

Human-Elephant Coexistence HECx awareness programmes



Background

Human-Wildlife negative interactions (HWNl) between humans and wild animals are a common issue worldwide as human populations continue to expand into areas that were originally occupied by wildlife. This expansion leads to habitat loss and fragmentation, forcing wildlife to live in closer proximity to human settlements. The consequences of such negative interactions include crop destruction, reduced agricultural productivity, competition for grazing lands and water resources, livestock predation, injury and loss of human lives, damage to infrastructure, and an increased risk of disease transmission between wildlife and livestock.

Although there is no permanent solution to human-wildlife negative interactions, their impacts can be significantly reduced through effective management and collaborative approaches. This involves understanding the underlying causes of negative interactions,

implementing integrated mitigation strategies, and engaging local communities as active participants in conservation efforts. By focusing on prevention, mitigation, and coexistence strategies, it is possible to promote a more harmonious relationship between humans and wildlife.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

As part of the awareness initiative, 33 Human-Wildlife Coexistence (HWCx) street plays, eight Human-Elephant Coexistence (HECx) street plays, and five school awareness programmes were conducted to educate local communities and students about safe practices and coexistence with wildlife.

Key achievements and outcomes

Through street plays and awareness programmes, community members and students were thoroughly informed about



Street play: Highlights the significance of Lord Vinayaga (Elephant God) in Hindu mythology as the remover of obstacles.



The villagers who enthusiastically watched and engaged with the street play



The Forest Range Officer formally inaugurating the HECx school awareness programme for students

Students engaging in the programme by posing with elephant masks and awareness booklets

HWNI and Human-Elephant negative interactions (HENI), including wildlife behaviour, causes of negative interactions, and the importance of coexistence. Participants were also introduced to a variety of practical “dos and don’ts” related to wildlife encounters from an individual safety perspective, helping them understand how to protect themselves and their families from potential risks

posed by wild animals. These programmes provided practical guidance and safety advice for people living in areas where wildlife interactions are common.

Challenges faced

The implementation of activities was occasionally delayed due to the time required



The street play effectively portrays how uncontrolled tourism disrupts wildlife and damages their habitats



Villagers and forest frontline staff participating as the audience of the street play



Highlights the harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife in the past

to obtain permission from the relevant authorities.

interaction areas were distributed to villagers.

Participant numbers and locations

A total of 6,000 community members and 400 students benefited from the programmes. The activities were conducted in the Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Anamalai, Kodaikanal, and Dharmapuri Forest Divisions.

Acknowledgments

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Tamil Nadu Biodiversity and Greening Project for Climate Change Response (TBGPCCR, Tamil Nadu Forest Department), Asian Elephant Support, USA and SWORD Adhiaman Kazhaikuzhu, Krishnagiri.

Key partnerships and collaborations

Forest Department, local NGOs, village head & headmaster/headmistress of the schools.



Measurable outcomes

- 🐘 Forty-one street plays and five school awareness programmes were successfully conducted.
- 🐘 The programmes reached around 6,000 community members and 400 students.
- 🐘 Awareness activities covered 41 villages and five schools across the target areas.
- 🐘 Four-hundred elephant booklets in the vernacular/local language and 400 elephant masks were distributed to students as part of the awareness programme. Additionally, 6,000 notices containing important “dos and don’ts” for people living in human-wildlife negative



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Citation: Marimuthu, R.(2026). Human-Elephant Coexistence HECx awareness programmes. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 39–41.