

## What is Human-Elephant-Conflict?

Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) occurs when people destroy elephant forest habitat which means elephants must travel further to find food, often coming to villages and destroying peoples crops and houses. In retaliation people may resort to killing elephants.

## What are the causes?

Elephant habitat in Assam is decreasing at an alarming rate. Deforestation, even at a local scale, is having an effect on the elephants who are finding that they have less and less shelter and food.



## Why is it important?

This conflict threatens the survival of elephants who are at risk of becoming extinct. Elephants are important not just culturally but also for seed dispersal and the germination of many plants.



## What can be done?

As long as people are living in close proximity to wildlife there will always be conflict. But it can be managed and reduced by making people aware of the causes of the conflict and non-lethal methods they can use to reduce effect of the conflict on their livelihoods. Ensuring adequate protection of elephant habitat is also essential.



## Find out more!

If you want to find out more about the Assam Haathi Project and our work then please contact us using the details below.

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# ASSAM HAATHI PROJECT



## Who we are

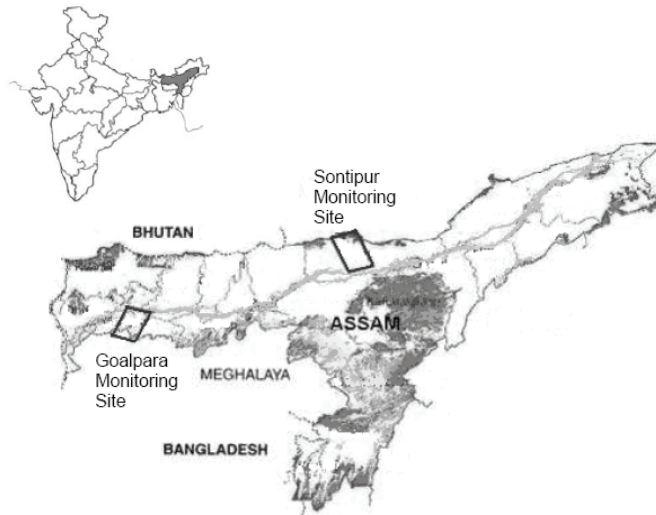
The Assam Haathi Project (AHP) began in 2004 and is a collaboration between Chester Zoo (UK) and EcoSystems-India. We also work with the State Forest Department, Government of Assam and local conservation organizations. It is funded by the Darwin Initiative and Chester Zoo.

## Our aims

We aim to empower the local communities to take responsibility for deterring elephants from causing damage to their property and crops and create a sustainable co-existence for people and elephants. Whilst also monitoring elephant movements to understand more about their distribution and patterns in order to protect elephants long term.

## Where we work

We are based in Assam, North East India and operate in two districts: Sontipur & Goalpara.



## What we do

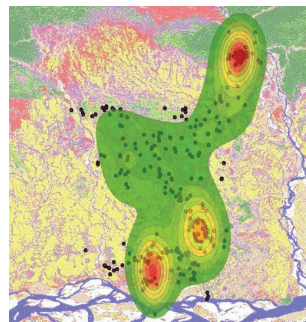
### Community conservation

Involving the local communities is central to our aims and we believe it is important for the communities to maintain ownership of mitigations. The AHP will provide information and support where required but encourages action from the communities. For example, where more expensive measures are introduced, e.g. electric fencing, the community will provide the labour and some materials and will be trained in maintenance by AHP.



### Elephant tracking

Local community involvement is also core to our elephant tracking. We employ field monitors from villages affected by HEC who record information when an elephant enters the area that they monitor. Data collected includes the number of elephants, any crop or property damage caused and any mitigations used. Locations are recorded using GPS to enable the sites of elephant activity to be analysed using computer mapping (GIS). This helps understand the behaviour of elephants and their movement across a wide area.



## Interventions

Various interventions have been tried and tested in our project villages. All mitigations use locally available and low cost materials so can be used by anyone. A handbook has been produced detailing step-by-step methods for implementing mitigations used by the AHP. The interventions fall into 3 main categories:

**Warning Systems:** alert you in advance elephants are approaching, e.g. trip wire; watch tower.



**Barriers:** prevent elephants from entering a particular area, e.g. electric fence; trench.



**Deterrents:** discourage elephants from entering an area and can also be used to chase elephants away, e.g. chilli smoke; spotlights.



Most of these methods work better in combination and should be alternated to prevent elephants becoming used to them. Although it is important to remember that the best way for reducing conflict is to protect the forest.

## Alternative livelihoods

We have provided training workshops in conjunction with the Spices Board on alternative crops that are less palatable to elephants, including chilli, vanilla, ginger, black pepper and citrus. These are high return cash crops and could provide a good alternative or secondary crop.

