

HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT

INTRO

WHAT IS HWC

Human - Wildlife Conflict (HWC) is defined as 'interaction between humans and wildlife where negative consequences, whether perceived or real, exists for one or both the parties when action of one has an adverse effect on the other party' (Conover, 2001; Decker et al., 2002).

It has been in existence for as long as wild animals and humans have co-existed and shared the same resources.

OR ONE CAN SAY

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) refers to struggles that arise when the presence or behaviour of **wildlife poses actual or perceived direct**, recurring **threats to human interests or needs**, often leading to disagreements between groups of people and negative impacts on people and/or wildlife.

Causes of Human-wildlife Conflict

- **Lack of Protected Area:**
- Marine and terrestrial **protected areas** only cover **9.67% globally**. About 40% of the African lion range and 70% of the African and Asian elephant ranges fall outside protected areas.
- In India, 35% **tiger** ranges currently lie outside protected areas.

Causes of Human-wildlife Conflict

- **Wildlife-borne Infections: Covid-19 pandemic –**
- sparked by a zoonotic disease is driven by the close **association of people, their livestock, and wildlife** and by the unregulated consumption of wild animals.
- With closer and more frequent and diverse contact between animals and people, the probability of animal microbes being transferred to people increases.

CAUSES-

HABITAT FRAGMENTATION

ENCROACHMENT OF FOREST LAND

INCREASES DISTURBANCE

INCREASE IN AREA UNDER CULTIVATION AROUND WILDLIFE HABITATS

INFESTATION OF WILDLIFE HABITAT BY THE INVASIVE EXOTIC WEEDS

MONOCULTURE

WATER SCARCITY

DECREASE PREY BASE

IMPACT

- **Impact on Wildlife And Ecosystems:** HWC can have detrimental and permanent impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity. People might kill animals in self-defence, or as pre-emptive or retaliatory killings, which can drive species involved in **conflict to extinction**.
- **Impact on Local Communities:** The most evident and direct negative impacts to people from wildlife are injuries and the loss of lives and of livestock, crops, or other property.
- **Impact on Equity:** The economic and psychological costs of living with wildlife disproportionately **fall to those who live near that wildlife**, while the benefits of a species' survival are distributed to other communities as well.
- **Impact on Social Dynamics:** When a HWC event affects a farmer, that farmer may blame the government for protecting the perpetrator that damages crops, while a conservation practitioner may blame industry and farmers for clearing wild habitats and creating the HWC in the first place.
- **Impact on Sustainable Development:** HWC is the theme in conservation that is strongly linked to the **SDGs** as biodiversity is primary to sustain the developments, even though it is not explicitly mentioned as one.

INDIAN SCENARIO

India is a mega-diverse country owing to its large climatic and topographic gradient. With only 2.4% of the world's land area, it harbors around 8% of all recorded species including 91,000 species of animals and 45,000 of plants (MoEFCC, 2014). Out of 34 global 'Biodiversity Hotspots', four fall fully or partly within Indian political boundaries.

With more than 100 National Parks and more than 500 Wildlife Sanctuaries, the country has an extensive network of protected areas and wildlife reserves.

INDIAN SCENARIO

- India faces an increasing challenge of human wildlife conflict, which is driven by **development pressures** and an **increasing population, high demand for land and natural resources**, resulting in loss, fragmentation, and **degradation of wildlife habitats**.
 - These pressures intensify the interactions between people and wildlife because they often share living space without a clear demarcation of boundaries.
- In India, data from the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change shows that **over 500 elephants were killed between 2014-15 and 2018-19**, most related to human-elephant conflict.
- During the same period, **2,361 people were killed as a result of conflict** with elephants.

SOLUTIONS

- **Advisory for Management of HWC:** This has been issued by the Standing Committee of **National Board of Wildlife** (SC-NBWL).
 - **Empower Gram Panchayats:** The advisory envisages empowering gram panchayats in dealing with the problematic wild animals as per the **WildLife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
 - **Provide Insurance:** Utilising add-on coverage under the **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna** for crop compensation against crop damage due to HWC.
 - **Augmenting Fodder:** Envisages augmenting fodder and water sources within the forest areas.
 - **Take Proactive Measures:** Prescribes **inter-departmental committees** at local/state level, adoption of **early warning systems, creation of barriers, dedicated circle wise Control Rooms** with toll free hotline numbers, Identification of hotspots etc.
 - **Provide Instant Relief:** Payment of a portion of ex-gratia as interim relief within 24 hours of the incident to the victim/family.

SOLUTIONS

Poaching

Soil and moisture

To stop monoculture

Controlled fragmentation

Awareness

Eco/animal-friendly fencing measures

Controlled crop pattern

Paying ex gratia

Relocation

INDIAN SCENARIO

- In 2018, the Uttar Pradesh government had given its in-principle approval to bring **man-animal conflict under listed disasters** in the State Disaster Response Fund
- The Uttarakhand government (2019) carried out **bio-fencing** by growing various species of plants in the areas.
- The Supreme Court (2020) affirmed the **right of passage of the Elephants** and the closure of resorts in the Nilgiris elephant corridor.
- Odisha's Athagarh Forest Division has started casting **seed balls** inside different reserve forest areas to enrich food stock for wild elephants to prevent man-elephant conflict.