

**PERFORMANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT  
OF WILDILFE CONSERVATION**

## **Executive Summary**

Sri Lanka is a country awash with a great number of wild animals and the significance of the wild animals found herein has immensely contributed towards the promotion of tourism industry. The absolute responsibility regarding the protection and the coexistence of the animals rests with the Government legally. The Department of Wildlife Conservation has been entrusted with above legal responsibility by the Fauna and Flora Ordinance, Nos.2 of 1937, 31 of 1942, 12 of 1944, 12 of 1945 (Cap.469) and the (Amendment) Act No. 38 of 1949, (Amendment) Act No. 44 of 1964, (Amendment) Act No. 01 of 1970, (Amendment) Act No. 49 of 1993 and (Amendment) Act No. 22 of 2009 and accordingly, the Department of Wildlife Conservation performs the responsibility regarding the protection of the wild animals for the sake of the Government. Legal provisions, too, have been made under the Fauna and Flora Ordinance for the protection of wildlife resources found outside the wildlife reservations and that legal power, too, has been vested in the Department of Wildlife Conservation by this Act. (Annexure 01 )

The Department of Wildlife Conservation has been provided with all facilities and resources required for this purpose and the fully responsibility relating to taking decisions rests with the Department of Wildlife Conservation. In addition, several institutions have joined hands with the environment protection initiatives and the Department of Wildlife Conservation, Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, Central Environmental Authority, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, Geological Survey and Mines Bureau, Coastal Environment Protection Authority, Department Cost Conservation and Coastal Resources Management and the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency can be cited as examples therefor. However, the Department of Wildlife Conservation holds the prime responsibility for the wildlife conservation. The fact as to whether the Department of Wildlife Conservation had duly accomplished its responsibility on the conservation and protection of wild animals over a number of years has resulted in the formation of a vast dialogue in that regard in the society. Intensification of the conflict between human and wild animals, killing of tuskers

and a large number of elephants considered as an inestimable resource can be outlined as the main reasons attributed thereto.

Further, it was revealed in audit that some animal species are gradually subject to the extinction while some other animal species are highly proliferating exceeding its average population limit. (Example:- Tuskers and Peacocks respectively ). However, the Department of Wildlife Conservation lacks a clear data base capable of obtaining information in this connection and evidence could not be found to establish whether there was a specific arrangement towards that end.

## **1. Background of issuing the Report**

Accordingly, a report prepared after conducting a study regarding whether the Department of Wildlife Conservation which has been vested with the absolute powers for the conservation of wildlife and protection of their habitats had successfully discharged the relevant functions is submitted hereby to make the responsible parties aware in this connection.

## **2. Audit Methodologies Adopted**

### 2.1 Examination of registers, books and reports

2.1.1 Performance Reports pertaining to the years from 2012 to 2016.

2.1.2 National Policy for the Conservation and Management of Wild Elephant in Sri Lanka, 2006.

2.1.3 Project Reports.

2.1.4 Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance No.2 of 1937 (Cap.469) and the amendment relevant thereto.

2.1.5 Gazette Notifications.

2.1.6 Written declarations, clarifications and confirmations obtained from various institutions.

## 2.2 Conduct of Interviews

2.2.1 Discussions conducted with the environmentalists and verbal and written clarifications of the officers.

## 2.3 Physical Inspections

2.3.1 Inspections of the constructions carried out in parks.

2.3.2 Inspection of tickets issued at the entrance of parks.

2.3.3 Inspection of the construction of electric fence.

### **3. Limitation of Scope**

It is emphasized that in the preparation of this report, it was carried out subjected to the following limitations of my scope.

3.1 Delays of the Department of Wildlife Conservation in the presentation of information required by the Audit. (Copies of agreements, Gazettes, Files)

3.2 Due to the limitation of time and resources, functions of the parks could not be physically observed.

3.3 Failure in updating data.

3.4 Absence of a data base on the animal population.

3.5 Irregularity of the Department of Wildlife Conservation.

3.6 Inefficiency of the institution due to failure in filling vacancies of the top management.

3.7 Absence of information for comparison.

#### 4. The process of the Department of Wildlife Conservation

The Department of Wildlife Conservation has been entrusted with the responsibility of long term protecting and preserving the wildlife resources found within the territory of Sri Lanka including its coastal belt and the legal responsibility for the establishment and management of wildlife reservation areas under the Fauna and Flora Ordinance, too, has been assigned to the Department.

##### 4.1 Reservations of the Department of Wildlife Conservation

The total extent of the reservations established by the Department of Wildlife Conservation stood at 14 per cent of the total land area and it exceeds 10,000 square kilometers. The number of wildlife reservations in the country is shown below and its expansion within the country is indicated in Annexure 02.

Category of Reserves		Number of reserves declared at present (Up to December 2016)	Extent of Lands Square Kilometers
-----		-----	-----
National Reserves	Major Nature Reserves	03	245.33
	National Parks	26	6,457.07
	Nature Reserves	09	1,027.14
Sanctuaries		60	2,613.29
Elephant passes (Kawudulla, Minneriya)		01	87.77
		-----	-----
Total		<u>99</u>	<u>10,430.60</u>

#### **4.2 Vision and Mission of the Department of Wildlife Conservations.**

While the mission of this Department being long term conservation of wildlife resources for present and future generations, the vision thereof is to ensure conservation of wildlife resources by all together under Professional Management.

#### **4.3 Objectives of the Department of Wildlife Conservation.**

When directing towards the vision and mission, arrangements have been made to achieve the following objectives. (Annexure 03)

- (a) Formulation of strategic national plans and programmes for the conservation of wildlife resources to suit to national and international policies.
- (b) Preservation of reservation areas representing all the natural ecosystem including the places of specific scientific importance in the country, timely and quantitative and material development of those areas in a manner enable to maintain sustainable populations of the wildlife species and establishment of coordination among them.
- (c) Identification, classification and management of reservation areas based on more suitable research data and information and conduct of updated supervision on their standards.
- (d) Preparation and implementation of conservation plans for the engendered animal species.
- (e) Providing facilities for the use of opportunities available for the environmental tourism while conserving the ecosystem within the relevant reservation area.
- (f) Implementation of Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance and other regulations enacted for the minimization of illegal use of wildlife resources in the country.

