

Human-tiger (*Panthera tigris*) conflict: status and trend in the Chitwan National Park, Nepal

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Abstract

This study explores an understanding of human-wildlife conflict (HWC) focused on tiger, particularly the status and trend of human-tiger conflict (HTC), in three major areas of Chitwan National Park (CNP); Ayodhyapuri, Patihani and Megghauli VDCs. A set of questionnaire survey was conducted in 98 households [Ayodhyapuri (38), Patihani (30) and Megghauli (30)]. Additionally, key informant interviews were conducted and official records of CNP, National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) during month of June- July, 2017 were referred. Records from 2003 to 2015 at CNP shows that highest HTC was recorded in the year 2003-2004 (235 cases), out of which human casualties were 22 (4 injured and 18 killed). The trend has declined thereafter with the lowest conflict recorded in the year 2013-2014 (17 cases), out of which human casualties were 6 (4 injured and 2 killed). A significantly higher human-tiger interaction was recorded in Ayodhyapuri compared to other two study sites ($\chi^2 = 7.88$; d.f. = 2; $p = 0.02$). However, a contradictory trend was obtained based on our survey owing to the long compensation procedure (51.02%), less compensation (30.61%) and weak information flow (18.36%). Besides, the development of dense community forest lured the tigers to the nearby buffer zone causing conflicts with tigers. Nevertheless, the perception of respondent relative to tiger conservation was found to be positive. Conservation education, awareness programs along with adequate and prompt compensation against damages coupled with regular/timely monitoring of tigers may help to reduce human-tiger conflicts. Keywords: Human-tiger conflict; Compensation; Livestock depredation; Retaliation

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