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## CONFLICTS BETWEEN LINEAR DEVELOPMENTS AND ASIAN ELEPHANTS IN SUB HIMALAYAN ZONE OF UTTRANCHAL (INDIA)

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### Abstract

As a consequence of recent habitat fragmentation, the free movement of Asian Elephants all over India has been interfered up to a great extent. This largest terrestrial mammal very existence is now under threat due to various reasons such as persecution for its ivory and blockage of migratory routes due to construction of human developmental activities. Shrinking elephants' habitats due to linear developments such as railroads, motorways and canals and human habitation in and around the protected areas give rise to foraging and migratory problems, resulting ultimately in man-elephants conflicts, confrontation between herds and accidental deaths.

This poster discusses in detail, threats faced by Wild Asian Elephants in the sub Himalayan region in Rajaji National Park, Uttranchal, India. Various case studies of difficulties faced by elephants because of railroad, motorway & irrigation and hydroelectric canals in the region are also discussed. River Ganges flows through the habitat for about 20-km & divides it in two parts. The man-made barriers have shrunk the width of habitat along the river Ganges from 20- km to roughly 4- km. The railroad and motorway on the right and the irrigation & hydroelectric canal on the left of the Ganges have restricted the access of the elephants to the legendary river Ganges, the irresistible attraction for the Wild Asian Elephants, which they have to visit daily for drinking, bathing and beating the heat in summer months. Therefore, the elephants look for alternate sources of water and food and as a result they enter human habitation and croplands, leading to the man-elephant conflicts. Moreover, with rail tracks in the vicinity, there have been numerous elephant' deaths due to speeding trains. The frequent confrontations of elephants with moving traffic on railroad and highway have made them irritable, restless & prone to accidents.

This poster examines the disastrous effects of improper design and construction of crossings on the age-old migration tracks and the existing linear developments and how they could be rectified in an animal-friendly way. The poster also suggests practical solutions to reduce the threats to elephants and to their habitats, ensuring sustainability of viable elephant population in a habitat shrunk by human activity.