



ZSI e-NEWS

The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of Zoological Survey of India

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NEW



ANIMAL OF THE MONTH
Stripe-necked mongoose,
Herpestes vitticollis Bennet

Check-list of Fauna of India:

Gerromorpha

(Hemiptera: Heteroptera) from India

Lepidopterous pests of vegetables

in India [Visit www.zsi.gov.in]

From the Director's Desk

Our new venture of bringing out an Electronic Newsletter from January 2009, highlighting the activities of the department, has been greatly appreciated by the readers. I thank them all for the encouragement.

The month of March was indeed memorable. The Eastern Regional Station of ZSI at Shillong completed 50 years of its dedicated service to the Nation, thus marking 2009 as its Golden Jubilee Year. His Excellency, Governor of Meghalaya, Shri. Ranjit. S. Mooshahary inaugurated the Golden Jubilee celebration. Andaman & Nicobar Regional Station of the Survey organized a National Symposium on '*Recent Advances in Biodiversity of India*' from 11th to 13th. A four-day-long Training Programme on '*Environmental Awareness and Wildlife Conservation*' was conducted at ZSI, Kolkata, from 24th to 27th. Besides, the department released an exclusive issue of *ENVIS* Newsletter highlighting the significant findings on the fauna of the cold desert of Ladakh and Lahul Spiti based on the rapid assessment surveys conducted by the scientists of the department.

This month, we are providing the readers access to 2 checklists on Indian fauna, viz. 'Gerromorpha (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Insecta) from India' and 'Lepidopterous pests of vegetables in India', through our website www.zsi.gov.in. The site also contains 3 other checklists (Nepomorpha: Hemiptera: Insecta, Freshwater Prawns of the families: Atyidae and Palaemonidae, and Mecoptera: Insecta) uploaded in the previous month.

I am glad to release the third issue (March 2009) of the *ZSI e-NEWS*.

Dr. Ramakrishna

Headquarters, Kolkata

Eleven Survey parties proceeded for field surveys in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and the Wildlife Sanctuaries of Kuldiha and Hadgarh, Orissa. Identification of 600 specimens of different faunal groups was

completed. Seven new species of insects were discovered from India.

Eighteen enquiries pertaining to the identification of the specimens received from outside agencies were attended, besides identifying a head of Barking Deer received from Wildlife Division, Cooch Behar, West Bengal,

received for rendering identification service.
“XIth Leadership Course on Environment

Awareness and Wildlife Conservation” Training Programme was conducted from 24th to 27th.

GLIMPSES OF THE LEADERSHIP COURSE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION HELD AT ZSI, KOLKATA



Dr. M. Sanjappa, Director, Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata, speaking on the occasion



Ms. Meena Gupta, Former Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. of India, New Delhi, addressing the gathering

In this Issue

Eastern Regional Station, Shillong

3 species of Rotifera under 3 genera and 5 species of Cladocera under 5 genera were identified and registered from Deepor beel, Kamrup District Assam. 2 species of Rotifera under 2 genera and 4 species of Cladocera under 3 genera were also identified and registered from Nokrek Biosphere Reserve, Garo Hills, Meghalaya.

The Eastern Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India, Shillong celebrated its Golden Jubilee on 19th on completion of 50 years of its service to the North-Eastern Region of the country. His Excellency, the Governor of Meghalaya, Shri. Ranjit. S. Mooshahary, Chief Guest on the occasion, inaugurated the function. Speaking on

the occasion, Shri Mooshahary lauded the efforts of the ERS/ZSI fraternity in documenting the faunal diversity of the region. Two publications, “*Zooplankton diversity in floodplains lakes of Assam*” and “*Studies on little known amphibian species of NE India*” authored by the scientists of the station were released by the Chief Guest besides releasing a Souvenir to mark the occasion. During the occasion, Special Golden Jubilee Lectures were delivered by Dr. A. K. Ghosh and Dr. J. R. B. Alfred, former Directors of ZSI and Dr. Ramakrishna, Director, ZSI inaugurated the Golden Jubilee Exhibition.

