



Sustainable Management of Farmers- Elephant Conflict

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Introduction

Mikumi national park is Tanzania's fourth-biggest national park; it's one of the protected areas that are found in the southern part of the country. Mikumi is a home of large herds of Elephants, buffaloes, zebras, wildebeest, hyenas, leopards, lions, Sable antelopes great kudu and many more. However, Mikumi national park is surrounded by small villages where by most of people are engaged in agricultural activities to sustain their live hood.

The following is the facts about life of elephant at Mikumi National Park:-

Elephants have a long life of up to 80 years and have the gestation period of 22 Months, which is the longest for any land mammals!

Elephants require 150 kg of food and 100 liters of water daily! No wonder they are so huge in size!

Like humans, elephants live in joint families. The family groups have grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, siblings and cousins staying together. The family groups are managed by grand-mothers, mothers and aunts. Adult tuskers do not stay with family groups and prefer to stay by themselves.

Elephant brain weighs 5 kg which is the largest among land animals and that is why they are considered very intelligent and are capable of learning fast.

They can communicate long distances using low-frequency (infrasound) sound which we humans cannot even hear!

Much like humans, elephants have emotions such as happiness, pain and grief. When a member of their group dies, all others grieve by standing in a circle and touching the dead elephant with their trunk!

Method

Due to an increasingly human activities and world domination, wildlife often competes with human for the land and food sources. These conflicts can results into affecting human livelihood and the populations and habitats wildlife. Conflicts result from human-wildlife interactions yield negative outcomes for one or both parties and take many different forms.

Elephants are the subjects of intensive human-wildlife conflict in many parts of our country.

This conflict is mostly caused by elephant damaging agricultural crops, human – elephant conflict is increasing due human population, expanding agriculture and political instability which results in competing for land, also results in crop and property damage, economic losses, human injuries, killing of elephants and more indirect impacts such as stress, prevent freedom of movement effecting healthcare or education.

Therefore, this project is intending to suggest the best conservation management in resolving Human/farmers – Elephant conflict around the Tanzanian National parks.

The method used in our project is the interview, observation and household survey method whereby the reason is that the interviewee is free to talk rather than writing their problems since are illiterate.

The project was conducted in two Sub-Villages located in Doma ward around Mikumi National park, the Sub -villages was Mtakenini and Kibalawala located at Maharaka Village.

This study were done with the use of interviews guide for the farmers, house hold survey and field observation which assisted us to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. This was the most efficient way to collect the type of data needed during our study.

During the study, twelve farmers were interviewed in two different sub-villages (six farmers in each sub village) around Mikumi National Park. Two day were used to collect information from sub village. Also Observations were made in all of the two sub-villages where by twelve Respondents' were seen and the distance to Mikumi National Park was noted.

Results

The obtained results were used critically to discuss farmers –elephant conflicts, and therefore mass education will be disseminated to all Famers surrounding National Park in Tanzania for betterment of Farmers –elephant ecosystem. The following is the table showing the results from the farmers according to the study questions.

According to our study, majority of the farmers they mentioned that the major crops which is grown by most farmers is Maize, tomatoes, cowpeas, sesame, sunflower and cotton. Those crops is grown the purpose of sustaining live hood of farmer in terms of food and also as a sources of income ounce they are sold.

During the study we noted that, some of the crops which is grown around the sub village are much more damaged/eaten by Elephants causing total loss in terms of hunger and financial to the farmers. All respondents mentioned that, one of crop which is more damaged by elephants is maize, followed by tomatoes and cowpeas.

Conclusion

According to the discussion made, it obviously and noted that during the cropping seasons, Elephants escapes from the National Park and come to the farms to eat crops. Also farmers grow those crops in order to sustain their lives. Therefore, the study noted that this conflict won't stop because of the human –Elephant interests.

Due to this interest, it is a time now to suggest the best way of resolving the human – elephant Conflict which seems to occur in many areas of our country.

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Figure 2; Maize farm damaged by Elephants

Land ownership in Acres	Number of farmers	Percentage land ownership
0 – 1 acres	3	25
2- 3 acres	5	42
4- 5 acres	2	16
Above 5 acres	2	16
total	12	