

Lessons learned from applying "Conflict Specific Mitigation (CSM)" Strategies to mitigate human-elephant conflicts: A case study from Wasgamuwa, Sri Lanka

IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialists Group/IUCN SSC Task Force on Human-Wildlife
Conflict, Human-Wildlife Conflict Workshop, Guwahati, Assam, India - November 2016

Ravi Corea, Chandima Fernando, and Chinthaka Weerasinghe
Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society (SLWCS)
www.slwcs.org



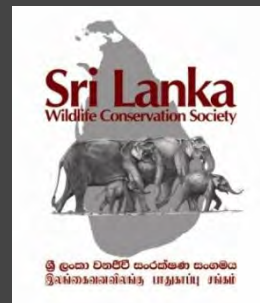
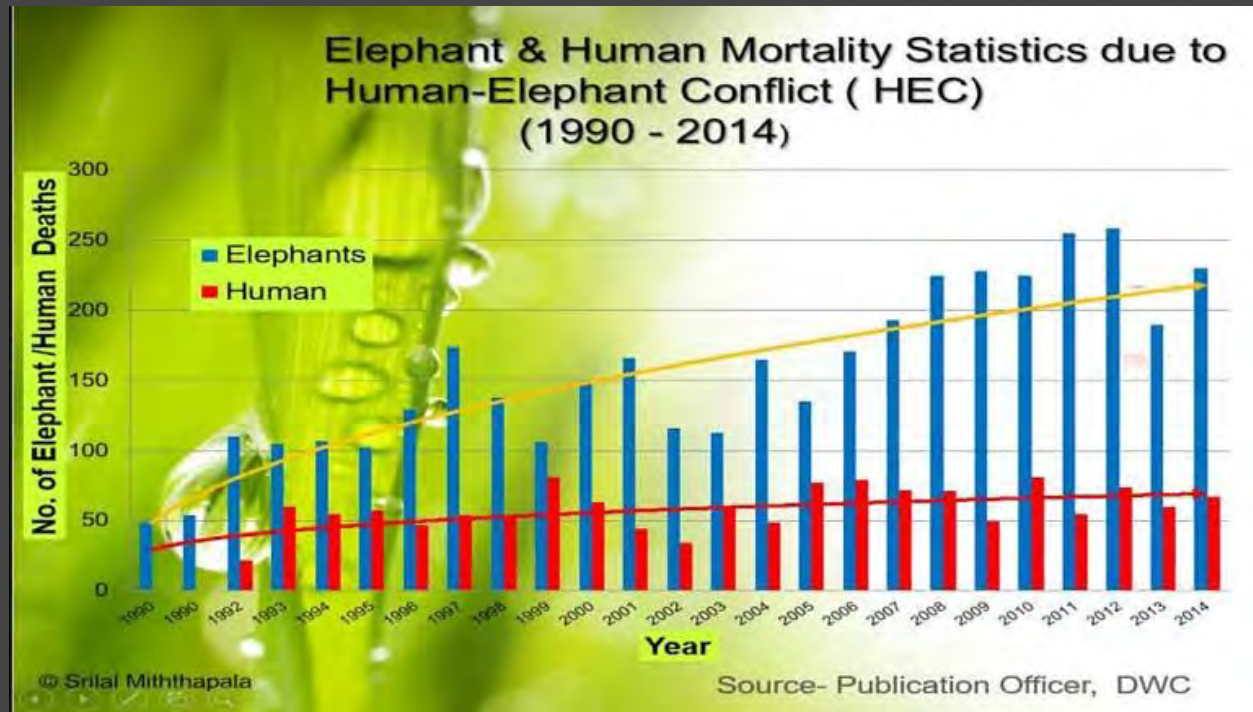
elephantea



ශ්‍රී ලංකා වනජීවී සංරක්ෂණ සංගමය
இலங்கைவனவிலங்கு பாதுகாப்பு சங்கம்

HEC biggest socio-economic-environmental & wildlife issue

- Last 12 years – 1464 elephant deaths and 672 human deaths
- Conflict over agriculture is the leading cause of death



Current framework & policies to reduce HEC?

- *Mainly focus on implementing broad – scale mitigation measures*



Fencing elephants



Relocating elephants



Elephant drives

Current framework & policies to reduce HEC?