- (g) Encouragement of scientific wildlife researches relevant to wildlife resources management in Sri Lanka.
- (h) Development of skills of the staff of the Department of Wildlife Conservation through trainings, encouragements and motivations.
- (i) Increase in the people's contribution for the conservation process through the conduct of education and awareness programmes.
- (j) Minimization of the dependency of the communities living in the reservation areas upon the said reservations and increase in the contribution of the communities for the conservation process by way of taking action to upgrade the economic standard of those communities.

#### **4.4 Functions of the Department of Wildlife Conservation**

For the achievement of those objectives, the functions required to be discharged by the Department according to the long term plans of the wildlife reservations are as follows.

- (a) Enrichment of the wildlife habitats.
- (b) Construction of roads in the protected areas.
- (c) Promotion of Environmental Tourism.
- (d) Erection of electric fence.
- (e) Awareness and community outreach programmes.
- (f) Conservation of endangered animal species.
- (g) Building and constructions.
- (h) Minimization of elephant- human conflict in Sri Lanka.
- (i) Repairs of buildings and structures.
- (j) Information Communication System.
- (k) Research activities.
- (l) Training, conservation, education and reviewing activities.
- (m) Protection and law enforcement..
- (n) Repairs of Plants and Machineries.

- (o) Vehicle repairs.
- (p) Purchase of Plants and Machineries.
- (q) Purchase of Vehicles.
- (r) National Wildlife Research and Training Centre (Girithale).
- (s) Infrastructure facility development.

In order to discharge these functions, allocation had been made and expenditure had been incurred as indicated below. (Annexure 04)

#### **4.5 Wildlife Conservation Fund**

According to the Fauna and Flora Protection Act, directives had been made by the Order No.14830 dated 29 November 1968 to establish the Wildlife Conservation Fund. That order had been subsequently amended in three instances as required. (Annexure 5)

##### **4.5.1 Objectives of the Wildlife Conservation Fund.**

- (a) Promotion of public interest in the protection and conservation of the wildlife.
- (b) The maintenance, improvement and development all areas established for the purpose of protection and conservation of wildlife.
- (c) Payment of rewards or awards to officers and members of the public who have rendered a better service or shown outstanding merit or who have shown bravery in the exercise, discharge or perform of their powers, functions or duties.
- (d) Payment of rewards or awards to persons who, in their capacity as informer or otherwise had been directly or indirectly responsible for securing the conviction of persons for offences committed under any written law.



#### **4.5.2 Functions of the Wildlife Conservation Fund**

- (a) Conservation of wildlife species threatened with extinction.
- (b) Payment of compensations for the deaths and physical damages of the officers.
- (c) Payment of compensations relating to the damages caused to the public from wild animals.
- (d) Improvement of facilities in parks for the tourists and the animals.

4.5.3 Incurring of expenses for the fulfilment of the above activities from the income received to the Wildlife Conservation Fund during 05 years period and the savings are shown in annexure 06.

4.5.4 Even though an income of Rs.1,857,890,768 had been earned from 26 National Parks during the year 2016, the expenditure incurred for the habitat enrichment of the wild animals is Rs.71,579,824. It is a low percentage of 4 per cent.(Annexure 07)

#### **4.6 Problems in Cadre**

4.6.1 The approved cadre of the Department of Wildlife Conservation as at 20 December 2017 was 2,331 and 536 vacancies of the staff existed.

(Annexure 08)

4.6.2 Even though the Management posts included 57 persons for the execution of the administrative activities of the Department had been approved, the actual cadre of the Department was 23 at present. Vacancies of 34 persons exist at present and it is 56 per cent. Accordingly, the procedure of taking decisions in the Top Management had faced an excessive problem.

	Designation -----	Approved -----	Actual -----	Vacant -----
1	Director General	*01	0	01**
2	Director(Sri Lanka Scientific Service)	*02	0	02
3	Director (Sri Lanka Allied Sciences Service)	01	0	01
4	Assistant Director (Sri Lanka Administrative Service)	02	0	02
5	Assistant Director(Sri Lanka Scientific Service)	*30	50 */*	25
6	Accountant	02	01	01
7	Engineer	02	01	01
8	Veterinary Surgeon	17	16	01
		----	---	---
		57	23	34
		==	==	==

\*\*The Post of Director General is an Acting Post from 22 November 2010.

- 4.6.3 Despite the fulltime service of the employees required for the Posts, execution of acting duties in the vacant posts in addition to the permanent duties of the Officers who engage in those posts had directly affected the efficiency of the activities of the Department. Details are given below.

Permanent Post -----	Acting Post -----
Deputy Director ( Implementation of Laws)	Director General (Acting)
Deputy Director (Natural Resources Management)	Director Operations ( Execution of Duties)
Assistant Director (Planning)	Performance of the duties of Deputy Director (Planning and Information Technology) and Covering of duties of the post of Deputy Director (Implementation of Laws) .
Assistant Director (Conservation of Elephants)	Execution of the duties of the Deputy Director (Conservation of Elephants)

- 4.6.4 The approved cadre of the Sri Lanka Scientific Service is 33 \* and the actual cadre is 05\*/\*.Accordingly, it was revealed that vacancies of 27 Officers of the Sri Lanka Scientific Service and 06 officers of the other services existed in the Institution. As the Department had to perform the duties of 33 vacancies by 05 Officers, one Officer has to perform the duties of several Posts. Therefore, the process of decision making in the Department had depended on 05 Officers.

4.6.5 Even though 30 Posts of Assistant Director/ Deputy Director of the Sri Lanka Scientific Service had been created according to the report on approved cadre by the Department of Management Services No.DMS/G2/56/2 and dated 21 August 2012, the Department had not taken action to make appointments in this connection up to date. Eighteen Wild life Range Officers had been appointed from the year 2006.

