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

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It was a pleasure to review the manuscript "Stakeholders' Perception of Socioecological Factors Influencing Forest Elephant Crop Depredation in Gabon, Central Africa". I think this manuscript has great potential to be published in a journal, but not in its current form. This paper looks at human-elephant conflict in an underrepresented area. However, the sample size limits the generalizability of the results. Also, some results are exciting yet not talked about, for example, the overlap of villagers' and conservation professionals' perceptions.

I left comments on some major flaws in the paper. I didn't focus too much on minor comments, as the manuscript will probably change significantly once major comments are applied. I think the results of the paper and the graphs should be explained more in the text. Moreover, authors should increase the diversity of their citations, as their paper has great potential for generalizability to many situations all around the world, yet they mostly cited papers about elephant conflict in Africa. The authors should not only cite elephant conflict papers in Asia but also talk about the bigger picture (human-megafauna conflict and its reasons). After applying these comments, I should be in a better place to leave some minor and fine-scale comments.

To conclude, my biggest concern with this draft is the small sample size that limits the authors' power to generalize their findings and expand them to other contexts. Also, I did not find any theoretical context that authors used. Their small sample size also further limits the authors to model any relationship. I'm also worried about the loss of information when translation occurred from French to English or from local languages to French and then to English. Authors should make sure to review some literature on this context.

Major Comments:

I personally do not prefer the word "stakeholder". I would suggest using "decision-maker" or something like that. Please take a look at this link for the reason: https://sph.uth.edu/research/centers/dell/blog/posting.htm?id=reflecting-on-our-language-stakeholder

Abstract:

-The abstract started talking right off the bat about human-elephant conflict in Gabon. I'd suggest talking about conflict, or at least human-megafauna conflict, in the world, and then narrowing down to Gabon and the elephant crop problem.

-Also, a big bulk of your abstract consists of your results. You need to provide more details on your analysis and add a discussion component as well (e.g., future directions, management recommendations).

-I didn't find any keywords in your draft!

Introduction:

- Introduction is weak; authors start talking about elephants in Gabon, which is quite specific. When you are submitting your paper to an international journal, you need to take the global audience into account.
- Also, the introduction lacks coherence and cohesion. Paragraphs and sentences should be linked to each other better, and they should be roughly the same length.
- I think you should talk about conflict as a general phenomenon in the first paragraph, and then you can cite papers on conflict in general.

Methods:

- What's the difference between a conservation network and the snowball method?

- How did you come up with your sample size? (46 individuals)

Discussion:

Your discussion section can benefit a lot from more coherent and cohesive writing. In many paragraphs, you basically reported your results again followed by someone else's findings, without synthesizing at the end. You need to make sense of your results in the light of other works around the world. Your results are either in line with other studies or are contradictory to other people's results. In both scenarios, you need to talk about a synthesis and conclude something from it.