- Still HEC imposes various costs on local communities
- Still HEC threatens elephant populations

Main reason why the issue remains the same

Broad mitigation strategies do not recognize **specific HEC at the LOCAL level**



Conflict Specific Mitigation (CSM) Strategies

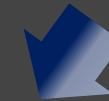
Research

- Identify timing and location of HEC
- Study socio-economic & wildlife impact
- Prioritize different HECs
- Identify the most crucial problem



Participatory planning

- Open discussion with stakeholders
- Identify joint objectives
- Propose socio-economic benefits to the community
- Mutual agreements for win-win initiatives

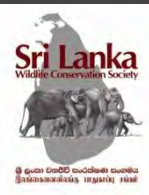


Implementation and Monitoring

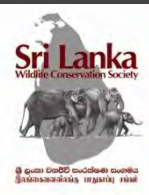
- 100% involvement of the community
- Equal ownership of the project
- Monitor threats and success

Case study – Villages bordering the Wasgamuwa National Park

- Villages are located adjacent to unprotected & protected elephant habitat outside the Wasgamuwa National Park (WNP)
- These habitats provide vital resources for elephants that live inside and outside the WNP
- Daily encounters between elephants and people
- Incompatible land use/livelihoods
- Elephant presence in the corridor – restricts movement of villagers
- Aggressive interactions – increased negative attitude towards elephants
- Increased harassment of elephants – make elephants react aggressively toward humans
- Negative impact on overall elephant conservation in the area



Electric Fencing



Other SLWCS ongoing & planned CSM Strategies

- Project Orange Elephant: providing a natural deterrent and a sustainable income
- Drone Mitigators: using UAVs to protect villages and fields to minimize human-elephant conflict interactions
- Elephants and Bees Project

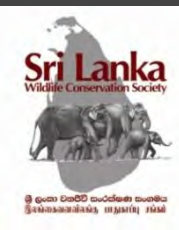


POE Concept



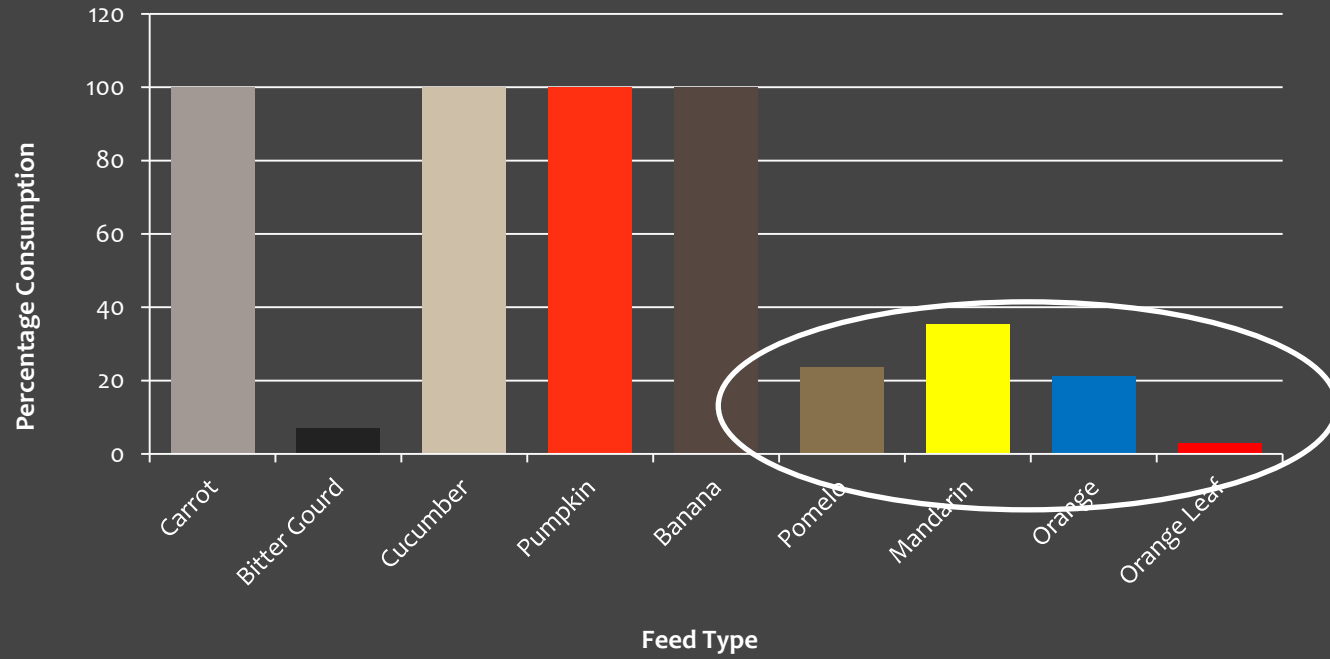
The challenge is even though human elephant conflict is a result of agriculture-based land used practices that are incompatible with elephants—a large part of the solution to mitigate human elephant conflict has to be based on developing innovative land use strategies.

- Agriculture main contributing factor to HEC
- Traditional crops also contributes to HEC
- Find alternative crops???



