

Human-Wildlife Conflict

Elephant

Farmers Manual



WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT WORKING PAPER

Number 12

Human-wildlife conflict:

Elephant

Farmers Manual

Edited by
Yaw Osei-Owusu and Lonneke Bakker

February 2008



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2008

Why do elephants visit farmers' fields to destroy their crops and sometimes aggress people?

Farmers make farms close to National Park boundaries.



Corn farm close to boundary of forest reserve

Farmers grow crops that are attractive to elephants e.g. maize, yams, cassava, pineapple, rice, millet, etc. close to boundaries of forest reserves and National Parks.



Corn

Some people destroy the habitat of elephants by cutting down trees in forest reserves or establish farms in areas where elephant used to live. In the process they destroy some of the trees that provide food for elephants and decrease the area where elephants can graze.



Cutting trees from a forest reserve

Some people shoot to kill elephants in forest reserves. Elephants have a good memory and will become aggressive to people once they have been shot at.



A hunter shooting an elephant

What can farmers do to PREVENT elephants from visiting their farms and aggressing people?

A Avoid

Avoid making farms close to forest reserves and National Park boundaries.

Avoid growing crops eaten by elephants. Grow crops that are not eaten by elephants, such as pepper ginger and cotton and which can give you good returns if you have to grow crops near to a forest reserve boundary.



A young chili pepper farm

Avoid cutting down trees in forest reserves and avoid destroying the habitat of elephants

Avoid settling close to forest reserve boundaries.



Settlements close to a forest reserve

Avoid shooting to kill elephants. A wounded elephant may attack and hurt or even kill you.



A hunter attacked by an elephant

B Be Alert

Use a combination of these old and new methods on your farm to drive away elephants.

Use all the old or traditional methods known in your community such as:

- beating the bark of trees,
- beating empty cans,
- bamboo blasters,
- setting fire at edge of fields,
- night patrols,
- burning palm kernel



Beating bark of tree to make noise

Use a rope to fence off your farm.



A group of farmers preparing a fence

Hang alarm bells on fence round your farms to warn you of the presence of elephants. The noise from bells can also drive elephants away



A farmer hanging a bell on rope

C Chili Fence

Some new methods you may want to try on your farm are based upon using chili pepper. Elephants do not like the smell of pepper and their skin is sensitive to it as well. So using chili pepper to protect your farm is helpful to keep elephants away!

- Grind chili into powder.
- Mix grease and the powdered chili.
- Smear the mixture on rags and hang these on the rope around your farm.
- When the elephants smell the chili, it will hurt their nose and they will not come closer to your field.



A farmer hangs a piece of rag, smeared with chili and grease, on a rope on a fence

D Dung Bricks

The smoke of burning chili pepper goes far away, and elephants will not come close to your farm if you burn these chili dung bricks in your field. Prepare and burn chili-dung bricks at points around your farms when the crops are ripe!



1. Mix ground chili pepper and dung



2. Compact mixed chili pepper and dung



3. Dry chili-dung bricks



4. Dry chili-dung bricks at edge of farm

E Educate and Patrol

Form community scouts to assist with putting up the fence, guarding the fields and patrolling the boundary of forest reserves or conservation areas to drive away elephants. See the Wildlife Officer nearest to you for assistance.



Community Scouts on patrol

Report the presence of elephants in your area to the Wildlife Office nearest to you.



Farmers report at Wildlife Office

F Finally

Remember to follow the rules in driving away elephants from your farms:

- A** Avoid
- B** Be alert
- C** Chili pepper
- D** Dung bricks
- E** Educate and Patrol

The materials you need are chili-pepper, used oil, rope, rags and bells.

They are easy to obtain and do not cost much.

The methods are easy to make and give good results.

It worked for farmers in Zimbabwe, Ghana, Uganda, Zambia and can work for you too!!

Go ahead and try it on your own farm!



This training package on human-elephant conflict consists of a Technical Manual, a Farmers Manual and a video on a project in Ghana. The Farmers Manual is mainly intended to explain successful and new techniques to rural populations.