



■ Five tigers have died in the past year due to man-animal conflict.

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Tigers, elephants getting pushed into 'conflict' zone

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NEW DELHI: Shrinking habitat for wildlife is making tigers and elephants vulnerable to man-animal conflict. As many as 31 elephants and five tigers have died because of this conflict in the past year, data released by NGO Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) said.

The issue cropped against last Sunday with two tiger cubs allegedly poisoned to death in a day by villagers in outskirts of Ranthambore tiger reserve. State Chief wildlife warden R.N. Mehrotra said at least four cubs have been wandering for the last four months in the outer areas of the reserve and may have killed some goats as prey. In retaliation the villagers poi-

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A. N. PRASAD,

Project Elephant director
soned two cubs.

In January this year, a tiger was allegedly poisoned in Pench Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh and another died of suspected poisoning in Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh. "Both tigers were victims of revenge killing by villagers," said an environment ministry official.

Data with the environment ministry has shown that forest areas for tigers and elephants have shrunk by 15-20 per cent in the last two decades. India has 88 identified elephant corridors connecting habitats of

27,000 elephants, whose population is rising since 2000.

"The corridors have shrunk forcing elephants to wander into agriculture fields. And, it has caused conflict in Uttarakhand and West Bengal," said A.N. Prasad, director of Protect Elephants in the environment ministry. The result of this has been death of 31 elephants and injury to many more.

The wildlife experts, however, find a thin difference between revenge killing and poaching. "Last year, a water hole was poisoned in Central India killing 20-25 animals. It was basically an attempt to poach a tiger," said Tito Joseph of NGO WPSI.

Problem of shrinking habitats is more in reserve with good wildlife population such as Corbett Tiger Reserve.