



Man-Animal Conflict

- Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has constituted a permanent coordination committee to prevent elephant deaths on railway tracks.

About Man-Animal Conflict

- It refers to the interaction between wild animals and humans which results in a negative impact on people, animals, resources, and habitats.
- It occurs when growing human populations overlap with established wildlife territory which creates competition for space and resources.
- Conflicts between the man and animal have occurred since the dawn of humanity.

Man-Animal Conflict in India

Between 2018-19 and 2020-21, 222 elephants were killed by electrocution.

- Odisha accounted for highest number of elephants deaths follow
- 29 tigers were killed by poaching between 2019 and 2021.

Causes of Man-Animal conflict

- **Habitat fragmentation and shrinking of habitat** due to encroachment in forest lands, people and animals are increasingly coming into conflict over living space and food.
- **Encroachment in the forest lands** by local people has resulted in shrinkage of wildlife habitats especially on the fringes which has increased the pressure on the limited natural resources in the forest areas.
- **Increased disturbance due** to collection of fuel wood, fodder, water etc. from the forests has also increased the incidences of man-animal conflict
- **Increase in area under cultivation around wildlife habitats** and changed cropping pattern have also contributed to increased man-animal conflict.
- **Decreased prey base caused by poaching of herbivores** has resulted in carnivores moving out of forest in search of prey
- **Increasing livestock population:** Domestic animals often outnumber wild ungulates within protected areas. Livestock has become an important source of prey for predators
- **Climate Change and its effect through drought,** floods, forest fires, destruction of habitat and food will aggravate the problem of human-animal conflict

Initiatives Taken to Tackle the Conflict

- A **network of Protected Areas** namely viz., national park, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserving covering important wildlife habitat have been created all over the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve wild animals and their habitat.
- **Wildlife corridors:** Wildlife corridors have been developed in many parts of the country.
 - **For example:** In 2017, to protect elephant habitats, the Odisha government had identified 14 corridors.
 - **Tiger corridor** around Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserves are built.
- **“Plan Bee”:** Indian Railways launched ‘Plan Bee’ to prevent elephants getting hurt on rail tracks, thereby reducing the elephant death toll.
 - Nearly 50 buzzing amplifiers have been deployed as part of “Plan Bee” at a dozen “elephant corridors” in the vast forests of Assam, home to nearly 6,000 elephants, 20% of the country’s total.
- **Advisory for Management of Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC):** This has been issued by the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife (SC-NBWL).
- **Empower Gram Panchayats:** The advisory envisages empowering gram panchayats in dealing with problematic wild animals as per the WildLife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- **Controlling population:** In January 2018, the Environment Ministry has approved “immunecontraception” method to address man-animal conflicts.
 - The immuno-contraception is non-hormonal form of contraception. It causes production of antibodies which in turn prevents conception in animals.
 - Ministry sanctioned over Rs 10 crore for ‘immunology contraception’ of wild boars, Rhesus monkeys and elephants.



Way Forward

- **Recognizing the key sources** of conflict and focusing on promotion of community centric management and conservation.
- **Local traffic management measures** like restricting the speed of trains at vulnerable locations, night closure of roads, etc. to reduce chances of collisions.
- **Landscape level approach** that deals with large scale processes in an integrated and multidisciplinary manner, combining natural resources management with environmental and livelihood considerations.
- **Encouraging Non-Infrastructural solutions** like extended tree canopy, corridor planting etc.
- **Awareness Programmes:** To create awareness among people and sensitize them about the Do's and Don'ts in the forest areas to minimize the conflicts between man and animal.
- **Training programs:** Training to the police offices and local people should be provided for this purpose and the forest department should frame guidelines.
- **Boundary walls:** The construction of boundary walls and solar fences around the sensitive areas to prevent the wild animal attacks.
- **Technical and financial support:** For the development of necessary infrastructure and support facilities for immobilization of problematic animals through tranquilization, their translocation.
- **Provide Insurance:** Utilising add-on coverage under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna for crop compensation against crop damage due to HWC.
- **Augmenting Fodder:** Envisages augmenting fodder and water sources within the forest areas.
- **Take Proactive Measures:** Prescribes inter-departmental committees at the local/state level, adoption of early warning systems, creation of barriers, dedicated circle-wise Control Rooms with toll-free hotline numbers, Identification of hotspots, etc.
- **Provide Instant Relief:** Payment of a portion of ex-gratia as interim relief within 24 hours of the incident to the victim/family.
- **Heatwave mitigation in agriculture:** Opting for the right crop varieties, bathing animals, and adopting the mulching technique (e.g., Plastic Mulching); Timely sowing and adoption of heat-tolerant wheat crop varieties etc.

