

## Elephants and Bees: Non-lethal Strategies to Resolve Conflict with People

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Elephants are in peril because of our influence on their lives. Firstly, the illegal ivory trade is presently causing a continental loss of up to 3% per annum. Secondly, through our expanding numbers we are compressing them in their range. Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) is rife but amid this bad news follows a feel-good way in which human conflict with crop raiding elephants can be diminished.

Dr Lucy King from Save the Elephants in Kenya has built on the novel discovery that



beehives can deter elephants from feeding on trees. Lucy and her colleagues took these findings further and designed beehive fences to protect people's crops from elephants and provide them with an additional food source in the form of honey! During a two-year trial period, 106 kg of honey was harvested from a farm's beehive fence, with an average of 4.6 kg of honey

harvested per hive. This indirect benefit from the beehive fences is hoped to encourage more farmers to invest in beehive fences as a means of protecting crops and creating income through the sales of honey. Although risks exist around the idea of bees stinging farmers, children and livestock, King's research has shown that when positioned correctly along the borders of crop fields, beehive fences have the potential to aid farmers in protecting their crops from elephants and thereby decreasing the levels of HEC across the continent.



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