



WWF®

TAI

2015

SAFE SYSTEMS

Revolutionizing Human Wildlife Conflict

THE PROBLEM

Human Wildlife Conflict leads to the loss of species in the wild. Almost all negative interactions between people and wildlife, e.g. attacks on people, or livestock, and crop depredation, result in either the immediate retaliatory killing of the wildlife, or contribute to the gradual loss of tolerance to having wildlife in that area. The loss of a single cow to a tiger, or an entire crop to elephants, the sole sources of household income in many rural areas, can have a devastating impact on a family. In some places in India, livestock depredation by tigers is as high as three cows per day. Similarly, the loss of a family member to predators or elephants is a tragedy from which families never recover.

These tragedies impact not only the human communities but also wildlife numbers with conflict contributing to drastically reduced wildlife numbers globally, along with poaching and habitat loss. Between 1800 and 2009, an estimated 373,000 people were killed by tigers (with hotspots in India, Bangladesh, and Indonesia), and over the same period the wild tiger population fell by 97%. Current estimates are as few as 3,200 tigers remain in the wild, with tigers eliminated from multiple countries. In some places Asian elephants kill up to 300 people a year, and over the past 100 years their population has declined by over 50%.

The solution should be simple: keep wildlife, people and crops apart. However as human populations and economies boom, so does the area needed for settlements, agriculture and transport. These expand into previously remote areas – wildlife habitat. New settlements emerge next to areas which only a decade ago were far from human interference. The buffers that kept wildlife and people separate are disappearing.

Add to this the fact that wildlife conservation seeks to protect and restore populations of conflict species in many areas. WWF's Tigers Alive Initiative takes the further bold step of seeking to double tiger numbers by 2022. Similarly, ambitious conservation goals exist for WWF priority species: polar bears, mountain gorillas, snow leopards, and elephants, along with the habitats and ecosystem services that sustain them.

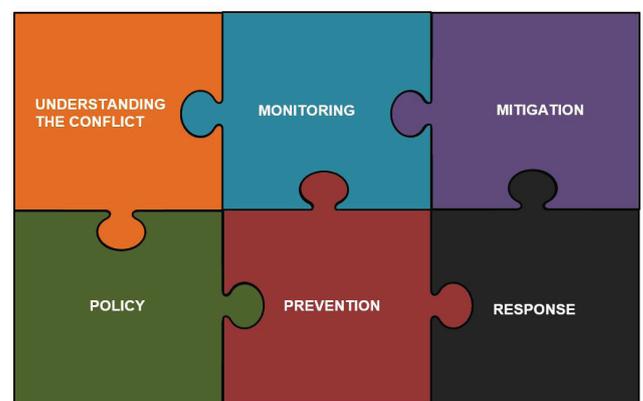
But, already we have seen instances where conservation and higher wildlife populations (for instance with tigers) has led to increased conflict. The fundamental issue that WWF is tackling is that our conservation success across all priority species could mean increased conflict, which in itself would defeat our goals, through a loss of support for species in the wild. The future of these priority species lies in how we handle Human Wildlife Conflict now.

THE STATUS QUO

Current approaches to Human Wildlife Conflict globally suffer from two critical weaknesses: they have an isolated focus on the symptoms of conflict; and they lack coherent long term direction.

Current approaches are site and context specific and are the result of many years of trial and error in that area. They are readily grouped into six conflict elements:

- **Policy:** Human Wildlife Conflict policy mainstreaming; legal protocols to manage conflict animals
- **Prevention:** fencing; barriers; deterrents; early warning systems
- **Mitigation:** interim relief, compensation and insurance schemes; alternative livelihoods programs
- **Understanding the Conflict:** hotspot mapping; community attitude surveying; impact and severity monitoring
- **Response:** rapid response teams; first aid; and crowd management
- **Monitoring:** Human Wildlife Conflict program performance measurement



While each action serves a valuable function at the site, in isolation, the actions are merely addressing symptoms of a wider challenge, require constant fundraising, and ultimately have minimal impact on human progress and wildlife conservation in that area. Effective Human Wildlife Conflict management requires that ***all six elements*** are implemented concurrently with actions and lessons from each informing and reinforcing actions in the other elements. This current approach of dealing with symptoms of conflict is demonstrably weak. Actions at a site do not coalesce around a desired outcome nor do they build momentum toward a “better” future for people and wildlife in that area. Current actions merely deal with the current state and context.

THE FUTURE

Our answer is The Human Wildlife Conflict Safe Systems, a paradigm shift from the current context to a long-term results-based goal that goes to the heart of conflict management.

Human Wildlife Conflict Safe Systems is a suite of actions across all six elements that contribute to a single long-term goal for an area: to make it safe - safe for people, assets, wildlife and habitat.

