

Project Updates: April 2014

By April 2014, all the paddy fields had been harvested and none of the farmers stayed at the paddy lands to protect them from the crop raiders. However, elephants come along the paddy lands in search of crops and continued to home gardens and houses as no crops were left at the paddy lands. Usually, farmers store the harvest (rice) in their houses. Villagers have to struggle to protect their home gardens and harvested crops from the elephants each night during the post harvesting period. Elephants not only raid home gardens but also smash houses of poor villagers in search of stored rice (plate 1).



Plate 1: A house completely destroyed by some raiding elephants

Villagers said that the residents of the house had not slept in the house at the time of raiding as they were in the village hospital getting treatment for their only child. The elephants (three or four) had been raiding the home garden destroying more than 150 matured banana plants, eight coconut trees and some other vegetable and fruit plants for consecutive three or four nights. It is said that, the number of raiders had increased every night starting with two elephants at the first night and four elephants by the third day.

Some people at the study area were very rude to us and ignored us not providing the information about crop damage. Some of the householders did not even give us the permission to enter to their lands as they were agitated with the damage that happened to their crops. Banana, maniok (cassava) and vegetables were the major crops raided by elephants in the post harvesting period (plate 2).



Plate 2: Raided Banana and Maniok cultivation

The incidences of breaking the electric fence of the park also had escalated during the post harvesting period (plate 3).



Plate 3: Fallen posts of the park electric fence.

We continued collecting data on crop raiding elephants and raided lands and set night vision camera traps to capture crop raiding elephants. We captured another three new crop raiding elephants and some of previously identified crop raiders including [m155].