

## Project Update: July 2021

The key objectives during the first phase of our project were to identify potential corridors, work on a system of daily elephant monitoring protocol and identify resource availability. We started off with our field work in the first week of January 2021. Our work during January and February 2021 was towards monitoring a few of the moving elephants. Apart from this, we had couple of discussions and meeting with the forest department about ways we can better monitor elephants and manage human-elephant conflict. Details of this work are mentioned further in this report. A serious setback was faced for the project during the month of March. I Rakesh Kalva, met with a vehicle accident while on field. This unfortunate event set us back from our scheduled work in the month of March/April 2021.



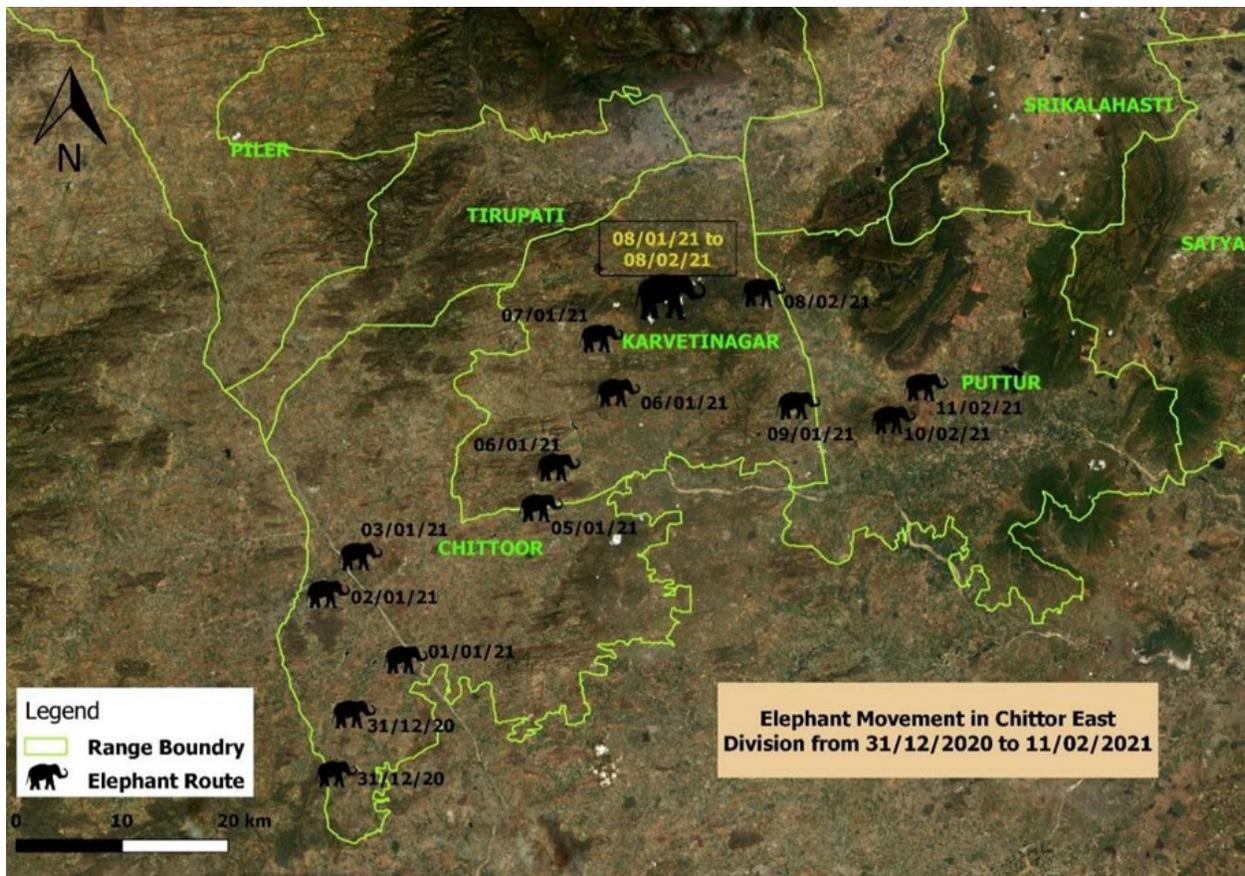
In later half of April 2021, the second wave of COVID 19 also started in India. Lot of states including the state of Andhra Pradesh started imposing statewide lockdown. This had put a halt to our field work in April-May 2021. India has come out of the second wave, and we resumed our field work in June 2021. Though our field work from March-May 2021 was affected, we tried to best use this time to work on some GIS aspects of the project and started using satellite imageries and data we had collected from January to map out the elephant movements and identify potential corridors. Although this does not show the complete picture at present it will help us save a lot of time in later parts of the project.