Project Orange Elephant

Percentage consumption of different feed types



POE Objective

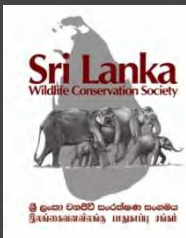
- Livelihood development and poverty alleviation through sustainable land use practices that will contribute to elephant conservation
- Reduce the direct impact elephants have on rural economies by providing farmers with alternative incomes that will act as economic buffers when their rice crops are raided
- Oranges (*Citrus sinensis*) and lime (*Citrus aurantiifolia*) was found suitable to cultivate as a commercial crop and act as an elephant deterrent



EleFriendly© Bus Service

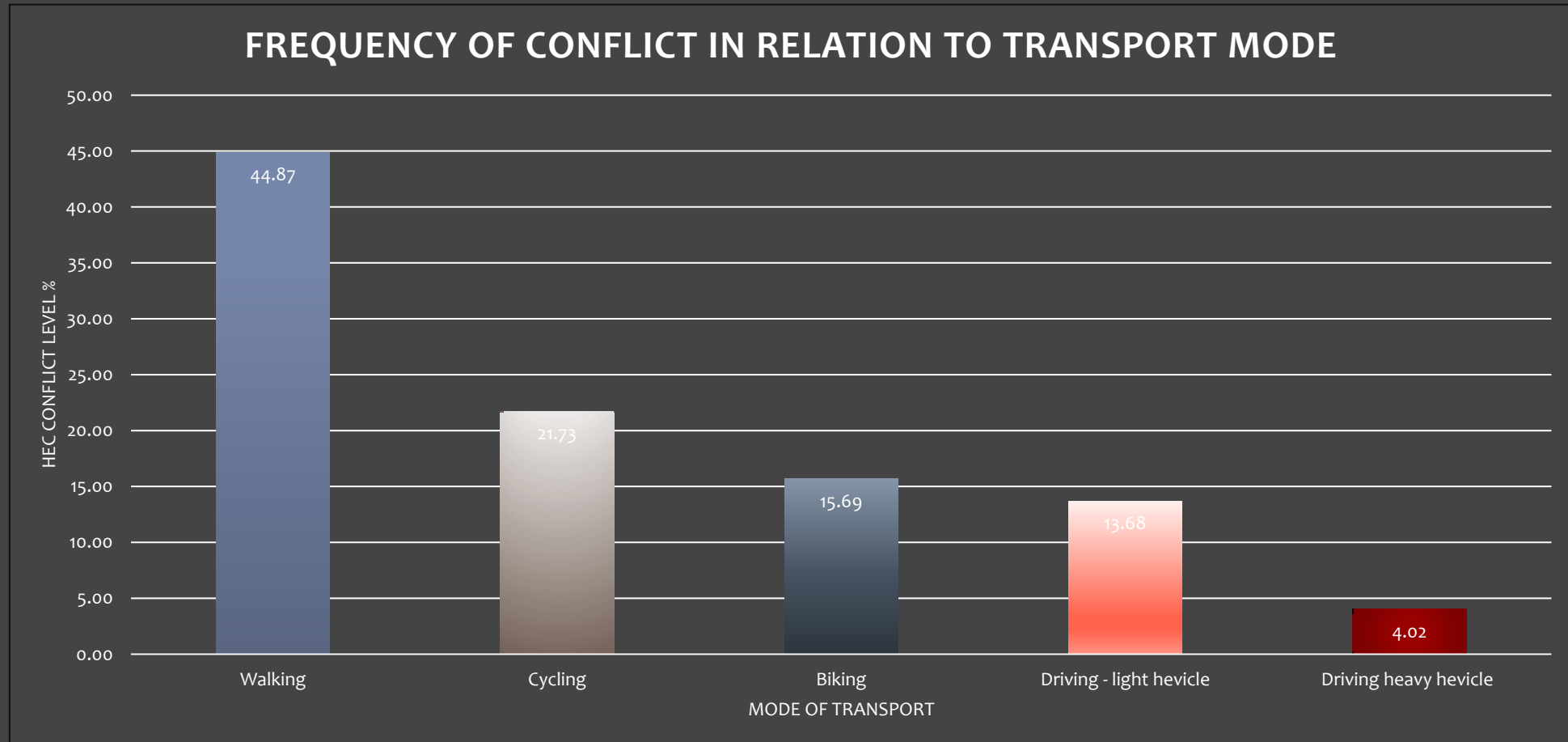


- Increasing conflict in an elephant corridor
- Increasing traffic
- Pedestrians especially school children the most vulnerable
- Farmers formed vigilante escort groups (shot/killed elephants)
- Needed an immediate solutions



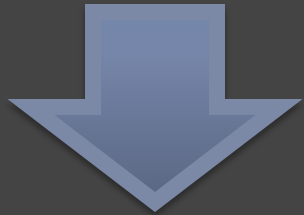
Our research at the corridor

- *Mode of transport - main cause for the conflict*



Our approach - Proposed CSM Strategy

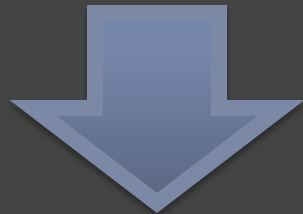
Reduce pedestrians and frequency of travelling