GLIMPSES OF THE GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF ERS/ZSI, SHILLONG



Dr. Ramakrishna, Director, ZSI delivering the Presidential Speech.



Dr. A. K. Ghosh, former Director of ZSI being felicitated by Dr. Ramakrishna, Director, ZSI



Dr. J. R. B. Alfred, former Director of ZSI
delivering the Golden Jubilee Lecture



His Excellency, the Governor of Meghalaya,
Shri Ranjit Sekhar Mooshahary
addressing the gathering as Chief Guest

In this Issue

Gangetic Plains Regional Station, Patna

One extensive survey was undertaken in Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary, Jharkhand and 226 exs. of faunal samples belonging to seven insect orders collected, besides undertaking a local survey in the Agroecosystems of Patna resulting in the collection of 75 exs of insects. 12 species of Moths (Insecta) under 11 genera were identified from the Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary and 10 species of Mollusca (Gastropoda) under 8 genera were identified from river Subernarekha in Jharkhand. 5 species of chalcids (Hymenoptera:

Insecta) under 5 genera were also identified from Bihar which included 3 species, collected for the first time from the state. One research paper entitled “First record of *Epipteromalus* Ashmead from the Old world with the description of a new species from India (Hymenoptera: Pteromalidae)” has been submitted for publication. One research manuscript on Hymenoptera was reviewed for the *Journal of Threatened Taxa*, Coimbatore and advisory service rendered.

NEW DISTRIBUTIONAL RECORDS FROM BIHAR



Insecta: Mantodea *Creobroter laevicollis* (Saussure)



Great stone Plover
Esacus magnirostris recurvirostris (Cuvier, 1829)

In this Issue

Estuarine Biological Station, Gopalpur-on-Sea

A field survey was conducted in Gahirmatha Wildlife Sanctuary, Orissa in collaboration with ZSI, Kolkata for studying the ecology and wildlife of the sanctuary. Over 100 examples of fish samples collected from Nuanai Estuary have been studied and identified as 30 species belonging to 21 families. One scientific article was reviewed and advisory service rendered. 116 visitors paid their visits to the museum during the month. Information on collection and preservation of faunal components was given to the school students of Army School, Gopalpur during their visit to the museum. One research paper was published and two papers submitted for publication.

Publication:

Kosygin, L. and H. Dhamendra. 2009. Physico-Chemical and Biological characteristics of Awang Khujairok River, Manipur, India. *Environment & Ecology*, 27(1):82-85.



Army school students, Gopalpur, observing museum displays



Hansua River mouth, Gahirmatha Wildlife Sanctuary

In this Issue

Western Regional Station, Pune



Great Egret, *Ardea alba*; Eurasian Coot, *Fulica atra* and Spot Billed Duck, *Anas poecilorhyncha* observed near Radhanagari WLS

Second survey to Radhanagari WLS and Chandoli NP was completed and the third survey initiated. Data entries of all identified registers (12, 825 records) and library accession register (3,850 records) were completed. One research paper has been accepted for publication. A member of the station participated in the "Leadership Course on Environmental

Awareness and Wildlife Conservation" held at ZSI, Kolkata. Identification services were rendered to forest department and local colleges on molluscs, butterflies, fishes and birds.

In this Issue

Sunderban Field Research Station, Canning

2 species of brachyuran crabs, 2 species of amphibians and 3 species of fishes were identified and registered. Specific identity of 8 species of Gastropods and bivalves collected from Jambudweep Island got confirmed. Scientific interactions were made with the frontline officials of Sundarban Tiger Reserve regarding conservation of wildlife. Preparation of pictorial handbook of brachyuran crabs of Digha is in final stages for publication. Specimen card preparation and computerization of library records are ongoing.

