



15 JULY 2026 SENTINEL EDITORIAL Q & A: Human-macaque conflict has emerged as a growing environmental and socio-economic challenge in Assam. Discuss its causes and suggest measures for its

long-term mitigation. GS III

Human-macaque conflict has intensified in several parts of Assam due to increasing interaction between humans and rhesus macaques. The conflict affects livelihoods, food security and biodiversity conservation, making it a significant environmental governance challenge.

Causes

- Habitat fragmentation due to deforestation, hill encroachment and urban expansion.
- Decline in natural food sources, forcing macaques to raid agricultural fields and human settlements.
- Expansion of agriculture into forest fringes, increasing human-primate interactions.
- Ecological changes and rapid growth of macaque populations in certain areas.
- Lack of scientific data and location-specific mitigation strategies.

Mitigation Measures

- Restore degraded forests and hill ecosystems to improve natural food availability.
- Implement the **Human Simian Conflict Mitigation Project** using scientific and area-specific approaches.
- Identify conflict hotspots through regular monitoring and ecological studies.
- Strengthen community participation in conflict reporting and awareness programmes.
- Promote research involving universities to understand macaque behaviour and population dynamics.
- Develop crop protection measures, early-warning systems and habitat-based conservation strategies.
- Strictly regulate encroachment and protect wildlife habitats through effective land-use planning.



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Conclusion

Long-term mitigation of human-macaque conflict requires shifting from reactive measures to **habitat restoration, scientific management and community-based conservation**.

Protecting ecological balance while safeguarding livelihoods is essential for achieving sustainable coexistence between humans and wildlife in Assam.