Much like transport safety strategies, the approach is based on the fact that we know from experience how to make each part of the system – the people and their assets, wildlife and habitats – safe. As such the Safe System approach treats each of these as Safe Outcomes that must be achieved at a given area if conflict is to be reduced. Thus, if people, their assets, wildlife and habitat are made safer, then the overall area becomes safer as contact between humans and wildlife can be minimized.

The Human Wildlife Conflict Safe Systems approach encompasses all interactions between people, their land, their livelihoods, decision-makers, commercial and government interests, and wildlife; and it accommodates human error and the “wildness” of the species involved.

It has **four** guiding principles:

1. It recognizes that wildlife is wild and conflict will occur. When conflicts occur however, the interventions across the system should ensure that the impact of an incident does not exceed the limits of community tolerance, and does not result in retaliatory killing.
2. It stresses that individuals, communities, leaders and the public who design the system need to accept and share responsibility for the safety of the system, and those that use the system must accept responsibility for complying with the rules and constraints of it.
3. It aligns conflict management decisions with wider development plans and processes that contribute to economic, human, and environmental goals.
4. It guides interventions to meet the minimum standards and long term goals, rather than setting specific targets.

The Safe Systems approach comes from global traffic management systems aimed at reducing road fatalities. Since the early 20th century, national development, car ownership and road fatalities increased linearly. Just as with Human Wildlife Conflict, attempts to reduce fatalities through addressing symptoms and isolated actions had negligible effects on this strong relationship between increasing car numbers and road deaths. It wasn't until concerted effort focused on addressing all the elements of road accidents concurrently, and backing this with the singular long term goal of making entire transport systems safer that accident rates were decoupled from vehicle numbers, and fatality rates fell dramatically.

HWC Safe Systems



SAFE PERSON

- Does not hunt wildlife
- Participates as a partner for protection
- Does not venture into, forage, or conduct livelihoods activities inside designated Protected Areas
- Conducts wildlife-friendly farming
- Has access to funds to support locally applicable preventative measures
- Has safe working environments
- Households have more than one income stream
- Participates in an insurance / relief scheme
- Is supported by locally based Response Teams
- Has access to a conflict information system
- Participates in community events for conservation



SAFE WILDLIFE

- Are not hunted
- Are separated from people, livestock and crops
- Provide positive contribution to human development locally
- Are supported by locally based Response Teams
- Are treated and monitored in the event of injury



SAFE ASSETS

- Farming systems are wildlife-friendly
- Enhanced farming practices are supported
- Invasive weeds are cleared or managed



SAFE HABITAT

- Are protected
- Are represented in a Spatial Plan for the area



EFFECTIVE MONITORING & EVALUATION

- Hotspot mapping
- Impact and severity monitoring
- Community attitude monitoring
- Performance measurement

HWC Safe Systems BASIC ELEMENTS

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Implementation

- For tiger range countries, program delivery will be from WWF Tigers Alive Initiative through WWF national offices in each country
- For Priority species – polar bears, snow leopards, African elephants, and mountain gorillas – program delivery will be from WWF International Species Program through WWF Species Action Plan leads.
- Initial actions will consist of national consultations using the Human Wildlife Conflict Rapid Assessment Tool to determine how safe the systems currently are, and identify critical gaps and opportunities for support.
- An HWCSS umbrella strategy will provide the overall framework on how to make national systems and landscapes safe.
- National and landscape consultations will define the precise scope, actions, and timeframes, based on local context that will be rolled out there.
- The HWCSS strategy will serve to systematize and institutionalize a common process and will provide a range-wide structure for comparing performance and contribution of the Strategy to the TX2 goal and each Species Action Plan.
- WWF Tigers Alive Initiative will allow space for innovation whereby landscapes that are already leading in a particular field, could be supported to further develop the action and to disseminate lessons to other tiger range countries.

HELP TO CREATE

A Safe System

WWF is seeking support for the elements that together create a safe system including:

- **Response teams** to act quickly in the instance of a potential or actual conflict situation to ensure no (or little) risk for the safety of animals, people or assets
- **Asset management** to improve systems of maintaining a barriers for crops or livestock and wildlife thereby reducing conflict
- **Insurance schemes** to protect people living near protected areas from the potential financial loss of conflict
- **Alternative livelihoods** to offer people options for income which reduce the possibility of conflict
- **Innovation funds** to allow for the development of new thinking and local ideas around alternative livelihoods and solutions to reduce risk while offering local people opportunities
- **Conflict mapping** to determine the areas with the highest conflict and therefore priorities for rolling out the safe system approach

These are just some of the areas to get involved in and we have further detailed information on the implementation of these aspects above, which will all be part of the larger coordinated strategy towards a safe system. Together we can create a safe system for all species.

For more information, contact:

*Dr. Ashley Brooks
Land Use Specialist & Goal 3 Lead
WWF Tigers Alive Initiative
abrooks@wwfnet.org*