#### **4.7 National Policy for the Conservation and Management of Wild Elephants -2006**

Approval had been granted by the Cabinet of Ministers on 20 September 2006 to the Department for the implementation of policies named as “The National Policy for the Conservation and Management of Wild Elephants in Sri Lanka” for the conservation of wild elephants by identifying the National importance of the protection of elephants. Accordingly, the following 06 policies had been included in the National Policy for the Conservation and Management of Wild Elephants.(Annexure 09)

- (a) To ensure the long-term survival of the elephant in the wild in Sri Lanka .
- (b) To mitigate the human-elephant conflict .
- (c) To derive socio-economic benefits from conserving the elephants.
- (d) To defray the costs imposed by the human-elephant conflict on communities affected by it.
- (e) To adopt regulatory mechanism for the removal of elephant from the wild for management reasons.
- (f) To promote scientific research as the basis for elephant conservation and management in the wild.

#### **4.8 Elephant Passes**

4.8.1 Wild elephants are animals which naturally are mobile animals and they move along the paths characteristic and habitual to them. Even though the habitats of the wild elephants had been cleared for the development activities, wild elephants do not leave their habitats.

4.8.2 Even though 17 elephant passes had been identified and out of those at only the elephant pass at Kawdulla –Minneriya could be published in the Gazette by the Department of Wildlife Conservation. (Gazette Extra Ordinary No.1343/10 and dated 01 June 2004) (Annexure 10). The 16 elephant passes which could not be published in the gazette are mentioned as given below and the current situation therein is given in annexure 11.

- |                         |                |                               |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Koholankala          | 2. Unathuwewa  | 3. Wetahirakanda              |
| 4. Dahayyagala          | 5. Puwakpele   | 6. Ulhitiya                   |
| 7. Hungamalaoya         | 8. Mahawewa    | 9. Rathnella                  |
| 10 Digampothana         | 11. 5 th Post  | 12.Nachchaduwa- Mahakandarawa |
| 13 Nachchaduwa-Wilpattu | 14 Sooriyapura | 15 Madupara                   |
| 16 Puluyankulama        |                |                               |

#### **4.9 Death of Wild Elephants**

4.9.1 According to the report of administration referred to in the National Policy on the Conservation and Management of Wild Elephants in Sri Lanka, 2006, since there is no breeding of domesticated elephants, they should be considered as the animals not contributing to the proliferation the generation. Provided 40 per cent of the wild elephants consists of matured female elephants with high reproductive capacity and reproduction takes place once in four years, the total increase stands at 10 per cent per annum. If the average life span of an elephant is from 60 years to 70 years, the annual death toll stands at 1 ½ per cent. Accordingly, even under the utmost satisfactory circumstances, the actual increase in the wild elephant will be 8 ½ per cent. Nevertheless, such situations are not realistically found. As the reasons such as accidents, wounds from shootings, illegal elephant catching, shooting to the mother elephant after catching calves, deaths cause during drought seasons due to lack of water, dispersal of heard due to deforestation, affect the birth and mortality rate, the average actual increase can be assumed as 6 per cent or 7 per cent. If the total number of elephants is considered as 1000, the number of elephants diminishes due to catching and killing will be twofold of the number of increase. To paraphrase, this decrease is a huge waste of wealth in our country. If this decrease is not prevented immediately, under no circumstance the disappearance of Sri Lankan Elephant can be precluded.

4.9.2 The Department of Wildlife Conservation is responsible in making suitable arrangement to protect the wild elephants, as a serious threat had arisen in respect of the protection of the tuskers due to an opinion expressed as the killing of tuskers has become a racket at present.

4.9.3 It was clear that the number of elephant deaths obtained during the previous 05 years, a heavy barrier existed to the population of wild elephants in Sri Lanka and its existence due to utilization of fauna and flora and their habitats commercially and other improper utilizations.

Year	Annual Elephant Deaths	Loss of Human Lives	Property Loss
2013	206	70	1262
2014	231	67	1424
2015	205	63	1226
2016	279	88	1320
30.10.2017	206	56	Full information had not been available at the Department as the payment of compensation carried out by the District Secretaries as well.

4.9.4 A considerable number of endangered tuskers had died at present. It had been shown by the data of the Department of Wildlife Conservation that 38 tuskers had died from the year 2012 to the year 2017. (Annexure 12)

Year	Deaths of Tuskers
2012	06
2013	09
2014	07
2015	05
2016	06
2017	05
Total	38

- 4.9.5 Proper action had not been taken for the security of the Tusker called Dala Poottuwa who was blind due to gun shots and treatments given for a period of three years for a wound in the left leg and non-identification of the moving pattern of that animal through the habitats it moves, were an indirect support to the killing of the Tusker.
- 4.9.6 According to the external information received to audit, it was shown that about 10 Tuskers had died but it could not be confirmed according to the information of the Department of Wildlife Conservation. However, the Department had not carried out an investigation thereon up to date. According to the information available in the Department, the number of Tuskers died in the year 2017 was 05. (Annexure 13)
- 4.9.7 As compared with the other zones, more number of elephant deaths was reported in the Wildlife Zone at Polonnaruwa. Deaths more than 50 per cent had occurred due to human activities as a whole. The humans are more inclined to use fire arms, subject to electric shock, subject to eat hakka patas, and poison them . (Annexure 14)
- 4.9.8 Even though a knowledge in dealing with elephants and a special training thereon had been given for the Wildlife Officers, there were instances that deaths of wild elephants had occurred due to the carelessness of the Officers as well. (As an example, the death of the large Tusker at Siyambalangamuwa shown by the picture below while being transported and a death of a female Tusker at the Omanta area at Vavunia in the year 2017 can be cited.)



