

Elephant Killings Report

In the Karbi Hills and Along Nagaon- Karbi Anglong Border

Report prepared by
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The Green Guard Nature Organization, has been engaged in a project for mitigation of Human Elephant Conflict (HEC), at Chapanala, Nagaon, along the bordering areas of the Karbi hills, since 2005. We also have two other projects, namely Support Programme for the Forest Dwellers of Karbi Anglong and the Educational Support Programme, for school children of selected villages of the hill district.

During the course of these projects, team members often interact with a cross section of people living in the forest villages of the Karbi hills and those in the fringe forest areas along the border.

Since November 2009, we came across disturbing reports of elephants being regularly killed in the hills, resulting elephants being shifted to lower reaches. The elephant's herds size was as high up to 86 elephants (on the 15th of December). This large sized herd, unlike in other years, when herds size was of only 10 to 30.

Further investigations revealed that poachers had killed several tuskers and taken away the tusks, the meat was also consumed. The members of Green Guard could document five separate incidents where elephants have been killed since November 2009 and photograph four of the carcasses. The spots of occurrence are remote and only accessible by foot and often the news of a killing are reported after several weeks. The carcass are therefore, inevitably found in various stages of decomposition, as is evident from the photographs.

In these stark pictures, it can be established that the trunk of the elephant has been hacked off and taken away, probably for consumption as meat, and no residual matter of the trunks was found in any of the four cases. The ends of the tusks, where they were hacked are also visible. In at least one of the cases, it can be confirmed from the photographs that the meat had been sliced off from the dead animal.

Case – 1: The first incident photographed was at Hatimaragarha during December 2009, the carcass being in a stage of advanced decomposition. The spot is on the Karbi hills at a distance of about 6 to 7 kms from the Chapanala market area.

Case – 2: In the second incident, the team could reach the spot within a week of the killing and therefore found the carcass in a fairly intact state. The bullet hole can be seen clearly on the forehead of the pachyderm. The area Risu Anglong is located at a distance of about 5 kms from Parkup in Karbi Anglong district.

Case – 3: The third photograph was of a totally decomposed elephant and only some bones were recovered, during the month of January 2010. During investigations it was learnt that the killing occurred sometime during October 2009. The spot is at a distance of about 8 to 9 kms from the Chapanala market, on the Karbi foothills.

Case – 4: The fourth incident occurred at Bodibari, on the Karbi hills, at a distance of about 8 to 9 kms from the Chapanala market. The carcass was totally stripped of flesh and only the skin and bones remained. The tusks, as in all the cases, had been hacked off and removed.

Case – 5: Most recent incident took place at Horshim, a remote area of Karbi Anglong, on the 7th of March 2010, where a group of three poachers were involved. The area being at a walking distance of 8 hours from Parkup, the corpse could not be photographed till the compilation of this report.

[Our sources further revealed that tusks weighing about 40 kgs were removed from the elephant and a deal was made over cell phone to sell the same for Rs. 3.2 lakhs. The poachers also apparently inform villages where the populace consume elephant meat, about a killing immediately or prior to the act, so as to ensure that the carcass is quickly stripped of fats and meat and it starts to rot faster].

Serious concern:

It was also learnt that a group of poachers, including a few women, from Nagaland arrive in these areas during the month of October. They are armed with rifles and used to engage in rampant poaching of birds and animals in the hill ranges of the region. The well-organized killings pose a threat to the survival of elephants, particularly tuskers in the Karbi hills and its neighboring areas. Further, reports have confirmed the rampant killing of deer and other animals in the Karbi hills in recent times. Sources have revealed that poachers also collect the skin and bones of the big cats from these jungles. Green Guard has also documented several killings of other animals in the Karbi hills during the last six years.

Photograph of Elephant Killings



Case 1(A) The decomposed Carcass of Elephant.



Case 1(B) The carcass is infested by maggots.



Case 2(A) Fungus growth on decomposing body.



Case 2 (B) Note the bullet hole on forehead.



Case 2 (C) Trunk and Tusks hacked off by poachers.



Case 3 (A) The decapitated skull of a tusker.



Case 3(B) Only bones remain of a mighty elephant.



Case 4 (A) The flesh less remains of a elephant.



Case 4(B) Green Guard members document a killing.



Case 4 (C) Stripped to the bone for meat !



Case 4(D) The stump of a tusk where it was hacked.



Case 4(E) Discarded skin stripped of flesh.