

Steps to end man-elephant conflict



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Jayanta Kumar Das 24 March 2015 Updated 25 Mar 13299 views

Elephants on the Line, a programme organized last year to mitigate man-[elephant](#) conflict in the villages bordering India-Bhutan [launched](#) in association with [Udalguri](#) administration and Dhansiri Forest Division, [Udalguri](#) since last six months. The programme was sponsored by North Carolina State University, USA and USFWS. [EOL](#) recently organized three village level awareness and demonstration workshops in three remote villages namely- Gitibari, Ganeshghat and Santipur in [Udalguri](#) district bordering Bhutan on March 21. “Elephants on the Line” team comprising Dr.KK Sarma,HOD,College of Vety Science, [Khanapara](#), Guwahati; Environmental journalist Mubina Akhtar (who is also the Hony. Advisor of Assam [Wildlife](#) Board) ; Jayanta K [Das](#),[EOL](#) Coordinator,Assam part; Dr.Pranjal Bezbarua ,GU along with Raju Brahma,ACF,[Udalguri](#) and local [EOL](#) members visited three human elephant conflict hit villages in [Udalguri](#) district. The team organized live demonstration on the dos and don'ts for villagers residing in [HEC](#) villages. All the three villages mostly inhabited by [Adivasi](#),Bodo and Nepali people had been [victims](#) of human elephant conflict sine decades due to ignorance and illiteracy. [EOL](#) members used to teach them to prepare chilly sticks/candles to drive away wild elephants. They were also encouraged to take up plantation of lemon citrus as an alternative cropping and to prevent entry of wild elephants into villages. The [EOL](#) team had a meeting with Girindra Adhikari,DFO,Dhansiri Forest Division [Udalguri](#) at [Paneri](#) Forest [IB](#) at [10](#) am. The DFO formally [launched](#) the chilly sticks prepared by [EOL](#) to prevent entry of wild elephants in the villages during night time. A colourful poster on the need for creating habitat for wild elephants and tips to avoid confrontation with wild elephants was also released on the occasion.

It needs mention that 22 people and 8 wild elephants had been killed during 2014 in [Udalguri](#) district which was considered as the highest [HEC](#) casualty in anywhere in Asia. A few nature loving people of India,USA and Bhutan had formed “Elephants on the Line” in July in 2014. The first meeting was held at [Udalguri](#) on July 24 which was sponsored by two consecutive DC s of the district namely-Thaneswar Malakar (now DC,Kokrajhar) and Sadhana Hojai. ABSU and AASAA of [Udalguri](#) district offered full cooperation and support for launching the program. [Wildlife](#) Educator Lisa Mills of North Carolina State University and [wildlife](#) biologist Dr.Ellen Cheng of USA;Mamatha Satyanarayana of Mysore; Sonam Wangdi, Jigme Dorji, Sangay Dorji,Tenjin Wanchuk all Chief Forest Officers of five Bhutan district attended the meeting where [EOL](#) was formally [launched](#). Activities were arranged with a very small financial support from USFWS and NCSU,USA. In October in 2014, Heidi Riddle of Asian Elephants Foundation, lady working worldwide for the mitigation of human [elephant](#) conflict joined [EOL](#) at a meeting held at Royal Manas [National](#) Park in Bhutan.She along with Lisa Mills,Dr.Ellen Cheng,Mamatha Satyanaraya also visited [Udalguri](#) doing practical [training](#) to members of [HEC](#) villages.

Subsequently six sectors had been identified for formation of sector committees. Various sophisticated electronic gadgets like GPS,digital camera,binocular,high power solar torch lights, laptops etc were given to sector members after giving proper [training](#). People have expressed their trust in [EOL](#) members for which forest department has been taking [EOL](#) support at any time in need.

Jayanta Kumar Das

Environmental journalist.

BY JAYANTA KUMAR DAS

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