Surviving Together

Project background

Species of focus:  • Tiger

Country/Countries:  • Thailand

Site(s):

The project began in the Alangdaw Kathapa National Park in Myanmar, but following issues with the political context the project was withdrawn, re-established and adapted in Dong Phayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex in Thailand, a site of 6,155km².

GPS coordinates:

No data

Project web site:

http://www.freeland.org/programs/surviving-together/

Summary description:

Surviving Together was initially implemented in Myanmar and worked with park authorities and local communities to stop poaching and to shore up protected areas. The programme used a four pronged approach:

1. Protection - trained and equipped a special patrol team to disrupt some of the poaching.
2. Outreach - FREDA (Forest Resources Environment and Development Association) worked with local monks and villagers to train them in alternative income and food generating activities while educating them about the importance of wildlife conservation.
3. Monitoring - with help from the Wildlife Conservation Society, a small team was trained to conduct line transect and camera trap monitoring so they could tell the difference, for example, between a tiger paw print and a leopard paw print.
4. Management - park managers were trained to supervise the teams described above and to coordinate their activities in support of one another.
The project has to withdraw from Myanmar given the political situation which disrupted funding and made it difficult to drive the program. Following this, the project was re-established and adapted in Thailand after a request from the Wildlife Conservation Society to help the Thai Department of National Parks.

After a period of scoping and learning, the Surviving Together project was launched. The first step in the project was a ranger training course which took place over 14 days and provided park personnel with their first exposure to what was involved in sound park protection and wildlife monitoring. After the training was completed, the rangers were given technical equipment such as global positioning system units and digital cameras to record violations. Standardized field information forms were brought into use, and stepped-up patrols were implemented to maintain a constant presence in the forest. Simultaneously, a group of rangers were assigned to work on community outreach alongside community development specialists in local villages.

According to a project website, today, the different components of the programme include:

1. Wildlife monitoring - utilising surveying techniques, camera-traps and other tools to reveal critical information about key species and to ensure informed, focused wildlife protection.
2. Protected area monitoring systems (SMART) - training of protected area personnel in patrol data collection, analysis, and reporting, providing officials with up-to-date information for informed, adaptive park management.
3. Ranger training - providing critical park protection skills for enforcement rangers and developing capacity among patrol and training team leaders to expand training activities through Protected area Operational and Tactical Enforcement Conservation Training.
4. Human wildlife conflict management - linking communities and protected areas to find effective ways to minimize conflict between humans and wildlife to safeguard livelihoods and biodiversity.
5. Community education and outreach - empowering youth and communities to make informed decisions on the sustainable management of their natural resources, and developing community-led solutions to conservation challenges. To ensure sustainability, local champions of conservation are sought, supported and mentored to develop their own conservation solutions.
6. Alternative livelihoods - providing poachers willing to reform with alternative livelihoods via vocational training and support of small-scale businesses. This is empowering vulnerable communities through sustainable, environment-friendly income-generation activities.

**Land management type:**

State managed protected area

**Product(s) in trade:**

- Bones, Meat, Skin
**Product value at site level:**

No data

**Types of poachers:**

Individuals from local community
Individuals from outside

**Details of 'other' poacher type:**

No data

**Project implementation**

**Is the project implemented by an external party?**

Yes

**Implementing organisation:**

Originally implemented by the PeunPa, a Thai organization and a member of the Wildlife Alliance. Currently implemented by Freeland.

**Name of funding organisation(s):**

Funders have included the David Shepherd Conservation Foundation and Save the Tiger Fund.

**Community organisation(s) involved:**

Not specified.

**Was the project established specifically to engage communities in combatting IWT?**

Yes

**Year the IWT project or component started:**

1997

**Project status is currently:**

Ongoing
Case study information is up to date as of:
No data

Community engagement

Approach taken to community engagement and its rationale:
Community members are provided with livelihood alternatives in lieu of wildlife use. Human wildlife conflict addressed as a way to decrease incentive for revenge killing of wildlife.

Details of 'other' community involvement approach type:
No data

Financial:
Not specified.

Non-financial:
Not specified.

The community engagement project is stand alone initiative

Details of wider response:
No data

Do community guards carry firearms?:
No data, possible values:
- Yes
- No
- Not known
- Not applicable
Do community guards conduct joint patrols with formal guards?:

No data, possible values:
- Yes
- No
- Not known
- Not applicable

Are community guards unarmed, without armed backup?:

No data, possible values:
- Yes
- No
- Not known
- Not applicable

Do community guards have rights of arrest?:

No data, possible values:
- Yes
- No
- Not known
- Not applicable

Do community guards have specialist training:

No data, possible values:
- Yes
- No
- Not known
- Not applicable

Are community guards covered by military law in the case of someone being killed or wounded?:

No data, possible values:
- Yes
- No
- Not known
- Not applicable

The community has traditional authority to sanction
No data, possible values:
- Yes
- No
- Not known
- Not applicable

**What “rules of engagement” for working with communities does the case study address?**

Acknowledge and address costs to communities from living alongside wildlife

**Other key principles for engaging communities emerging from this case study:**

No data

**What has been the impact on poaching/IWT?**

Don’t know/Case study/project has not assessed impact on poaching

**What has been the impact on wildlife populations?**

Not known/not documented

**Further detail about the impact on poaching:**

Initially, there were many arrests following the launch of the programme as the poachers were taken by surprise. Better enforcement, coupled with awareness work in the villages, reduced wildlife exploitation. Professional poachers in some cases gave up and began organic farming and domestic mushroom cultivation, alternatives offered by the programme’s development staff. In one focal community the number of poachers was reduced, but for others, the lure of easy money from poaching was too strong and they simply shifted their attention to parks with less protection.

**What worked and why?; What didn’t work and why?**

**What worked about the community engagement approach and why?**

An important factor for success was the perseverance of outreach staff to build trust with local communities. This was important to counter potential conflict such as that associated
with higher numbers of arrests as the park's newly trained patrol rangers caught more poachers - indeed accusations were made that the outreach staff were spies reporting villagers’ movements to park management. Outreach staff invested a lot of time and effort in long meetings with the communities which kept them out until late at night as community members worked on their farms during the day time.

**What did not work and why?**

*Not specified.*

**Further comments or additional information about community engagement:**

No data

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**Bibliographic information**

**Main source(s) of information:**

**Title:**

Partnering to stop poaching: Developing cross-sector strategic responses to wildlife

**Author(s):**

Galster S, Schaedla W and Redford T

**Year of publication:**

2016

**Journal/Book/Series details:**

Chapter 7 ini Tigers of the World (Second Edition): The Science, Politics, and Conservation of Panthera tigris

**Publisher:**

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