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Man Wild-Life Conflict in Katra (Jammu and Kashmir)

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ABSTRACT: The study was carried out in two main blocks of Reasi district that is Panthal and katra and few villages prone to man-wildlife conflicts, namely: Manion, Kunya, Manoon, baniya, sool, kakryal, dadoora, Chak Bhagtha. As human population extends to wild animal habitats, Natural life territory is displaced. The population density of wildlife and human overlaps increasing their interaction thus resulting in increase physical conflict. Increase in the population results in decrease of the forest area. Majority of the people are living near the forest area and they are encroaching the area, they directly or indirectly interfering in the habitat of wild animals. Mostly the people of these villages are dependent on the agriculture; few have their owned business like shops. In the study area, the causative factors regarding these conflicts have been identified as natural attraction towards crop and scarcity of food. Monkeys have been found to be the most problematic animals, followed by leopard and bear.

KEY WORDS: Animal Attack, Crop Damage, Habitat Loss, Human-Wildlife Conflict, Wildlife.

INTRODUCTION

The long-term survival of some of the world's most iconic species, including elephants and tigers, is at risk from a significant and escalating threat: human-wildlife conflict**.** Human-wildlife conflict is when encounters between humans and wildlife lead to negative results, such as loss of property, livelihoods, and even life. Defensive and retaliatory killing may eventually drive these species to extinction. These encounters not only result in suffering for both people and wildlife immediately impacted by the conflict; they can also have a global reach, with groups such as sustainable development agencies and businesses feeling its residual effects. The scope of the issue is significant and truly global, but we are nowhere near being able to address it at the scale needed.

The need for elevating this issue globally and unlocking partnerships and resources to reduce human-wildlife conflict spurred the creation of a new WWF-led report: *A Future for All: The need for human-wildlife coexistence*. The outcome of an international and multi-organizational collaboration, this report delves into the complexities of human-wildlife conflict, ways to sustainably manage and reduce it, and move towards coexistence with wildlife—all while engaging diverse partners through a call to action.

Human-wildlife conflict on the rise

As human populations and demand for space continue to grow, people and wildlife are increasingly interacting and competing for resources, which can lead to increased human-wildlife conflict. Along with other threats, human-wildlife conflict has driven the decline of once-abundant species and is pushing others to the brink of extinction. But the human-wildlife conflict issue has far-reaching impacts beyond the wildlife and communities immediately affected by it. With human-wildlife conflict centered around the interaction between wildlife and humans, human-wildlife coexistence is strongly linked and important to sustainable development activities. If not effectively managed, human-wildlife conflict has the potential to negatively affect these activities and conservation much more broadly.

STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

STUDY AREA: Jammu and Kashmir the north western UT is located in between 32^0 17′ and 37^0 58′ N latitude and 73^0 26′ and 80^0 30′ E longitudes (plate 3.1). It is located mostly in the Himalayan Mountains and share borders with the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab to the South. The study is carried out in one of the district of Jammu i.e: REASI district. The study was carried out in two main blocks of Reasi district that is Panthal and katra and few villages prone to man-wildlife conflicts, namely: Manion, Kunya, Manoon, baniya, sool, kakryal, dadoora, chak Bhagtha. The district has mountains and valleys surrounded by mighty Himalayas. Geographically, it is located at Latitude: 33.0820 Longitude: 74.8265.

Climate of the district is generally dry and cold. Winter start from the middle of November when both the day and night temperature fall rapidly and lasts till ending March to last week of June is the summer season followed by south west monsoon season till

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September. Summer months are generally pleasant. Increase in the population results in decrease of the forest area. Majority of the people are living near the forest area and they are encroaching the area, they directly or indirectly interfering in the habitat of wild animals. Mostly the people of these villages are dependent on the agriculture; few have their owned business like shops. Prior to this work, no surveys had been conducted to evaluate the socio economic condition of the rural communities of the present study area.

METHODOLGY: The questionnaire included socio demographic variables and a set of closed (no/yes/don't know) and open ended question related to perceptions of conflicts between human and wild animals. Open ended questions were asked to collect as much information as possible within the limited time. The respondents were selected randomly and completion of questionnaire was facilitated through face- to- face communication tools. A family was treated as the basic unit for the purpose of this study, with only one respondent from a family being interviewed.

INTERVIEWS: Field work spanned over the period of the three months from September- October 2021 and March 2022. We interviewed 230 respondents. Respondents who were unwilling to participate in the questionnaire survey were not included in the survey. The initial questions were related to the simple demographic information. This helped to ease the respondents into the interview session. If the respondent did not understand any given question, it was repeated and elaborated till became clear that the respondent had understood it, and only then the response was noted down.

