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KWS bid to mitigate man-elephant conflict



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In a bid to minimise the man–elephant conflict in the greater Numaligarh area the Kaziranga (/taxonomy/term/122) Wildlife (/taxonomy/term/123) Society conducted interaction programmes between the villagers of affected villages and wildlife (/taxonomy/term/123) experts at Kacharigaon, Porajungle and No.1 and No. (/taxonomy/term/1690)2 (/taxonomy/term/1690) Napathar.Padum Borthakur, president of Kaziranga (/taxonomy/term/122) Wildlife (/taxonomy/term/123) Society;Kali Prasad Buragohain, Editor, Rhino (/taxonomy/term/258); Rudra Goswami, former CCF, Assam; Mubina Akhtar, secretary, Kaziranga (/taxonomy/term/122) Wildlife (/taxonomy/term/123) Society; Pranab Saikia and Samarjit Sarma, wildlife (/taxonomy/term/123) activist and journalists of Golaghat district; Dr. Satya Dutta Choudhury accompanied the visiting team.Sharing his experience in dealing with wild elephants in Udalguri (/taxonomy/term/113) district, journalist Jayanta Kumar Das (/taxonomy/term/1926) said that Udalguri (/taxonomy/term/113) is the worst affected area due to elephant depredations and about 24 pwersons lost their lives in jumbo attacks in 2014.He said taht at one point of time the situation had gone quite out of control as (/taxonomy/term/2291) forest officials and the district administration could not minimise the man–elephant conflict.Villagers were getting aggressive and personnel from the Dhansiri Forest Division were apprehensive of the public ire. Das (/taxonomy/term/1926) told this correspondent that along with wildlife activist Mubina Akhtar, he formed a coordination committee comprising people from different walks of life,including local villagers,to find out a lasting solution to the issue.

The coordination committee was later contacted by the university of North Carolina which,in turn persuaded the US (/taxonomy/term/1702) Fish and Wildlife (/taxonomy/term/123) Service to initiate measures to provide requisites funds to the areas affected by the wild elephants so that the lives and the properties of the villagers of Udalguri (/taxonomy/term/113) district could be secured from marauding herds of elephants.

Das (/taxonomy/term/1926) said that they also started a programme called Elephants on the Line under which they carried out the other works to minimise the jumboo crisis (/taxonomy/term/2355). In 2014-15 a high level (/taxonomy/term/2232) delegation from Bhutan, Assam and Arunachal (/taxonomy/term/2194) Pradesh participated in the programme where issues relating to elephant migration and depredation and the steps to control crisis (/taxonomy/term/2355) were discussed extensively.

Measures like making a mixture of chilly powder, tobacco and cow dung and tying it to poles along elephants routes were accepted. The smell of the burning mixture repels elephants and the formula has worked in Udalguri (/taxonomy/term/113) as (/taxonomy/term/2291) this year the casualty inflicted by wild elephants came down to six persons, said Das (/taxonomy/term/1926), adding that similar strategies can also be adopted in the greater Numaligarh area near Kaziranga (/taxonomy/term/122).

Mubina Akhtar, secretary of Kazirang Wildlife (/taxonomy/term/123) Society said that villagers in the jumboo affected areas of greater Numaligarh do not know how to approach the appropriate authorities for redress of grievances and grant (/taxonomy/term/2065) of compensation (/taxonomy/term/1699). So the need of the hour is to conduct workshops on capacity building for the affected villagers.

Former Chief Conservator of Forest, Rudra Goswami said public participation is very essential in obtaining results, adding that the stake holders should be given responsibilities so that they take active part in the conservation process and persuade other villagers to avoid conflicts with wild elephants.

During the interaction programme at No.1 Napathar, a local farmer (/taxonomy/term/2478), Diganta Saikia, said that man and elephants must co exist since wild wildlife is crucial to the survival of all creatures. It needs mention that Pranab Saikia, Samarjit Sarma and Dr. Satya Dutta Choudhury have been working for the mitigation of man-elephant conflict in Golaghat district bordering Karbi Anglong district and Nagaland (/taxonomy/term/1597) for last couple of years.



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