forest fires.*

Besides according protection to evergreen forests, the monoculture plantations need to be stopped.

9

ANAMALAI-PARAMBIKULAM

Covering about 3000 km² of varied landscape from wet evergreen forests to montane shola grasslands, moist and dry deciduous forests, thorn forests, teak and coffee plantations. It includes, in Tamil Nadu: Anamalai (including Indira Gandhi National Park); and in Kerala: Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary, Chimmony Wildlife Sanctuary, Nenmara, Munnar (part), Malayattoor (part) and Chalkudy (part). Elephant population 1000-1200.

Conservation and management problems are :

1. *Habitat fragmentation by a network of reservoirs and canals.*
2. *Forest fires degrading moist forests.*
3. *Poaching for ivory.*

Elephants have been reported falling into the canals; as such, corridors need to be secured.

10

PERIYAR-MADURAI

About 3000 km² of evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests and dry deciduous forests, besides plantations. It includes, in Tamil Nadu: Madurai South (including Srivilliputhur); and in Kerala: Periyar Tiger Reserve, Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary, Chinnar sanctuary, Ranni (part), Kottayam (part), Konni (part), Achenkoil (part) and adjoining areas. Estimated population 1600-2000 elephants.

Major problems are :

1. *Habitat fragmentation.*
2. *Man-animal conflict.*
3. *Poaching for ivory.*
4. *Illegal cultivations.*

Cultivation is illegal in terms of both the land it is done on - the forest, and also the produce - ganja ! This needs to be put a stop to and the cultivators evicted.

11

RAJAJI-CORBETT

About 8000 km² across the foothills of the Himalaya, through mixed sal forests, rivers and streams, it covers, in Uttar Pradesh: Dehra Dun forest division, Siwalik forest division, Rajaji National Park, Bijnor plantation division, Lansdowne forest division, Kalagarh forest division, Corbett National Park and Haldwani forest division. Elephant population estimated 750-1000.

Main conservation and management problems are :

1. *Diversion of land.*
2. *Overgrazing and tree lopping.*
3. *Monoculture plantations.*
4. *Habitat fragmentation.*
5. *Man-animal and man-protected area conflict.*

Land largely diverted for non-forestry purposes, and the construction of canals and reservoirs have both lead to disruption of migratory corridors and paths, resulting in crop depredation and sometimes injury or death to humans.
