

Causes and Directions of Elephant Migration, A Geographical Survey: Yala National Park

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Introduction: Sri Lankan elephants (*elphahas maximus maximus*) more necessity and unrestricted natural corridors to migrate to find its seasonal ecological niche as natural way of life as well as to avoid pressure in their home ranges. As Study Area, Yala National Park (YNP) is facilitating more than 400 elephants. The objective of this paper is to find the causes and directions of elephants migration from YNP. The fieldwork was conducted in occasional nodes around the park through observation and interviews with officers and local people in December 2014 and March 2015.

During the dry season between March and September, 60 % of the total elephants migrate from YNP due to lack of carrying capacity, besides 03 % wander to find minerals and 5% wander to other areas due to attraction of fruits and vegetables around the park, in March and April at night around 7.00 pm to 1.00 am they spend outside the park. Due to the human interference in the park including setting fire, cutting trees, hunting, shooting at elephants, building fences and huts, visitors hooting motor vehicle hones, shouting, flashing their cameras and throwing stones direct 07% to wander outside the park. In addition 35% migrate as their annual routine from YNP. Elephants migrate from North Western Block of the Park to Maligawila and Moneragala jungles, from Western Block of the Park to Lunugamvehera, which acts as a national park as well as a corridor, from Yala East: Eastern Block of the Park to Poththuvil jungle and from Block I and II: of the Park to Bundala. This is very obvious during March to September but peak in May to July.

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