**4.9.9 Death due to intake of Garbage**

- 4.9.9.1 A large number of wild elephants face various diseases and die due to intake of garbage at present and the Veterinary Surgeons said that various things such as non-degradable polythene, shopping bags, plastic bottles can be seen in the

stomach of elephants in post mortems carried out. It was stated that the elephant, as a mammal become used to consuming of garbage, it was a habitual action for them and the herd of wild elephants come to eat garbage is increased day by day. A Cabinet Memorandum No. 17/1057/708/014 and dated 07 June 2017 is issued under the topic of “ Taking action for the prevention of the elephants hanging about the places in which garbage is disposed.”(Annexure 15)

4.9.9.2 Accordingly, although there is an ability to avoid this condition by construction of electric –fences in a manner to prevent elephants from reaching the places in which the garbage is disposed, the Department of Wildlife Conservation had failed to carry out a proper procedure with the relevant Local Authorities.

4.9.9.3 It had been identified that more than 300 wild elephants hang about in 54 places where the garbage is disposed in wildlife zones.

(Annexure 16)



#### 4.9.10 Enforcement of Law due to killing and torturing Elephants

4.9.10.1 In terms of Section 17 and Section 51 of Fauna and Flora Protection (Amendment) Act, No.22 of 2009, no person shall in any area outside or within a

National Reserve hunt, shoot, kill, injure or take any elephant. (in terms of Section 21 (b)) In case of an elephant outside a Reserve, shall on conviction be liable to a fine not less than one hundred and fifty thousand rupees and not more than five hundred thousand rupees and any offence committed under the Act involving an elephant shall be a non-bailable offence and the provisions of the Bail Act, No. 30 of 1997 and the Code of Criminal Procedure Act, No. 15 of 1979 shall apply in respect of such offence.

4.9.10.2 According to Section 51, in case of an elephant within a Reserve, shall on conviction be liable to a fine not less than two hundred and fifty thousand rupees and not more than five hundred thousand rupees and in case of a period not less than 10 years, shall be subject to an imprisonment of one of both or the said fine and imprisonment both. The number of killings of elephants and the sentences given therefor during the 03 preceding years are given below.

Year	Number of killings due to human activities (as per performance reports of the Department of Wildlife Conservation)	Number of law enforcements on elephant killings	Number of actions not taken on elephant killings
-----	-----	-----	-----
2015	117	18	99
2016	131	9	122
30/10/2017	136	16	120
	-----	----	-----
Total	384	43	341
	====	==	====

4.9.11 The calf elephant who was tied to a tree near the “ Demala Thotupala” close to the Menik river in Kataragama had been sent to the Elephant Transit Home ("Eth Athuru Sevana") at Udwalawa considering it as a court production without the Court’s permission. Further, it has been pointed out that a grave injustice had been suffered by the complainant in this case, as the Magistrate has also not produced the calf elephant as a court production. An accelerated programme should be implemented to make the officers of the Department of Wildlife Conservation aware of the court cases.

4.9.12 Even though a calf she elephant aged 06 years who was caught in a trap made with a steel wire had been found on 05 December 2016 at 22 post , Gonaganara of Part iv of the Ruhuna National Park , the Department had not taken any effective course of action to identify the suspects in this connection.



#### **4.10 Calf Elephant Racket**

It was revealed in audit that there was a racket of catching calf elephants illegally from forests and keeping them as tamed elephants by obtaining fraudulent licenses due to the inclination of general public for using elephants in respect of religious and cultural events and keeping elephants in possession. Further, the officers of the Department of Wildlife Conservation had also involved in this connection. (Annexure 17)

#### **4.11 Census of Elephants**

4.11.1 A survey on elephants had been carried out on 11 August 2011 and accordingly 5,879 elephants had been identified as baby, calf, young and adult in various age categories. According to this survey, 67.19 per cent of the wild elephant population in Sri Lanka live in the reservation network under the Department of Wildlife Conservation while 29.78 per cent live in the Reserves of the Department of Forest Conservation and 3.03 per cent live in jungles outside the Reserves. (Annexure 18)

4.11.2 According to the annual birth rate of elephants indicated as 2 per cent in the report of census on elephants in the year 2011, the number of elephants stood at 6,621. However, it is hard to observe that the said situation was realistic indeed.

#### **4.12 Human Elephant Conflict**

4.12.1 At present, human elephant conflict has rapidly increased due to the changes in the patterns of using lands owing to the deforestation occurred illegally and in development activities as well as the deterioration and minimization of enriched habitats usable.

4.12.2 Construction of electric fence, distribution of elephant crackers, removal of obstructions on elephant passes and strengthening the relationships between habitats, public awareness and participation had been identified during the past years by the Department of Wildlife Conservation as strategies for the mitigation of human elephant conflict. Nevertheless, more attention had been paid to the construction of electric fence and distribution of elephant crackers. The provision made annually for each activity during the period 2012-2016 is given below.

Nature of Expenditure ----- -----	2016 ----- Rs.	2015 ----- Rs.	2014 ----- Rs.	2013 ----- Rs.	2012 ----- Rs.
Construction of electric fence	239,502,262	275,819,926	195,340,000	209,232,518	177,660,693
Purchase of elephant crackers	86,616,504	75,867,343	58,331,560	48,403,600	43,464,025
removal of obstructions on elephant passes	727,028	-	-	-	-
Public awareness and participation	3,080,000	2,899,000	1,948,000	1,151,000	-

Note: Accordingly, no expenditure whatsoever had been incurred for the removal of obstructions on elephant pass during the said period and no attention had been paid thereto.

4.12.3 The Department had made provision for driving away the elephants as they invade cultivation lands and villages for searching foods due to loss of natural habitats. The expenditure incurred for the purchase of elephant crackers and driving away the elephants during 05 years was as follows.

