

## Project Updates – August 2014

Almost all the paddy fields have been harvested by the end of August and the crops are stored in farmers' houses. Consequently, more elephants are attracted to the houses which are being damaged to raid stored paddy (Plate 1).



Plate 1: Destroyed houses to access paddy by crop raiding elephants.

Villagers were complaining that they not only have to guard their crops at the fields but also at the houses as well. They are fed up of the tiresome lifestyle and uncertainty of their lives. Building of “a common brown rice store house” guarded by the community will allows villagers to store their harvested paddy and would be helpful to reduce the threat to the harvested crops and the lives of the people in the future.

The electric fence of the Udawalawe National Park and the Dahaiyagala corridor is not working properly and elephants break the fence almost every day. We observed a male group comprising of ten elephants breaking the electric fence of the Dahaiyagala corridor and entering to Pokunuthanna village on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 2014 (plate 2).





Plate 2: Elephants were gathered at the Dahaiyagala electric fence to enter Pokunuthanna village in the evening.

Our night vision cameras had also captured three young males that were re-entering the corridor in the early morning after raiding crops (plate 3).



Plate 3: A young male was breaking the fence to reenter the corridor and another two males were following him.

We identified [m286] that have been seeing inside the park seasonally as another crop raider while he was crossing over the electric fence of the corridor (plate 4). [m286] is an adult male that have been identiifed inside the Udawalawe national park as a seasonlly visiting elephnat of the park.



Plate 4: [m286] was crossing the electric fence of the corridor at the Pokunuthanna area.

The conductivity of the fence should be measured to understand the effectiveness of the fence as a barrier for crop raiding elephants in the future.

One of these elephants had destroyed one of our night vision cameras and had taken it away (plate 5). Though we searched for it all morning with some villagers, we could not find the camera unfortunately.



Plate 5: The strap and some broken plastic pieces of the night vision camera left by elephants.