

ODISHA TO INSTALL SIREN TO CAUTION ELEPHANT MOVEMENT IN FOREST

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Steps are being taken to prevent elephant-human encounters.

The Forest Department in Odisha is experimenting with a siren system, which would go off automatically sensing elephant herds crossing the National Highway to reduce human-elephant encounters.

“We in association with a non-government organisation have started a pilot project on siren system to alert traffic to elephant movement. The system has been installed at two places at Ratasingha and Haldihabahal,” said Dhenkanal Divisional Forest officer Prakash Chand Gogineni.

Mr. Gogineni said, “The Forest Department officials have been deployed at two places to assess its operability and how seamless it can work to prevent encounters with wild elephants.”

“The siren system detects elephant herds approaching National Highway by its infrared sensor system. There is an in-built programme to identify jumbos from their sizes and other attributes. Once detected, the siren would go off alerting traffic from both sides,” he said.

“We have found the system working when elephants were crossing NH. However, we will carry out overall assessment. We will evaluate how the system is responding to elephant herds and single elephant during crossing of roads,” said the Dhenkanal DFO.

As cropping season has begun, wild elephants would start coming out from forests. The Dhenkanal forest division has identified five crossing points for elephants. Invariably, elephant herds cross NH two to three times in week. There are chances of elephants getting collided with speeding vehicles. Sometimes, people riding two-wheelers bump into elephant herds.

Similarly, the Khadi Village Industries Commission is implementing apiculture programme to keep elephants at bay in neighbouring Angul district. In cooperation with Athmallik Forest Division, about 100 bee boxes have been set up at border of Laxmipur village in Angul district. Marauding elephants stray into the village frequently damaging large crop areas. Sometimes, human-elephant encounters result in human casualties. Elephants are expected to be stung by bees if their boxes are hit. It would drive elephants back. CCTV cameras have been installed to capture reaction of elephants.

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