Some of the key work undertaken thus far are as below:

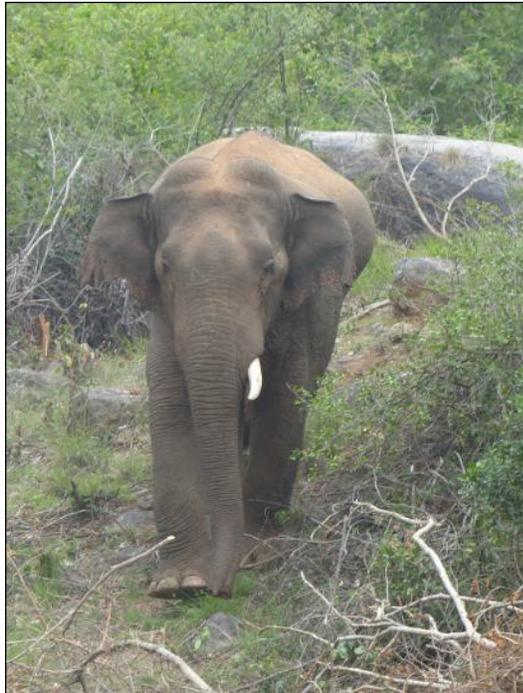
### **Monitoring of the three elephants**

Tracking elephant movement with an objective of identifying functional corridors was a key aspect of the project. In the first week of January 2021, we had the opportunity to track three male elephants who were moving from the protected area of Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary eastwards. This we felt would provide an opportunity to see the path these elephants take outside the sanctuary area. We tracked these elephants during the January and February 2021 to understand their movement better. Here we worked in collaboration with the forest department of Andhra Pradesh. This herd had moved over a distance of more than 100 km from Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary and moved very close to Sri Venkateswara National Park.

### **Meeting with the high officials at Tirupati**



An inter-department meeting was held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to discuss the way forward with these migratory elephants. In this meeting the forest department had invited our team to give a presentation of our understanding and suggest suitable measures that can be taken. Our team leader Rakesh Kalva had attended the meeting and shares his inputs through a presentation.



