



PRELIMINARY SURVEY ON HUMAN MACAQUE INTERACTION

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Abstract

Human-monkey interactions have reached crisis proportions in Sri Lanka over the last 10 years due to extensive deforestation aimed at promoting rapid economic growth and agricultural expansion. The main objective of this study was to determine the current status of human macaque interactions in some selected areas in Kuliyaipitiya Electoral District, North Western Province. This on-going research has selected the most reported activities of macaques respectively in Ihala Ambawa (V1), Deegalla (V2), and Kabalewa (V3) GN divisions which are surrounded by Balagalla reserved forest. 15 interviewees (V1 – 7, V2 – 5, V3 – 3) were selected for the pilot survey. The purposive sampling method was used to collect data under two main categories: farmers and villagers. The in-depth interview method was used to collect the data through a questionnaire consisting of open and closed questions. Participatory monitoring was used to collect data from interviewees' homes, where the main questionnaire was modified to improve the quality of the data from time to time. People who have good experience with macaques' activities and particularly older (over 50 years) were selected as interviewees. No previous research or actions like workshops about prevention methods or wildlife actions can be found in the research area regarding this conflict. The current human macaque interaction has rapidly increased in the research area from 2000 to 2010 with an increase in their population inside the forest and the following reasons were found to be responsible for this status. There has been mass deforestation on their food supplements inside the forest for the last couple of months compelling them to find quick food availabilities in the village. Hence, their interaction with humans increased in the last 10 years thus familiarizing themselves with the village resulting in their hunt for more comfortable food resources. Consequently, villagers have to face daily economic loss which can be quantified as property damages and crop damages. The present study attempted to quantify the economic loss as home gardening, economic crops, home property damages, and economic crop sites' properties gradually for 2 years. The climatic condition of the area, floral and faunal biodiversity, human population, subsistence patterns, and agricultural practices were also considered in looking for the best mitigation actions for the problem.

Keywords: *Monkey, Interaction, Conflict, Agro-Economic, Attitude*