

# Review of: "Stakeholders' Perception of Socioecological Factors Influencing Forest Elephant Crop Depredation in Gabon, Central Africa"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The authors quantitatively assessed local perceptions about the factors related to crop predation by forest elephants. Based on this assessment, they built a framework that may eventually facilitate the design of management strategies to improve human-elephant coexistence. Overall, the study is relevant for elephant conservation and could be used as a reference in other cases of human-wildlife interactions. I think, however, that the authors need to clarify some of the information provided in the different sections. In the lines below, I present my main comments and suggestions.

## Introduction

The authors stated in the Introduction that people affected by CDIs may kill the elephants. However, when analyzing the drivers in the Results, they said that the increase in human-elephant interactions is partly because "village areas had become safe environments for elephants". Does this mean that elephants are no longer killed in local communities (at least in the communities that participated in the study)?

I also suggest the authors support their statement about the contribution of the establishment of the network of national parks to the CDIs in nearby villages.

## Methods

In the description of the study area, I suggest the authors include information about the landscape types they used in their analysis (multiple-use forest, protected area, village area). This information may clarify where hunting and poaching occur and how these activities may cause elephants to move to village areas. Additional information about the study villages regarding the types of crops planted and the methods used by villagers to protect their crops (do they use electric fences?) could also help to understand some of the results.

I also suggest the authors clarify what the time frame was for the comparisons made by the participants about the frequency of CDIs and other related variables.

## Results

I suggest the authors include the sex ratio in the demographic profile of the participants.

## Discussion

The last sentence of the paragraph about how logging may affect elephant trail systems is confusing. If the new trail system includes villages and is culturally transmitted across generations, how (and why) could elephants return to their previous trail systems?

I also suggest the authors clarify their analysis of the effects of the establishment of the national park. The authors described the participants' perception of the effects, not the real effects. If I understood correctly, the reason elephants began to come close to people is fruit scarcity caused by logging and climate change, not the creation of the national park. If this is so, the statement that "the establishment of national parks has increased village-elephant habitat spatial overlap" needs more support.