E10: Perspectives in Human-Wildlife Relations

Instructors: Abi Vanak (coordinator; avanak@atree.org), Swati Shresth, Siddhartha Krishnan
Credits: 2 credits (32 contact hours)
Duration of the course: 1st September – 27th October
Time and Days: 2:00 – 3:50 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays

Course description
In this course, we explore the rich complexity of interactions between humans and wildlife through 3 different perspectives. A historical perspective will explore diverse relationships between humans and wildlife and how political, cultural and economic changes influence these relationships over time. A sociological perspective will explore the reasons behind these types of interactions, and how perspective changes depending on the narrator and the broader social and cultural milieu. An ecological perspective will examine how intrinsic factors have affected the way humans interact with wildlife and vice-versa, and explore the different ecological contexts behind the suite of interaction types. This will be a reading intensive course, and students will be expected to discuss papers in class. At the end of the course, students will have to present a term paper that will examine one type of human wildlife interaction (e.g. elephant-human or tiger-human or ungulate-human) or types of human-wildlife interactions in particular landscapes (e.g. Tropical forests or Sundarbans or Western Ghats etc.), seen through these three different lenses (historical, sociological and ecological). We expect these term papers to be publication quality and will encourage and mentor the students to publish their papers.

Course assessment
Assessment will be based on attendance and participation in the class (20 points), Presentation (40 points) Term paper (40 points).

Ecological Perspective:
September 1

Course overview and readings
Woodroffe et al. (2005). The impact of Human-wildlife conflict on Natural systems – Chapter 1 from Book - People and wildlife, conflict or co-existence?

Herbivores and crop-depredation


Herbivores – effects of hunting


Human–Carnivore interactions

Karanth and Gopal 2005 An ecology-based policy framework for human–tiger coexistence in India in People and wildlife, conflict or co-existence?


Mitigating conflict:

Non-lethal techniques for reducing depredation – Chapter 4 Conflict or Co-existence
Techniques to reduce crop loss: human and technical dimensions in Africa – Chapter 5
Conflict or Co-existence


September 15

**Historical Perspective: Herbivores**


September 17

**Historical Perspective: Carnivores**


September 22

**Criminility, Wildlife and Conservation**


**September 29**


**October 1**

**Sociological and Anthropological Perspectives**

**Human attitudes towards wildlife**


**October 6**

**Human-wildlife relations**


October 8

**Community and conservation: Material and symbolic implications**


October 13, 15, 20 – Student led paper discussions. Students will select one or two papers each of their interest and lead the discussions in class.

October 27, 29 - Term paper presentations.