In this Issue

Central Regional Station, Jabalpur

3030 specimens of fishes, pertaining to 41 species under 27 genera, 15 families and 8 orders were identified/registered and added to the National Zoological Collection of the station. Three-lined Catfish - *Glyptothorax trilineatus* Blyth 1860 of the family Sisoridae and Moth Cat fish - *Erethistes hara* (Hamilton, 1822) belonging to family Erethistidae were collected for the first time from Central India. Four species of Orthoptera viz., *Gelastorrhinus laticornis* (Serville), *Chloeobora crassa* (Walker), *Tristria pulvinata* (Uvarov) of the family Acrididae and *Anaxipha* sp. of the family Trigonidiidae were also added to the faunal collections from Central India. Two research papers were submitted for publication.

3 scientific papers were reviewed for various journals and advisory services rendered. The Madhya Pradesh Biodiversity Board meeting at Bhopal was attended by a scientist of the station. Scientists of the station visited Sangra village, near Belukhera, 20 km away from Jabalpur to study the human and wildlife conflict reported in the village by the news media.

Publication:


Gupta, S. K. 2009. New records of some Orthoptera Insects from Central India. *Bionotes*, 11(1):28.



Three-lined Catfish *Glyptothorax trilineatus* Blyth, 1860



Moth Catfish *Erethistes hara* (Hamilton, 1822)

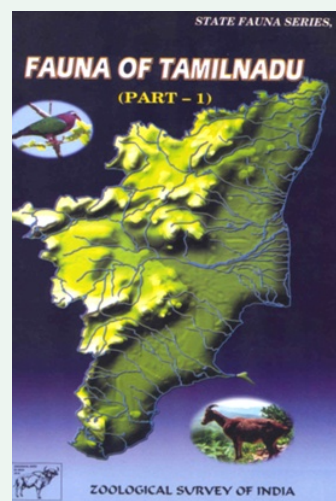
 In this Issue


Southern Regional Station, Chennai

A survey team proceeded on a 3 weeks programme to Kanyakumari Wildlife Sanctuary. 5 species of cockroaches, 13 species of grasshoppers, 2 species of scorpions and 36 species of fishes were identified. A senior scientist delivered an invited talk on "Biodiversity with reference to Indian Subcontinent" at Vivekananda College, Chennai. Identification and advisory services were rendered on 8 species of aquatic insects and 26 species of fishes. A volume on *Fauna of Tamilnadu* under the State Fauna Series was published; 22 papers were contributed by the scientists of the station to the volume. One manuscript dealing with 8 species of aquatic and semi-aquatic Hemiptera with a new record to Madhya Pradesh has been contributed to the conservation Area document "*Fauna of Bhandavgarh National Park*" (under finalisation).

Publication:

Editor- Director, 2009. *Fauna of Tamil Nadu, State Fauna Series*, 17 (Part-1): 1-256 (Published by the Director, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata: Co-ordinator: G. Thirumalai)



 In this Issue

Marine Biological Station, Chennai

6 species of Sponges and 22 species of Fishes were identified by the scientists of the station. 245 exs. of echinoderms were registered and deposited in the National Zoological collections maintained at the station. Identification service




Pentaceraster mammillatus, with 4 & 6 arms
- a rare finding from Gulf of Mannar

was rendered to a Forest Consultant at Pondicherry, on 22 species of fishes. Besides, 13 manuscripts for three journals and a report were reviewed and advisory services rendered. 3 papers were submitted for publication.



