

Project Update: June 2015

Field work for the project was started in April 2015 and we first decided to look at people's attitudes towards wildlife and understand stakeholders' perceptions. This was a principal component of the proposed study and was conducted with the help of a trained social science student. We interviewed various stakeholder groups and found out about their attitudes and daily interactions with wildlife along with other pertinent socio-economic and socio-political issues that people face. For some stakeholders, social and economic issues were more alarming than wildlife issues as people seemed to have found coping mechanisms with wildlife related damage due to high acceptance. Secondary data on human attacks by elephants and leopards was collated adding up to more than 80 fatality cases and ~500 injuries between 2009 and present. The interviews of victims will start shortly. Monitoring of elephant depredation areas to identify critical areas for conservation is ongoing."

Photos:



Image1. Stakeholder interview respondents: A group of women from nearby tea estate extracting driftwood from forests

Image2: Identifying elephants and monitoring their movement: An adult male crossing a busy National Highway



Image3: Stakeholder interviews: In conversation with Ranger Officer, Wildlife Squad West Bengal Forest department