

Mammals of Sri Lanka - Terrestrial Carnivores

Fauna of Sri Lanka
SLWCS Poster Series
Poster No. 01

Considered as symbols of power & courage by the ancients, the carnivores or the predators are undoubtedly sources of wonder & awe. Large or small, they are a successful group of animals playing a dynamic role as predators, prey, scavengers & even dispersers of seeds.

Sri Lanka with its surrounding continental waters is home to 90 indigenous terrestrial mammalian species (of which 16 are endemic) & 28 species of marine mammals. A further 12 species have been introduced. This poster illustrates all 14 members of the order Carnivora in the island & the pangolin. Other 'carnivores' include the microchiropteran bats, some cetaceans & introduced domesticated carnivores (though some are insectivores to be more specific).



Bears

Mostly nocturnal or crepuscular & are generally solitary; take shelter in caves, tree cavities, hollow logs & dens etc.; tend to move relatively slowly, but are capable of running, standing & walking on hind feet, climbing & swimming; vision & hearing are not well-developed, but the sense of smell is acute; bears use their sensitive lips to locate & maneuver food; omnivorous & opportunistic feeders where most members eat primarily fruits and insect larvae but may also include vertebrates, carrion, forbs & grasses, honey, seeds, tubers, eggs & fish. Globally there are 8 species in 5 genera, but Sri Lanka is home to just one species.

Sloth bear මලකුරු *Melursus ursinus*
Distribution- B,F ; Status-IUCN 1999-TR / FFPO-Pr / IUCN 2002-VU / CITES-App.I


Viverrids – civets & palm cats

Some are probably strictly carnivorous & effective predators feeding on insects, other invertebrates, small vertebrates, plant matter & carrion; others also include fruit & roots in their diets thus act as pollinators & seed dispersers; most are nocturnal; senses of sight, smell & hearing are all well developed. 34 species in 20 genera worldwide, but 3 species in Sri Lanka.


Key to the civet cats and palm cats of Sri Lanka

A. Tail with alternative black & white rings Ring-tailed Civet-cat
Tail without any clear markings B

B. Body variegated black & grey in colour Indian Palm-cat
Body golden brown or chocolate in colour Golden Palm-cat






Ring-tailed civet මලකුරු *Viverricula indica*
Distribution- A,B,C,F



Golden palm cat කහ පාල් කැටුණ *Paradoxurus zeylonensis*
Distribution- A,B,C,D,E,F ; Status- Endemic / IUCN 1999-TR / FFPO-Pr



Palm cat කහ පාල් කැටුණ *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*
Distribution- A,B,C,D,E,F

Family Herpestidae – mongooses

Primarily predators - feed on a wide range of animal-matter including small mammals & birds, bird eggs, reptiles (especially snakes), a wide variety of insects & crabs but some members also include vegetable material, feeding on fruits & tubers; some are gregarious, others solitary; most terrestrial, often making complex burrow systems. 34 species in ~20 genera world wide, and 4 species in Sri Lanka.

Key to the mongoose of Sri Lanka

A. Tail tip not black in colour B
Tail tip black in colour C

B. Body colour light speckled grey & with a lighter tail tip Grey mongoose
Body colour speckled brown & without a lighter tail tip Brown mongoose

C. Neck with a clear black stripe. Large in size Striped-necked mongoose
Neck without any markings. Smaller in size Ruddy mongoose



Ruddy mongoose කහ මුට්ටු *Herpestes smithii*
Distribution- A,B,C,D,F



Grey mongoose කහ මුට්ටු *Herpestes edwardsii*
Distribution- A,B,C,F



Brown mongoose කහ මුට්ටු *Herpestes brachyurus*
Distribution- A,B,C,D,F



Striped-necked mongoose මහ මුට්ටු *Herpestes vitticollis*
Distribution- A,B,C,D,F ; Status- IUCN 1999-TR / FFPO-Pr

Mustelids - weasels, otters, badgers etc.