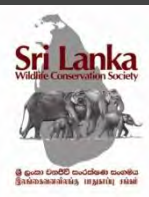
Community consultation - villagers could not afford to change mode of transport



SLWCS – Action



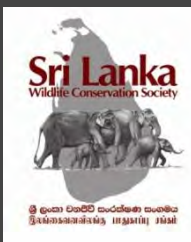
First EleFriendly© Bus service



EleFriendly© Bus Service

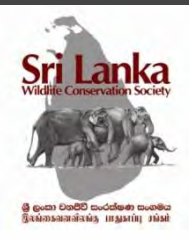


- First ever commute to reduce HEC
- Community owned
- Transports school kids for free
- Farmers are able to spend more time farming and less time patrolling
- Brought National and International communities together to support local people and wildlife



Outcome

- Conflict level has decreased for the last three months from 83 to 21 – a 74% decrease in conflicts
- Farmers' attitudes toward elephants have changed significantly
- Farmers are more cooperative – willing to listen & participate
- Farmers' tolerance for elephants in the area has increased
- Elephants are less disturbed in the corridor
- Elephants are able to stay in the corridor for foraging and socializing



CSM Strategic Approach

- Need to work beyond protected areas
- Critically important to identify specific issues at local level
- Identify similarities and differences of issues
- Find the appropriate, unique solutions – need to think outside of the box
- Adapt solutions that can be implemented at a local scale
- Link direct benefits to the community
- Share the ownership with the community
- **Very Important – IMPLEMENT what you promise – be willing to pay the local community for their tolerance for wildlife**



Conclusions: Electric Fences, POE, EleBus

eFences:

- Cost
- Design
- Length
- Management: maintenance and repairs
- Labor intensive
- Obstructive and disruptive
- Creates false expectations
- Good for site specific
- Can be effective – have immediate impact
- Does not conform to conservation ideals

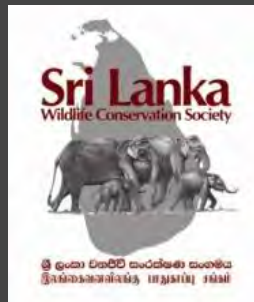
POE

- Motivation
- Time/gestation period
- Transition periods
- Weather/climate /disease

- Scaling up
- Markets/buyers

EleBus

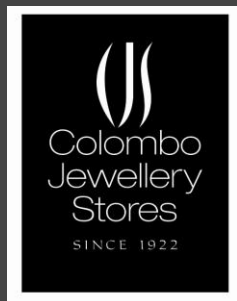
- Cost
- Maintenance/Repairs
- Sustainability
- Demand
- Scaling up



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A sincere and grateful thank you from SLWCS and the communities we work with to all who contributed to the EleFriendly© Bus Service Project

- Adele & Loi Nguyen



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our sincere Thank you to all our corporate partners:



WEALTHTRUST SECURITIES LIMITED
Central Bank Appointed Primary Dealer
No. 32, Castle Street, Colombo 08, Sri Lanka

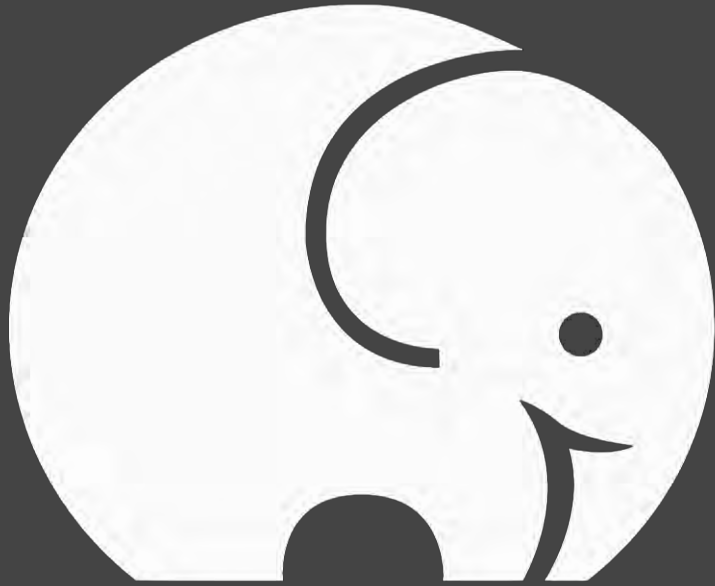


MIKE'S
ORGANIC
CURRY LOVE



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A sincerer thank you to our corporate partners who sponsored us to attend the 2016 IUCN/SSC Asian Elephant Specialists Meeting, Guwahati, Assam, India



elephantea

