Research Article

Human-carnivore interaction during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

A study on human-carnivore interaction during the COVID-19 has been conducted by direct field observation along with data from the news of social, print and electronic media. Seventy-three interaction reports were documented in which 12 species and 149 individuals were recorded. The highest interaction was recorded on Fishing Cat (34%). Considering the individual numbers, Asiatic Golden Jackal embodied nearly one-third of total counted individuals and all of them were killed. Most interaction incidents were reported from the rural areas (61.6%) and this varied significantly with other areas (χ^2 = 29.25, df = 2, p < 0.00). The highest number of interactions were recorded for winter (n= 34) and result varied significantly with other seasons (χ^2 = 8.2466, df = 2, p = 0.016). Based on reported events, three regions (central, northwest, southwest) were identified as major interaction hotspots, where more than two-thirds of incidents occurred. The reasons behind the interactions identified in this study included natural food scarcity, misconception, human interference, misidentification, traditional hunting, unplanned transport system, lack of breeding ground and natural hazards. The mitigation of human-carnivore conflicts necessitates a comprehensive approach that integrates accurate knowledge dissemination, mass awareness campaigns, habitat conservation endeavors, and effective law enforcement measures.

Key words: carnivore, interaction, Fishing Cat, hotspots, pandemic