Project Update: October 2012

- Traditional methods of mitigating human wildlife conflicts were recorded. Since most of the implementation process needed actual field trials and little modifications based on each trial conditions, it is taking longer than expected.

  We are continuing the work with local communities, with modifications of the traditional methods for reducing crop damage by wildlife and hence reducing human wildlife conflict.

- Often, human wildlife conflicts is seen by outside researchers as restricted to charismatic species like elephants, leopards and tigers only. However, the real problem faced by local people is more from species like wild pig, macaque, langur, porcupine etc. Strategies need to be focused on mitigating conflicts from these species. The number of cases of crop damage done by these wild animals is more compared to human casualties. In human dominated landscapes like India, mitigating these problems is more important for conservation of wildlife. Our research highlighted the scale of this problem in comparison to conflicts by charismatic species.

- There are traditionally available strategies for mitigating these conflicts. However, these have problems in implementation. Support should be given to support such initiatives.

- A 'Live Fence' with locally available plant species is most useful in reducing crop damage by wildlife and human wildlife conflict by smaller species. Our project focused more on smaller species than charismatic species because the real problem to local communities living in and around protected areas are from such species.

- Local people were involved in every process of the research and implementation. The project leader was also born, brought up, and lived in the same landscape. The project extended even beyond the time frame set earlier and is still continuing.

- We are planning for more implementable locally available solutions. We have field trials of most models for reducing human wildlife conflicts. Among the models we have documented, most effective methods will be highlighted for use by local people.

- Project took longer period than expected. We found seasonal variations in human wildlife conflicts. Since June to September is the rainy season in the region, October is the blooming period for crops in the field. Crop damage by wildlife is higher during October to December. After harvesting the crop, farmers migrate to other neighbouring region in search of employment. So virtually we are constrained by the time to collect, implement the mitigation strategies. So, even though the research

was completed in the first year, we could not able to implement the mitigation strategies. This season we have implemented the strategies. So the project took longer than it was planned. More than that we wanted to put forward easily implementable, locally possible solutions for the problems. Our intention was not to do research for the sake of research or money. We have longer commitment for the landscape as we are from this region.

- We need to develop locally implementable solutions for reducing crop damage by wildlife. Focus of human-wildlife conflict research, particularly in human dominated landscapes, should be more on smaller species of wildlife than charismatic bigger species because, cases of crop damage will result in more detrimental effects than direct human wildlife conflicts.

- We have used RSGF in all our publicity materials and also in banners for public functions.

- The project took longer time than earlier proposed due to two major reasons:

    1. I was away from the home region to do my Masters in Landscape ecology and Nature Conservation. Even though I am from the same region, and have been involved in conservation for 15 years, I thought a proper scientific background is needed in increase the effectiveness of my conservation. I completed this masters' at the age of 40 and came back here again to continue conservation work.

    2. Number of cases of conflicts especially crop damage is higher after the monsoon, when the crops in the field are in bloom. We will have to wait for such seasons. We needed at least three seasons for actual implementation of mitigation strategies.