

Man-elephant conflict victims of Udalguri deprived of ex-gratia for three years



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Jayanta Kumar Das 4 March 2016 11299 views

Non payment of ex-gratia to 42 families whose relatives had been killed by wild elephants during last three years ie 2013,2014 and 2015 has posed serious setback to conservation activities of forest department in [Udalguri](#) district.It needs mention that man-elephant conflict in remote villages of [Udalguri](#) district bordering Bhutan-[Arunachal](#) has already been recognized [as](#) the highest man-[elephant](#) conflict zone in [India](#) by international conservation organizations like USFWS,Asian [Elephant](#) Support etc.Man-[elephant](#) conflict casualties in [Udalguri](#) district have been 13 man and [8](#) wild elephants in 2012,19 man and [10](#) wild elephants in 2013,24 man and [7](#) wild elephants in 2014,21 man and [6](#) wild elephants in 2015 and 1 man and 1elephant in [2016](#).Thus its very serious to note the casualties of 77 man and 32 wild elephants in just a district alone during last four years.The man-[elephant](#) conflict scenario has been improved last year in 2015 with members of 'Elephants on the Line' (a local village based programme for the mitigation of man-[elephant](#) conflict in indo-Bhutan villages of [Udalguri](#) district) with support from USFWS,NCSU,Riddle's [Elephant](#) and [Wildlife](#) Sanctuary (all USA based);Dhansiri Forest Division,[Udalguri](#), Tea garden managements and [Udalguri](#) civil administration worked hard visiting conflict zone villages in the district to create awareness among people so [as](#) to protect lives and property of people.

The number of casualties started coming down during 2015.But non payment of [compensation](#) and ex-gratia to [victims](#) families for last three years has made situation [worse](#) with effected people refuging to cooperate with forest department of [Udalguri](#) district.It is known that Assam government and BTC authority have stopped releasing ex-gratia or damage [compensation](#) to the [victims](#)' families for last three years.[As](#) a result the role of forest department in mitigating man-elephant conflict in [Udalguri](#) district has now been badly effected. Already forest department of [Udalguri](#) district has been suffering due to lack of man power,vehicles,weapons etc.Forest personnel working in [Bornadi Wildlife](#) Sanctuary do not have modern necessary gadgets like binoculars,DSLR camers,night vision devices, to monitor or track wild elephants or other animals.No fund ever had been release to [Bornadi](#) WLS falling under Manas Tiger Reserve during last year. The situation is [worse](#) in [Bornadi](#) WLS due to non availability of vehicles,where [as](#) at least 20 wild elephants are still taking shelter in the WLS.

The [compensation](#) for house and [crop](#) damages too have yet to be paid to [victims](#) (for last three years)in the district.The situation has compelled forest personnel to restrict or avoid their movements in the [HEC](#) villages fearing public anger, paving way for poachers or illegal tree loggers roam free inside reserve forests in the district.

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BY JAYANTA KUMAR DAS

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