OBSERVATIONS

Table 1.1. Animals involved in the conflict

Animal involved in conflict	Manion	Kunya	baniya	Sool	kakryal	dadoora	chak Bhagtha	**Total**	**%age**
Number of respondent	30	45	34	25	46	23	27	230	
Monkeys	20	40	34	23	46	23	27	213	92.60
Bear	1	2	4	6	1	6	7	27	11.73
Leopards	7	8	6	8	2	5	8	44	19.13
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

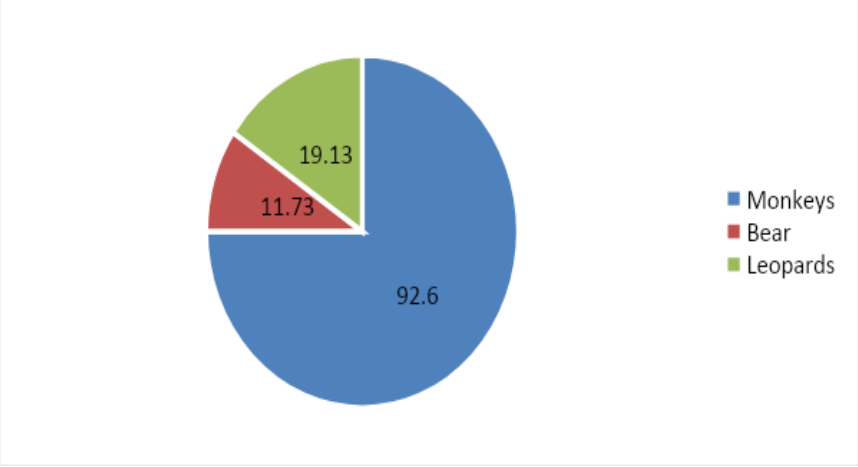

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Table 1.2. Nature of destruction caused by wild animal

Damage	Manion	Kunya	baniya	sool	kakryal	dadoora	chak Bhagtha	**Total**	**%age**
Number of respondent	45	30	34	25	46	23	27	230	
Livestock	18	10	15	8	20	20	22	113	49.13
Crop	40	30	32	25	46	23	27	223	96.95
Human injury	2	1	3	6	8	5	7	32	13.91
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The present survey reveals that nature of damage in various villages varied from livestock attack to damage to crops and human injury etc. (Table 1.2 reveals that damage to crops by wild animals share maximum percentage (96.95%), followed by livestock damage (49.13%) and human injury is (13.91%).

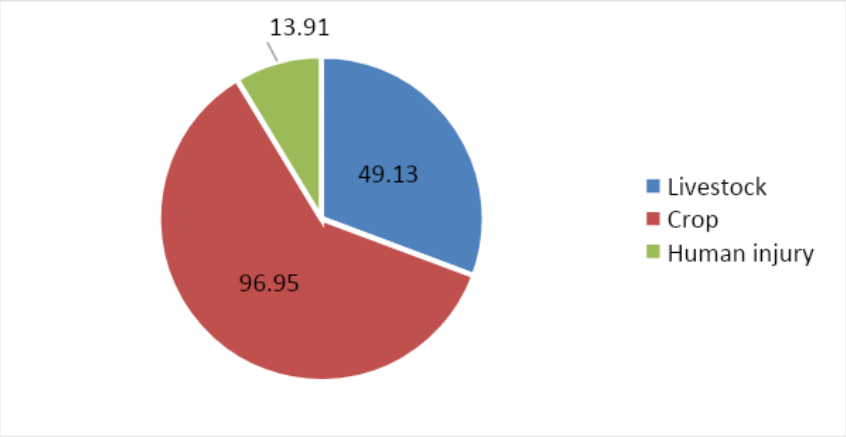

Fig. 1.3 Percentage frequency of the destruction caused by wild animal

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the study area, the causative factors regarding these conflicts have been identified as natural attraction towards crop and scarcity of food. Monkeys have been found to be the most problematic animals, followed by leopard and bear. During the survey, one of the respondents told us that monkeys haven't let anything grow; they have stopped cultivating vegetable and must buy them from the market. The problem of monkeys is so much that they are dependent on state subsidises food rations. It was also observed that there is a general practice of feeding these monkeys by army base camps and if they don't feed them these monkeys become aggressive and attack humans or their crops.

There is great loss in the agriculture field by these monkeys they destroy all the crops and results in decrease in production due to which a farmer suffer a lot because he is totally dependent on agriculture. Leopards generally attack during night when animal generally goats and sheep are tied in the open. It also attacks on the dogs which are used to guard these animals. Bears generally attack the grazing cattle especially goats and sheep along with crop raiding and sometimes farmers come in direct contact with these carnivores and get injured.

There are various attack of bears on people one respondent told about the incident that how he come in direct contact with the Bear and he lost his one eye. Different studies have revealed different causative factors responsible for these attacks. Mishra (1997) was of the view that drastic increase in the livestock population in the last decade, which has accompanied a change from subsistence to commercial agriculture and animal husbandry is the main reason for these conflicts.

MANAGEMENT

As human population extends to wild animal habitats, Natural life territory is displaced. The population density of wildlife and human overlaps increasing their interaction thus resulting in increasing physical conflict. Various styles of human-wildlife conflict occur with numerous negative results. Comprehensive wildlife management integrates social and biological sciences. Traditionally, management decisions have relied more heavily on insight from the biological sciences from social assessments of the human

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dimensions. The purpose of any management programme should be to help wildlife managers with biological backgrounds of the animals in questions and to human dimensions considerations into wildlife damage management.

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