#### Purchase of Elephant Crackers

Year	Thunder crackers large		Thunder crackers small		Signal crackers		Total	
	Quantity Units	Expenditure Rs.	Quantity Units	Expenditure Rs.	Quantity Units	Expenditure Rs.	Quantity Units	Expenditure Rs.
2012	239,000	20,013,000	125,000	7,962,825	150,000	15,488,200	514,000	43,464,025
2013	260,000	22,459,500	132,000	8,499,400	163,000	17,444,700	555,000	48,403,600
2014	284,500	27,055,840	150,000	10,451,000	182,500	20,824,720	617,000	58,331,560
2015	360,000	36,652,710	150,000	11,242,500	225,000	27,972,132	735,000	75,867,342
2016	375,500	41,377,802	156,500	13,442,618	234,750	31,796,083	766,750	86,616,504

## Driving away of Elephants

Year -----	Catch and release of aggressive wild elephants -----		Expenditure incurred per instance -----
	Quantity -----	Expenditure ----- Rs.	Rs.
2012	16	6,225,734	389,108
2013	13	2,211,363	170,105
2014	11	3,047,334	277,030
2015	11	1,913,665	173,970
2016	16	4,458,233	278,640

4.12.4 The expenditure incurred on driving away elephants and the purchase of elephant crackers during the year 2016 had been Rs.4,458,233 and Rs.86, 696,931 respectively. Accordingly, the expenditure on driving away elephants and the purchase of elephant crackers had increased by 133 per cent and 14 per cent respectively as compared with the preceding year.

4.12.5 Wild elephants had been driven away in 16 instances by the Department of Wildlife Conservation during the year 2016 and an expenditure of Rs.4,458,233 had been incurred therefor. Accordingly, a sum of approximately Rs.278,640 had been spent per elephant.

4.12.6 Even though an expenditure of Rs.329,230,260 had been incurred out of the provision of Rs.647,575,000 received for the mitigation of human elephant conflict according to the budget proposal of the year 2016, the damage caused to both parties as a result of human elephant conflict had increased by 36 per cent in the year 2016 as compared with the year 2015.

#### 4.13 Construction of Electric Fences

4.13.1 Construction of electric fence had been identified as one solution among the major solutions for the mitigation of human elephant conflict. Accordingly, 4,211.8 kilo meters had been constructed up to the year 2016. The provision made by the Government for the construction of electric fence during the 05 preceding years , the amount spent by the Department and the distance of electric fence constructed in each year are given below.

Year	Head of Expenditure	Distance constructed	Provision	Expenditure	Financial Performance
		Km	Rs.	Rs.	
2012	284-1-2-2014 Gaja Mithuro Programme	231.85	200,000,000	177,660,693	89%
2013	284-1-1-6-2105-03 Construction of electric fence	341.85	110,914,925	110,914,925	100%
2013	284-1-1-6-2502 Deyata Kirula		100,000,000	98,317,593	98%
2014	284-1-10-2105-03 Construction of electric fence	179.2	250,000,000	195,340,000	78%
2015	284-1-8-2502 Construction of electric fence	226.16	300,000,000	275,819,926	92%
2016	284-1-8-2502 Construction of electric fence	287.1	250,000,000	239,502,262	37%

Note:- The amount spent for the construction of electric fence included the expenditure on purchase of equipment for electric fences and all equipment for electric fences purchased, is not used for the constructions during the relevant year.

#### **4.13.2 Gaining the Assistance of the Civil Security Department for the Construction of the Electric Fence**

In the construction of the electric fence as a strategy for mitigating the human-elephant conflict, aggravating day by day, the dearth of employees for the constructions had been identified as a major issue faced by the Department of Wildlife Conservation and as a solution therefor, construction, protection and maintenance of all electric fences relating to wildlife and forest conservation zones in the island had been assigned to the Civil Security Department with effect from 19 October 2012 subject to a proper methodology and supervision. Moreover, provisions amounting to Rs.99,784,505 had been made for the maintenance of electric fences in the year 2017.

4.13.3 It was observed at the inspection carried out on the construction of electric fence that the electric fences had been constructed illegally in certain areas by persons around their cultivating lands. Moreover, it was further revealed that there was no examination or supervision as to what type of power source is used for such electric fences and whether the present voltage thereof falls under the proper standard. (Annexure 19)

4.13.4 Even though an expenditure amounting to Rs.1,081,415,399 had been incurred for the construction and maintenance of electric fences during 05 years, it was observed that equipment for electric fences valued at approximately Rs.22,746,196 had remained idle and underutilized in the Office and Beat Offices.

4.13.5 Provisions of Rs.3,763,315 had been released on 07 August 2015 for the construction of the Sandagalagama Ilukpelassa Mahanetula electric fence of 24 km in length. Even though the issues on lands should be solved before releasing provisions, that function could not be performed even by September 2016 due to failure in solving those issues on lands. However, before settling those issues on lands, procurement activities had been

carried out therefor and the institution as well had been selected for awarding the contract.

4.13.6 It had been planned in the year 2014 to construct the electric fence of 60 km from Aluthganara up to Unathu Weva under 06 phases. Even though action had been taken to clear the running way part by part and to construct the electric fence of 19.5 km even under 06 phases of this construction, it could not be completed even by September 2016 due to issues on lands. As such, the amount of Rs.3,233,982 spent therefor in the year 2014 had become fruitless. Details appear below.

<b>Description</b> -----	<b>Proposed Extent</b> -----	<b>Amount spent</b> -----	<b>Distance completed</b> -----
		<b>Rs.</b>	
Phase 01	(10 km)	464,574	4.50 km
Phase 02	(10 km)	842,863	7.00 km
Phase 03	(10 km)	Not performed	-
Phase 04	(10 km)	963,272	8.00 km
Phase 05	(10 km)	Not performed	-
Phase 06	(10 km)	963,272	-
		-----	-----
		3,233,981	19.5 km
		=====	=====

4.13.7 Even though the issues on lands should be solved in the construction of the electric fence, the Department of Wildlife Conservation had failed to solve the said issues on lands. Several electric fences that could not be constructed due to those issues, are as follows.

- Wadinagala – Karambana
- Konaketiyawa – Dewalamankada
- Koholankala – Karambaweve

- Hungamalaoya North
- Nikiniyawa
- Walathambapura – Mahawatta
- Mahawatta – Welipitiya
- Welipitiya – Kattambery
- Wilmanna Uraneeya(Modarapalassa)
- Sandagalagama – Ilukpalassa – Mahanetula
- Aluthganara – Unathaweta

#### **4.14 Declaration of Wild Elephant Management Reservations**

4.14.1 The objective is the identification of elephant migration patterns and networking of forest areas by connecting Udawalawa, Lunugamvehera and Bundala National Parks as a remedy for the Human-elephant conflict.

