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Leopard and Elephant's conflict with humans on the rise, detailed study urgently needed

by Kanishk Singh (http://www.tecake.com/author/kanishksingh/) on Oct 10, 2015

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The number conflict situations of leopards and elephants with the humans are on the rise. On seeing the increasing numbers, Dr Vidya Athreya, senior research fellow at Wildlife Conservation Society and wildlife conservationist urged that wildlife life enthusiast and government should conduct studies to understand the behaviour and distribution of leopards and elephants outside the protected area as most of the conflicts are happening outside. She further added that generally all the studies that have been conducted to observe the behaviour of leopards in protected while most of the case are found outside.

Vidya pointed out that since humans have been constantly depleting habitat of leopards by converting 'jungles' into 'concrete jungles' and clearing forests. This has resulted in a severe decline in the number of prey for the big leopards. Thus, they

move outside the protected area, towards villages or cities in search of larger prey.

While commenting on why leopards are more in the news than other big cats, she said that leopards are more adaptable than other big cats and can easily survive among people and they often prey on dogs which are easily available in village or cities.

She said that declaring an area as a protected area will not work now as these animals don't understand man-made boundaries. They are leaving their habitat only in search of food and humans are responsible for it.

Same is true for elephants and the government should take necessary steps with the help of local communities protect these wonderful creatures. "Conflict between humans and elephants arises because of planned and unplanned development without no appropriate safeguards in place. Fencing of villages is only a short-term measure. Land-use planning should be done based on human development and elephant needs," said Dr Prithiviraj Fernando, an elephant expert from Sri Lanka.

Moreover, last human-leopard encounter was reported on 30 September in Rajasthan's Rajsamand district when leopard's head got stuck in the pothole for four hours.

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