

Direct and Indirect Impacts of Predator Conflict in Kanha National Park, India

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Abstract : Habitat for predators is on the decline worldwide, which often brings humans and predators into conflict over remaining shared space and common resources. While the direct impacts of human predator conflict on humans (i.e., attacks on livestock or humans resulting in injury or death) are well documented, the indirect impacts of conflict on humans (i.e., downstream effects such as fear, stress, opportunity costs, PTSD) have not been addressed. We interviewed 437 people living in 54 villages on the periphery of Kanha National Park, India, to assess the amount and severity of direct and indirect impacts of predator conflict. While 58% of livestock owners believed that predator attacks on livestock guards occurred frequently and 62% of those who collect forest products believed that predator attacks on those collecting occurred frequently, less than 20% of all participants knew of someone who had experienced an attack. Data related to indirect impacts suggest that such impacts are common; 76% of participants indicated they were afraid a predator will physically injure them. Livestock owners reported that livestock guarding took time away from their primary job (61%) and getting enough sleep (73%), and believed that it increased their vulnerability to illnesses (80%). These results suggest that the perceptions of risk of predator attack are likely inflated, yet the costs of human predator impacts may be substantially higher than previously estimated, particularly related to human well-being, making the implementation of appropriate and effective conservation and conflict mitigation strategies and policies increasingly urgent.

Keywords : direct impacts, indirect impacts, human-predator conflict, India

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