4.14.2 Even though it had been mentioned in the Environmental Impact Evaluation Reports prepared before the construction of the Hambanthota Port and Maththala Air Port that the Hambanthota Wild Elephant Management Reservation should be declared with these development activities for providing protection for wild elephants, it had not been so done.

(Annexure 20)

#### **4.15 Elephant Conservation Park at Horowpathana**

4.15.1 Problems have arisen on the qualitiveness of the electric fence of the elephant conservation park and aggressive elephants out of about 30 retained therein have escaped and necessary action had not been taken to find out reasons therefore and to identify shortcomings thereon.

4.15.2 The tusker named “Thanidalaya” which was in the Horowpathana Elephant Conservation Park of 2,500 acres in extent, constructed for the holding of aggressive elephants, has escaped therefrom on a previous day

and the Department had failed to take adequate steps in respect of the safety of elephants and villagers.

## **4.16 Other Fauna Species**

### **4.16.1 Sri Lankan Leopard**

4.16.1.1 The Sri Lankan leopards are animal species which belong to the cat family and they occupy territories that are demarcated by themselves. When a strange leopard invades that area, that strange leopard is at a greater risk. Most leopard species can be seen in upcountry areas and their lives are threatened with rapid colonization of those areas.

4.16.1.2 The research institution named “The Wilderness and Wildlife Conservation Trust” has revealed that there have been about 750-1000 leopards by the end of the year 2017 and it has further revealed that 35 leopards had deceased from the year 2001 to the year 2017. (Annexure 21)

4.16.1.3 The Department had failed to introduce a proper procedure for the protection of leopards and their community growth or for the safety of leopards and the public.

### **4.16.2 Turtle Conservation**

4.16.2.1 The turtle is a very special animal amongst organisms living in the ocean. The Southern boundary of the Bundala National Park, Southern coast at Balapitiya, Mannar, Eastern coast line from Kuchchaveli to Kokilai and the coast line from Kodaimudai to Kachchatheevu and Jaffna Peninsula are the coast lines where the turtles lay their eggs. Moreover, 05 types of turtles who visit the



sandy beaches in Sri Lanka to lay eggs have been identified by now.

- Loggerhead Turtle (Olugedi Kesbewa)
- Green Turtle (Gal/Vali Kesbewa)
- Letherback Sea Turtle (Dara Kesbewa)
- Oliver Ridley Sea Turtle (Battu Kesbewa)
- Kawksbill Sea Turtle (Pothu/Leli Kesbewa)

4.16.2.2 The Department of Wild Life Conservation maintains 05 turtle conservation centres. (Annexure 22). In addition to that, private centres between 12 and 16 are maintained. However, steps had not been taken to incorporate those institutions into a legal frame work and to supervise them.

4.16.3 It is obvious by studying on complaints received from outside that certain wildlife fauna species in different areas had exceeded their natural population and become unfavourable for the humans. The immediate reason for the increase in the population of certain fauna species is the exposure of their food chains to quick changes. As an example, matters such as the vast increase in the population of peacocks living outside the National Parks, rapid extinction of the fox from nature, who is their natural predator and non-reproduction had directly affected therefor. It was further revealed that at present, the human-monkey conflict as well has been created in Sri Lanka.

#### **4.17 Influence of Tourism on Animals**

4.17.1 Even though the key function of the Department of Wildlife Conservation is ensuring the safety of wildlife resource, providing facilities for the visitors to view the National Parks has become a key activity of the

Department at present. It is ensured according to the number of motor vehicles arriving at the National Parks and details on arrival of motor vehicles at National Parks are given below.

<b>National Parks</b>	<b>Number of motor vehicles as at 30/12/2016</b>	<b>Number of motor vehicles as at 15/122017</b>
-----	-----	-----
Yala (Within 10 months )	108,198	90,519
Udawalawe	55,286	51,749
Horton Plains	68,768	58,386

4.17.2 A number of 108,198 and 90,519 motor vehicles had arrived in the years 2016 and 2017 respectively at the Yala National Park of about 97,880 hectares in extent. The average number of motor vehicles arrived was about 250 per day (within 10 months) and there are instances of exceeding 700 during school vacations. As the Park is overcrowded during the hours from 6 am to 12 pm in the morning and from 02 pm to 6 pm in the evening, the traffic condition of the Yala National Park is no better than the traffic congestion we experience in Colombo (Especially at the Palatupana Access)

4.17.3 Even though discharging or carrying a firearm is prohibited in terms of the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance, a soldier had discharged his firearm to frighten the elephant called Gemunu living in the Yala National Park.

4.17.4 At present the animals in the Yala National Park had become used to eating food brought by visitors and they are more inclined to eat food received from visitors than the food in the forest.

Examples:- Elephants such as Gemunu, Thilak, Nandamithra and Arjuna

#### **4.18 Researches and Trainings**

The main objective and responsibility is the identification and implementation of research projects relating to wildlife conservation. According to the National Policy on the Conservation and Management of Wild Elephants, promoting of scientific researches should be made based on the conservation and management of wild elephants. The Department grants approval for carrying out research activities within the reservation network relating to forest conservation outside the Department and relevant proposals therefor are provided as well by the Department.

#### **4.19 Telephone and Radio Message Communication System**

---

4.19.1 The radio message network of the Department of Wildlife Conservation has been in operation since the first half of the year 1980 and this is used in communication to connect with service areas in the field and the Head Office, for field watch activities, organized raids, treatment to wild elephants, catching elephants and driving away of elephants.

4.19.2 At present, VHF – Radio is used and it is used as an alternative communication system for connecting with zonal offices, Headquarters of main parks with Head Offices.

4.19.3 Fixed or CDMA telephone facilities have been provided as to cover every office in the field due to the improvement in telephone facilities with the gradual expansion in the field of telecommunication.