Terrestrial, aquatic or marine dwellers; generally efficient hunters - some can take prey larger than themselves; hunt in burrows & crevices, on trees & in water; either diurnal or nocturnal. Global total: 56 species in 22 genera (the largest family within order Carnivora), of which one species in Sri Lanka.




Otter ලෑ-මලු *Lutra lutra*
Distribution- A,B,C,D,F ; Status- IUCN 1999-TR / FFPO-Pr / IUCN 2002-VU / CITES-App.I

Canids – dogs, jackals, foxes, & wolves

More omnivorous than many carnivores, feeding on invertebrates, plant matter & carrion as well as the prey killed by themselves; kills made by grabbing the neck & tackling the prey to the ground; senses of smell & hearing are acute, but sight is less developed; some species form packs. 41 species in 15 genera world wide, with one species in Sri Lanka.




Jackal කුලු *Canis aureus*
Distribution- A,B,C,D,E,F

Felids – cats


Most specialized land hunters; hunting method comprises a stalk followed by a final quick rush aimed at the neck which normally severs the cervical vertebrae of the prey; rely on senses of sight, smell & hearing, & the long whiskers provide an acute sense of touch; with the exception of lions, others are usually solitary. Globally 41 species are known of which 4 occur in Sri Lanka.

Key to the wild cats of Sri Lanka (for adult animals)


A. Body of adult with clear spots/ rosettes B
Body of adult uniform in colour/ with faint spots Jungle cat

B. Large, in size. Yellowish in colour Leopard
Smaller in size. Not yellowish in colour C


C. Four dark stripes in-between the ears. Rusty brown spots on a rufescent-grey body. Tail without clear cross bars Rusty-spotted cat
Five dark stripes in-between the ears. Blackish spots on a grayish body. Tail with clear cross bars Fishing cat






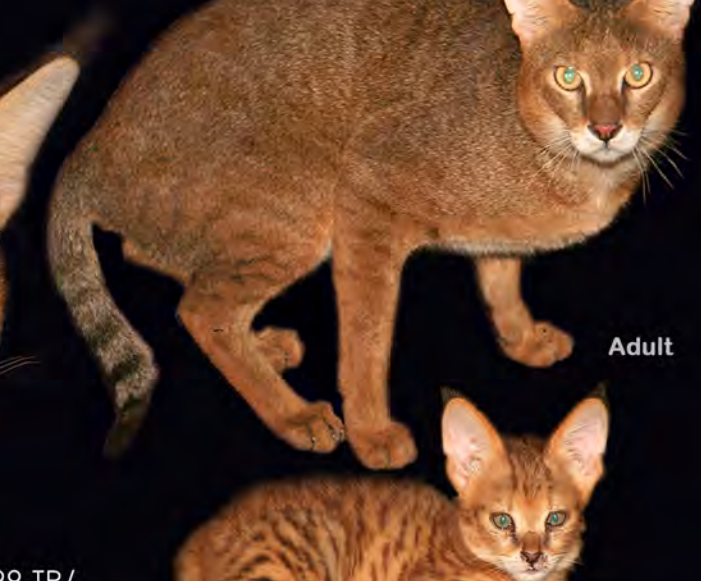
Rusty-spotted cat කහ දිවක *Prionailurus rubiginosus*
Distribution- A,B,C,D,F ; Status- IUCN 1999-TR / FFPO-Pr / IUCN 2002-VU / CITES-App. I/II

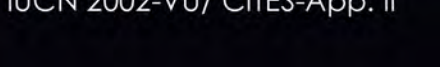


Leopard මලකුරු *Panthera pardus*
Distribution- A,B,C,D,E,F ; Status- IUCN 1999-TR / FFPO-Pr / IUCN 2002-EN / CITES-App. I




Jungle cat වඳුලු *Felis chaus*
Distribution- B,C,F ; Status- IUCN 1999-TR / FFPO-Pr / CITES-App. II

