

Project Update: March 2017

Activities done:

A series of community awareness programmes were conducted with the local communities. Special focus was on the women's groups as they are directly connected with the use and management of forest resources and more concerned with the security of the household. During the discussion session, women raised many questions about the habitat preferences and ways to cope with the human-elephant conflict in Khudunabari village Development Committee (VDC) in Jhapa district of Nepal. Women were made aware about the species preferences to reduce the conflict and agroforestry systems so that they do not have to go to nearby forest for the collection of firewood. This helps to reduce the risk of accidents while encountering with the elephant on the forest in one hand and helps reduce the pressure on the forest and contributes the habitat conservation of the elephant in the other.

Also, the previously used practices to cope with the conflict were also discussed. People said the electric fencing around the field and houses is effective to reduce the damage. But sometimes that was harmful for the elephant while crossing the path. They agreed on leaving some electric fencing free paths for the movement of wild elephant.

Some pictures during the awareness sessions:



Outcomes:

1. Active participation of rural women which itself is an achievement in rural Nepal.
2. Aware about the importance of biodiversity conservation.
3. Aware about some co-existence strategies such as agroforestry systems and plantation of species less preferred by the elephant such as chili cultivation.
4. Aware about the activities which could destroy the natural habitat of wild elephants.

During the field survey, some of the signs of wild elephants were also seen in the paddy field of adjoining community.



Left: Human-elephant conflict sign in project area. Right: Elephant foot print in paddy field

Activities in Progress:

1. School teaching and outreach materials publication (poster and calendar).
2. Questionnaire preparation for the household survey.
3. GPS points collection of the conflict areas.
4. Discussions with the adjoining community forest user groups.