#### **4.20 System of Reservation of Circuit Bungalows**

Reservation of circuit bungalows are carried out in two methods. They are Online method and Non Online method. The public complain that they face many difficulties in the reservation of circuit bungalows through both these methods. In

the Online method, it is possible to reserve circuit bungalows through the computer network from 12 midnight on the last day of the month. However, the response of the officers of the Department to complaints made by the public on the obstructions in access to the network is that access to the network has been obstructed due to technical problems. Nevertheless, the Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka reports that the computer network has not reached the maximum capacity on any day.

#### 4.21 Process of issuing Entry Tickets

4.21.1 In admitting visitors to 26 national parks belonging to the Department of Wildlife Conservation, computer generated entrance tickets are issued in the recovery of fees thereon. This entrance ticket consists of three copies such as office copy, Shroff's copy and the Visitor's (Customer's) copy. According to the Gazette Notification No.1612/37 of 31 July 2009, the way in which fees are charged, is mentioned in **Annexure 23**.

4.21.2 At the physical verification carried out on entry tickets issued in 02 national parks during the year 2016, a financial misappropriation of Rs.1,894,597 had been committed as follows. (**Annexure 24**)

Udawalawa National Park (Examination carried out by the Internal Audit Unit)	Rs.1,726,577
Minneriya National Park	Rs. 168,020
	-----
Total	Rs.1,894,597
	=====

## 5. Observations

- 5.1 An officer had been appointed to act in the post of Director General from 08 June 2016. According to Section 13.3 of Chapter II of the Establishments Code, an acting appointment should be made as a temporary measure only and until a substantive appointment is made. If the post requires the services of a full time officer, the permanent appointment should be made without delay. However, it was observed that action had not been so taken even by the date of audit. (paragraph 4.6)
- 5.2 According to the Memorandum of Cabinet of Ministers No.07/1085/359/015 presented on 26 June 2017, it was proposed by the Cabinet Paper that the Veterinarians of the Department of Wildlife Conservation, who are officers in the service of animal products and health could apply as well for the post of Deputy Director of the Department of Wildlife Conservation. However, it was observed that it had not been so carried out and as a result, the problem in cadre had aggravated. (paragraph 4.6)
- 5.3 The approved cadre of the Department of Wildlife Conservation stands at 2,331. Out of this, 1,227 are Field Officers. That staff requirement had been identified a long period before and it was observed that the approved cadre should be revised by identifying the requirement under the complex situation relating to wildlife conservation at present. (paragraph 4.6)
- 5.4 It was observed that in future, due to failure in taking action to fill the necessary vacancies of the Department as quickly as possible, the efficiency and the productivity of the employees of the Department of Wildlife Conservation had reduced. (paragraph 4.6)
- 5.5 It was observed that the amount spent for the improvement of enrichment of animals in parks during the year 2016 out of the income received from viewing animals of national parks, had been at a minimum level representing 4 per cent. (paragraph 4.5)
- 5.6 Even though 17 elephant passes had been identified, the Department of Wildlife Conservation was able to gazette only one elephant pass. It was observed that the

remaining 16 identified elephant passes had not been published in the Gazette up to now. (paragraph 4.8)

5.7 It was observed that the proper achievement of conservation of wild animals had been obstructed due to the unavailability of a proper co-ordination with institutions such as the Department of Wildlife Conservation, Department of Forest Conservation and Mahaweli Development Authority. (paragraph 4.8)

5.8 Even though it is the responsibility of the Department of Wildlife Conservation to prepare a methodology in protecting tuskers living at present, it was observed that such a methodology was not available. (paragraph 4.9)

5.9 Instances were observed in which elephants were killed due to failure in following suitable protective methods in the transportation of elephants. As an example, the instance in which the elephant of Siyambalangamuwa was killed can be mentioned. (paragraph 4.9)

5.10 In consideration of the number of elephant killings and the number of punishments imposed therefor, it was observed that the officers of the Department had not been considerate of the implementation of law and field inspections carried out for the protection of wildlife. (paragraph 4.9)

5.11 It was observed that wild elephants had been subjected to food poisoning as a result of eating garbage and died due to eating matter such as undecayed polythene found in garbage. Moreover, it was observed that the information on the total number of elephant deaths caused by eating garbage was not available with the Department. (paragraph 4.9)

5.12 Even though a Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers on the construction of electric fences to prevent wild elephants from accessing garbage dumps exists, it was observed that adequate measures had not been taken thereon. (paragraph 4.9)

5.13 An audit query had been issued in the year 2013 and proceeded with court action on the calf elephant racket and 17 calf elephants had been taken back to the Department of Wildlife Conservation. However, the instructions of the Attorney

General are sought to file cases in respect of 17 completed files. It was observed that penalties due to the Department as a result of the delay in filing cases had been deprived of up to now and that the follow up action is at a weak level. (paragraph 4.10)

5.14 The Department of Wildlife Conservation had spent a sum of approximately Rs.67,776,102 for constructing the elephant holding centre for taking care of the 17 calf elephants obtained from courts and it was observed that a sum of approximately Rs.49,678,509 is spent annually for recurrent expenditure such as food and resident salaries. It was observed that the racketeers had become active again due to the failure in expediting the implementation of law in this connection. (paragraph 4.10)

5.15 Even though the Department had been granted with provisions for the mitigation of the elephant human conflict, it was observed that those objectives had not been achieved successfully. (paragraph 4.12)

5.16 That no harm can be caused to elephants or other conserved wildlife due to the illegal construction of private electric fences could not satisfied in Audit and it was observed that a specific arrangement had not been available with the Department to supervise them. (paragraph 4.13)

5.17 Even though the Department of Wildlife Conservation should take action for the protection of all wild animals, a certain work had been carried out only for wild elephants. However, it was observed that adequate and clear procedure had not been established in respect of caring for other animals. (paragraph 4.15)

5.18 Even though the Department of Wildlife Conservation should take action on the protection of all wild animals, it was observed that action had been taken only on wild elephants and that an adequate and clear procedure had not been established for other animals. (paragraph 4.16)

