

Project Update: July 2010

2010 has been a remarkable year in history of elephant migration in south-west part of West Bengal, India. The migratory elephants usually stay here for approximately 8 months, but this year they did not return to Jharkhand. We are confident that habitat improvement programmes, availability of fodder and fewer disturbances are major reasons behind this long stay. However, we are afraid of more conflict in the zone due to long stay but surprisingly the conflict rate (both casualties and crop damage) has increased nominally. The elephants are expanding their range (territories) very efficiently in the adjacent areas of their earlier range. For example a herd of 40-45 elephants entered the Aushgram, Burdwan District of West Bengal after 10 years in May 2010. At present we are preparing a new range map of elephant distribution using GPS. On the other hand the numbers of residential elephants are increasing and cause more threats to humans. During July 2010 one single residential elephant killed four people in Burdwan district. The project personnel visited these places to interact with the villagers. This interaction helped us to know the nature of conflict, incident reason etc. During last week some forest officials announced the elephant as 'problem elephant' and ordered to kill the elephant. The RSG project team requested to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of West Bengal to save the elephant and we are grateful to PCCF who ordered to tranquilize the elephant for proper investigation and treatment.

Apart from the above said activities we have prepared the awareness materials for community awareness which will be initiated in 3rd week of August 2010.



