

## **Project Update: November 2015**

The human-elephant interaction is now a prime concern of government as almost in every fortnight the herds expanding their foraging and migration area. Simultaneously, the number of residential groups has been increased. It is now more challenging to accept the new techniques for 'coexistence'.

The Directorate of Forests, Government of West Bengal is assisting to identify the high intensity 'conflict' zones to conduct the awareness programme. We have also received the permission letter from the government.

A preliminary survey on fodder species has been done and we have identified 34 species in the forest areas along with elephant migration routes. The in depth study to know the nutritive significance, quantity, NTFP significance will be started from January 2016 with local colleges. Apart from that we are doing survey to review and develop a new human-elephant conflict zone map with High, Moderate, Low zone gradation.

Awareness programme on 'elephant conservation' and 'basic precaution to mitigate conflict' was conducted in several schools in 'Mayurjharna' elephant infested zones. Nature clubs, to motivate the students in conservation activities and to conduct regular in house activities, were formed.

Seminars and capacity building programmes were conducted in 'Bankura Sammilani College' and 'Bankura Christian College'. The Principals and Head of Department (Zoology) of those colleges are agreed to include the elephant project as topic in their students' project and also recommending students for internships. The 'Bankura Christian College' proposed to conduct awareness programme in local schools as project collaborator and we are happy to involve them.

The awareness programme was covered by DD (*Doordarshan*) News, the news broadcasting channel of Government of India, and local news channel. The local website news link is - <http://bangla.eenaduindia.com/State/Bankura/2015/11/23190553/Awareness-Seminar-for-Elephant-problem-in-Bankura.vpf>

As part of awareness/resource materials, we have developed sets of posters in local languages (i.e. Bengali) and distributed in schools, colleges and forest Ranger Offices for display.

The documentation and videography to produce a short duration documentary film is already started. We are already using video clippings for interactive seminar, awareness programme. The video format of awareness programme presentation will be available in Google Drive from January 2016.



(c) Samya Basu, The Rufford Foundation

EleFriend! Nature Club members



Photo credit: K. Haku (c) The Rufford Foundation

Seminar on HEI at Bankura Sammilani College



Photo credit: Arunima Roy, (c) The Rufford Foundation

Seminar on HEI, Samya Basu explaining effectiveness of energized fence



(c) Samya Basu, The Rufford Foundation

Poster release on HEC mitigation measures



Residential bull snatching food from truck





Documenting elephant herd movement