5.19 A statistical data network on the leopards of Sri Lanka was not available with the Department and due to the destruction of the forest resource, the survival of leopards living in parks (sanctuaries) had been variously affected. It was observed

that necessary steps had not been taken to carry out a study relating to bio diversity and to act accordingly. (paragraph 4.16)

5.20 It was observed that the Department had not taken action to retain observation reports on leopards or to hold a census or to conduct surveys and researches. (paragraph 4.16)

5.21 It was observed that no specific management methodologies had been introduced for other animal species which are becoming extinct. (paragraph 4.16)

5.22 The wildlife habitats become polluted due to stirring up of dust as a result of entrance of a large number of vehicles at once to the Yala National Park and their fast running. This would become a serious threat to the existence of wildlife and the forest. As a result of this congestion of vehicles, the manner in which wild animals are surrounded by blocking vehicles in certain instances, was observed. Moreover, it was observed that the Department of Wildlife Conservation had failed to take necessary measures and allowed to abuse the survival of wild animals with the objective of satisfying visitors and earning money. (paragraph 4.17)

5.23 Even though a system of rules and regulations and control had been introduced for the Yala visitors, it was observed that it is not in operation properly. (paragraph 4.17)

5.24 The method followed by the Department to find out whether elephants in the forest are living in safety and to find out if subjected to an accident is using VF-Radio belts on elephants. These belts had not been used on the tuskers that were at a risk and it was observed that use of belts or a specific methodology had not been followed in respect of their safety.

5.25 A proper communication method was not available due to the dearth of staff and attitudinal reasons. As such, it was observed that duties such as treatment, catch and release of elephants are not duly performed. (paragraph 4.19)

5.26 The only state institution which is there for the villagers to complain about invasion of wild elephants is the wildlife regional offices. As such, it was observed that the



problems of villagers cannot be properly solved due to the inefficient communication between officers. (paragraph 4.19)

5.27 It was observed that a financial misappropriation had been committed by destroying, changing data, reporting unauthorized and bogus transactions and opportunity in erroneous reporting of data without proper authority or permission in issuance of computerized entry tickets.

## **6. Recommendations**

6.1 It is recommended that decentralization of activities of the wildlife network within a proper management plan and restructuring of administration to suit the present conservation requirements are appropriate.

6.2 It is recommended that management should be regularized by preparing and implementing long term management plans for wildlife reserves.

6.3 It is recommended that it is appropriate to consider protecting the wildlife resource as the main objective and paying more attention thereto and spending a greater percentage of the income received from visitors on enrichment of wildlife.

6.4 It is recommended to construct circuit bungalows only after the conduct of a proper study in a manner not to cause any harm to the existence of the animals and to ensure an adequate space facilities for the free movements of the animals.

6.5 It is recommended to take action to identify the elephant passes and to publish 16 identified elephant passes in the Gazette.

6.6 It is recommended to construct a special security fence for the prevention of wild elephants from entering in the garbage dump management units located close to the haunts of elephant and to maintain them in a proper manner.

6.7 It is recommended to implement an appropriate and expeditious arrangement to fill all the vacancies of the Institution and settle the issue involved in the institution.

6.8 It is recommended to establish a system of laws and rules and management relating to Safari while giving priority to the conservation of wildlife and subsequent place to tourism industry and Safari service, to limit the number of vehicles entering in the Yala National Park daily and to introduce formal system of laws and rules relating

to the behavior of the tourists in a manner not to impede the free movements of the wild animals.

- 6.9 As a remedial measure for the elephant human conflict, it is recommended to immediately declare the already identified Wild Elephant Management Reservation, Mattala as a wildlife zone with the objective of networking forest areas by identifying the migrant patterns of the elephants and tuskers by way of connecting Udawalawa, Lunugamwehera and Bundala National Park.
- 6.10 It is recommended to appoint a suitable committee to deal with the security of the wild elephant and to establish Wildlife Control Units.
- 6.11 It is recommended to take necessary action to follow the artificial methods of breeding for animals threatened with extinction.
- 6.12 Misuse of issuance of tickets and reserving circuit bungalows was observed and as such, it is recommended that an accurate methodology should be followed by restructuring it.
- 6.13 One authorized Field Officer should be appointed for each valuable identified tusker and they are responsible for information and protection of that tusker and it is recommended that a perfect supervision should be carried out thereon by the Top Management.
- 6.14 It is recommended that an officer, who has been assigned with the responsibilities in respect of communication and drivers, should be engaged in the service of Wildlife Regional Offices so as to take action in every instance.

## **7 Conclusions**

- 7.1 It is concluded that the efficiency and productivity of the Department should be improved through creating new appropriate posts by restructuring the Department for solving the problem in cadre which caused the inefficiency of the Department of Wildlife Conservation at present.

- 7.2 It is concluded that the failure in legal opening of 16 identified elephant passes approved by the Cabinet of Ministers and failure in maintenance as proper elephant passes had resulted in the increase in the number of deaths of elephants and humans.
- 7.3 It is concluded that the elephant resource will become extinct in Sri Lanka within several ensuing years, if a proper arrangement will not be made without delay to control the human elephant conflict.
- 7.4 Even though the number of elephant deaths remains at a considerable rate, clear procedures available relating to prevention, minimization thereof or taking legal action to penalize persons responsible for the deaths of elephants had not been properly carried out. As such, it is concluded that the officers of the Department of Wildlife Conservation should be held responsible in respect of failure in implementing them properly due to the inefficiency of the Department.
- 7.5 It is concluded that the Officers of the Department of Wildlife Conservation should be responsible for the failure to minimize the human elephant conflict due to the inability to achieve the expected performance of construction by the Department of Wildlife Conservation despite having supplied the human and financial resources adequately for the construction of electric-fence.
- 7.6 As the wild elephant management reserve in Hambanthota was not declared, the expedited development projects taking place in those areas severely impacted on the corridors and habitats of the fauna including wild elephants. As such, it is concluded that the human elephant conflict in such areas would escalate.

H.M. Gamini Wijesinghe

Auditor General

March 2018

