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Nature and Extent of Human Wildlife Conflict in the Chichibon Corridor, Ghana

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Abstract

The current study assessed the nature and extent of Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) in the Chichibon corridor between Digya National Park (DNP) and Kogyae Strict Nature Reserve (KSNR) in eastern Ghana. Semi-structured questionnaire was used to interview 83 randomly selected farmers from 12 communities in the study area. Elephant crop raiding was reported to be the most serious HWC in the area occurring during the wet season. Elephants also scared inhabitants in the villages during the course of their migration. Most crop raiding occurred from May to July, with a peak in June. Yam was the most (33%) raided crop with the least (1%) raided being pineapples, okro, palm and cocoyam. Highest raids occurred in farms that border the south-western fringes of DNP. Most (81%) elephant raids occurred within 5 km of the two protected areas, there was however no significant relationship ($r^2=0.282$, $p > 0.05$) between number of raided farms in villages and the average distance of farms to the nearest protected area boundary line. Combination of different deterrent methods to ward off raiding elephants was used traditionally, however, noise making (beating of metallic objects) and burning of car tyres to produce smoke were most prominent. Noise making or burning of tyres alone was not very effective unless they are combined. Proper land use planning within the corridor that takes into consideration farming practices that do not attract elephants and development of better deterrent methods can potentially help reduce the incidence of crop raiding. These processes however need considerable resources particularly in creating community awareness, restoring degrading habitats and providing alternatives livelihood options.

Keywords: Crop raiding, human-wildlife conflict, livelihood, wildlife corridors