### Project Partners



### Supporting Organisations



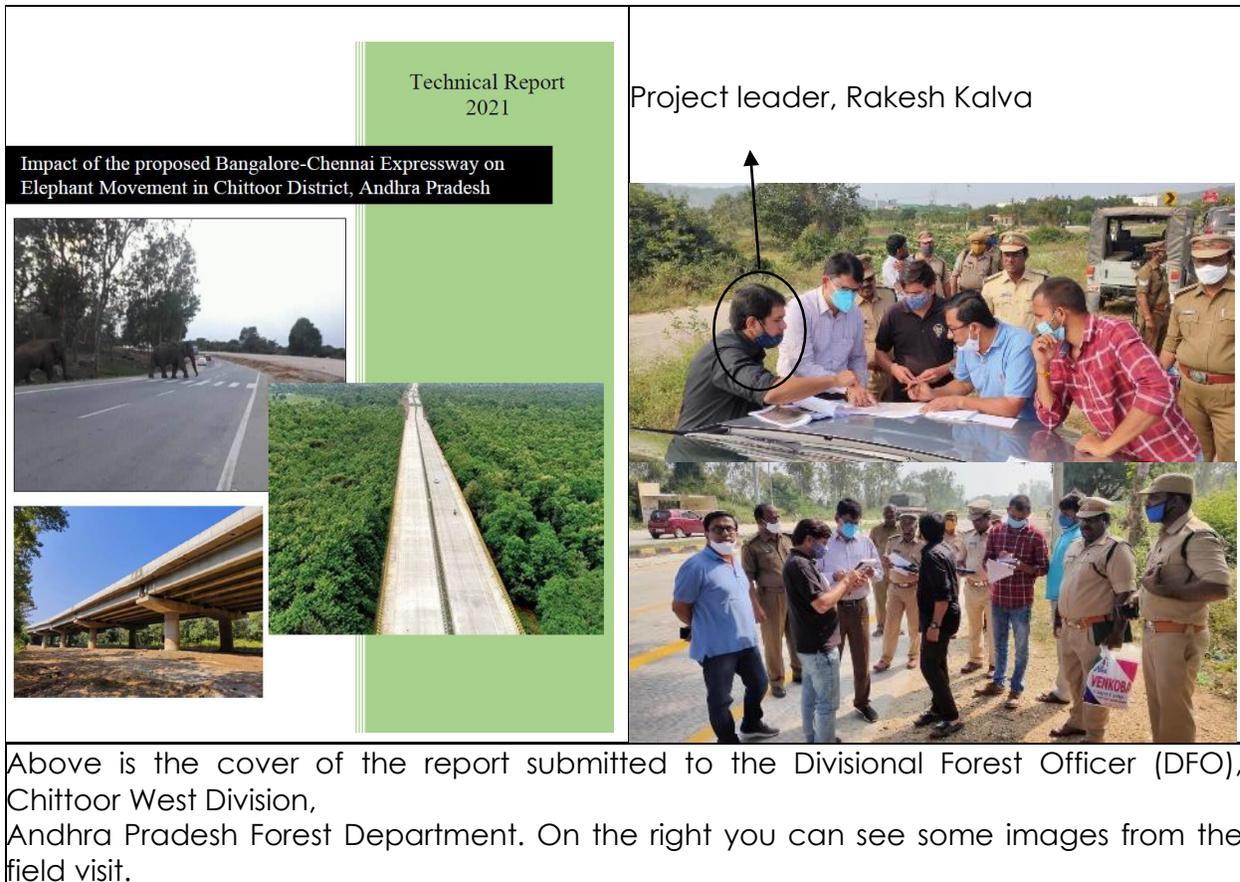
### Presentation on wildlife day

On the occasion of World Wildlife Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department invited us to give a presentation of our work and the way ahead with elephant conservation in the state. The presentation was delivered by project leader, Rakesh Kalva. Find below some of the key slides from the presentation.

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## Meeting with National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) for building underpass and report submitted

As we have been working in this landscape for a significant time the forest department had asked us to be part of the field visit to give our inputs. We had provided our inputs to the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) and also submitted a report to the Division Forest Officer about the impact of the proposed expressway on elephant movement and corridor. The field visit was done during January 2021 and the report was submitted to the forest department in March 2021.



Above is the cover of the report submitted to the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Chittoor West Division, Andhra Pradesh Forest Department. On the right you can see some images from the field visit.

### **Work in the coming months:**

#### 1. Priority areas and functional corridor:

This will take a significant part of our time in the coming months. We will be surveying the areas between Koundinya and Sri Venkateswara National Park to map out the corridor.

#### 2. Fine scale detailed resource mapping:

For the corridor part data will be collected along with the above activity. For the rest of the landscape, we will do an independent assessment.

### 3. Low-cost conflict mitigation workshops:

As the second wave of Covid 19 has ended we can now go ahead and organise workshops in villages. But even though the second wave has ended we will ensure all precautions are taken to safely conduct these workshops.

#### **Conclusion:**

Our work in the first part of the project has been affected because of multiple reasons, but we tried to get as much of it done as was feasible. We also made use of the non-field time to get other desk work done. We have started off our field work now and will try to cover as much time as possible. We will try our best to get all the activities fulfilled within the mentioned time. But, if possible, we request Rufford for an extension of 2 months to this project without any additional requirement of funds.