

# Farmer Perceptions of Crop Damage by Wildlife in Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park, Bhutan

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## Abstract

In the protected areas of Bhutan, crop damage by wildlife impacts the livelihoods of local agropastoralists. We interviewed a stratified-random sample of 274 farmers living in the Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park in an attempt to better understand and manage growing concerns.

Most of the farmers interviewed suffered major financial losses annually due to crop damage by wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*), barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*), macaques (*Macaca mulatta*), and sambars (*Cervus unicolor*). All respondents reported crop losses to wild animals, and wild pig was the most common cause (97%). Farmers responded by implementing nonlethal methods such as guarding, fencing, and performing religious rituals to protect their crops. Growers blamed the park's conservation policies for the high level of reported losses. Crop damage, especially by macaques, increased after establishment of the park in 1993 and implementation of the Forest and Nature Conservation Act of 1995.

Management actions should focus on increasing tolerance among farmers and reducing severe losses caused by wild pigs and macaques.

Key words: Bhutan, crop damage, farmers, interviews, Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park, wildlife, wildlife damage management.