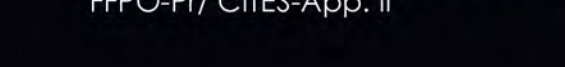








Fishing cat කහ දිවක *Prionailurus viverrinus*
Distribution- A,B,C,D,F ; Status- IUCN 1999-TR / FFPO-Pr / IUCN 2002-VU / CITES-App. II



Jungle cat වඳුලු *Felis chaus*
Distribution- B,C,F ; Status- IUCN 1999-TR / FFPO-Pr / CITES-App. II




Adult



Juvenile

Pholidotes - Pangolins

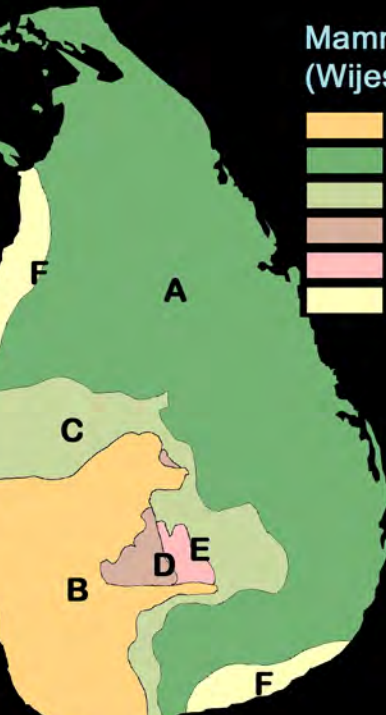
Insectivorous & mostly feed on ants. Being predators of soft-bodied insects, they lack teeth but have an extraordinarily long, muscular & sticky tongue to collect food. Pangolins have the ability to close their ears & nostrils as well as eyes, presumably to keep ants out. They have unique, overlapping scales on their backs which are made up of agglutinated hairs. Some species are arboreal, others are terrestrial & some in the former group have semi-prehensile tails, used in climbing. When threatened, they curl into a ball, protecting their scaleless undersurface. They have relatively poor vision & hearing thus probably locate their prey by scent. Globally there are 7 living species placed in one genus, & of them one species is found in Sri Lanka.



Pangolin කළුලිහි *Manis crassicaudata*
Distribution- A,B,C,D,F ; Status- FFPO-Pr / IUCN 2002-LR/nt / CITES-App.II

Mammalian distribution regions according to bioclimatic zones (Wijesinghe et al, 1993)

- A - Low & mid country wet zone
- B - Dry zone
- C - Low & mid country intermediate zone
- D - Montane wet zone (D1- Central Mwz, D2- Knuckles Mwz)
- E - Montane intermediate zone
- F - Arid zone (F1 - North west, F2- South east)



Legend for statuses

- TR - Threatened
- VU - Vulnerable
- IUCN 1999 - IUCN list of threatened fauna & flora of SL(1999)
- IUCN 2002 - IUCN World Redlist (2002)
- FFPO - Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance of SL
- CITES - Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (App.- Appendix)

Text, concept and creation by
Ruchira Somaweera, Nayana Wijethilaka, Nilusha Somaweera & Nuwan Bandara
Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society
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இலங்கைவனவிலக்கப் பாதுகாப்பு சங்கம்

www.SLWCS.org / info@slwcs.org / (011) 2714710
38 Auburn Side, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka.

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Special thanks to Prof. Charles Santiapillai; Ravi Corea, Chandeeep Corea and the SLWCS; Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne; Jan Seveik; Anil Dikumbura; Rohan Pelhiyagoda; Suminda Munidasa; Chamilla Wijethilaka; the National Zoological Gardens of Sri Lanka & the Department of Zoology of University of Peradeniya.

Printed by Gunarathne Offset Ltd., Sri Lanka. (October 2007)

(All photographs by Ruchira Somaweera unless otherwise stated)