Marine Sponge, *Orina sagittaria*

 In this Issue

Desert Regional Station, Jodhpur

Two field surveys were conducted, one from 2nd to 12th in the Aravalli Range of Rajasthan (5 districts), resulting in the collection of 948 examples of different faunal groups and the other from 3rd to 7th in and around the Sardar Samand Reservoir. 24 species of Lepidoptera, 35 species of Odonata, 5 species of reptiles, 84 species of Aves and 15 species of mammals were identified out of the material collected from the first survey and 10 species of reptiles, 68 species of Aves and 12 species of mammals from the second survey. Besides, scientists of the station also identified 8 species of Odonata of Aravalli Range; 8 species of Coleoptera of Rajasthan and

2 species of Nematoda of Gujarat from the earlier collections of the station. Systematic accounts of species to be included in a Pictorial Hand book were prepared. A checklist of lepidopterous pests of Vegetables in India has been finalized. Proof of the manuscript on Dung beetles of Thar Desert, Gujarat has been corrected and submitted. 8 manuscripts pertaining to the fauna of Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary have also been prepared. The station's museum was visited by 55 students of Emmanuel Mission Sr. Sec. School, Pali and 48 others during the month. 85 entries pertaining to the books in the station's library



Exhibition stall of DRS, ZSI in Kisan Mela
Organized by CAZRI (ICAR), Jodhpur

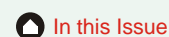


Indian long- eared Hedgehog
(*Hemiechinus collaris*) at Puskar forest, Rajasthan

was made employing the software, *e-granthalaya*. 159 entries of identified fauna were made in the faunal Database maintained at the station. An exhibition stall of the station was put up in the “Kisan Mela” organized by Central

Arid Zone Research Institute (ICAR) from 1st to 5th.
Publication:

Tak, N. 2008. Ants (Formicidae) of Rajasthan. *Rec. zool. Surv. India*. Occ. Paper No. 288: 54pp. (Published in Feb., 2009).



In this Issue

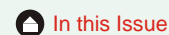
Freshwater Biological Station, Hyderabad

Routine local tours to lakes in and around Hyderabad (Durgam Cheruvu and Hussain Sagar) were conducted on 26th and collected 60 exs. of aquatic insects. Field studies on Kolleru Lake, West Godavari and Krishna districts Andhra Pradesh were undertaken. In addition to conducting the hydro biological investigations, observations were made on predominant wetland and wetland associated bird- waders. In all, 844 exs. of wetland/wetland associated fauna and 14 samples of zooplankton were collected from 14 sample sites in two lake zones. 32 species of Aquatic Insects (14 spp. of Hemiptera & 18 spp. of Coleoptera) were identified from the earlier collection deposited in the station. Aquatic Coleoptera collections received from ZSI, Jabalpur were identified and a research paper dealing with 41 species of aquatic beetles (Coleoptera: Hydrophilidae, Dytiscidae, Gyrimidae, Hailplidae and Elmidae)



Pelecanus philippensis at Kolleru Lake

belonging to 23 genera and five families was submitted. Of the 41 species, 14 species turned out to be first records from Madhya Pradesh and the Genus *Stenelmis*, first record from India. A senior scientist of the station presented a paper on “Estuarine Polychaete fauna (Annelida) from Andhra Pradesh”, and also chaired a session in the *National Seminar on Recent advances in Biodiversity of Indian subcontinent* (11-13th March, 2009), organized by ZSI, Port Blair.



In this Issue

Arunachal Pradesh Field Station, Itanagar



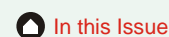
Snow Partridge, *Lerwa lerwa*

The Tawang district survey was continued up to 3rd March from the previous month. Over 85 species of birds including the Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculates*, Snow Partridge *Lerwa lerwa*, Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae*, Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*, Striated Laughing thrush *Garrulax striatus*, Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophiiata*, Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos*



Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel, *Dremomys lokriah*

concinus, Pland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*, and the Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis* were recorded. Apart from the birds, many species of mammals were also recorded including Capped Langur *Trachypithecus pileatus*, Goral *Naemorhedus goral*, Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel *Dremomys lokriah* and Assamese Macaque *Macaca assamensis*.



In this Issue

Marine Aquarium & Research Centre, Digha

The aquarium maintained at the station was visited by tourists at an average of 275 visitors per day during the beach festival at Digha. The main attractions of the visitors were Yellow Boxfish (*Ostracion cubicus*) and Sea Snake (*Hydrophis* sp.). The Yellow Box fish is recorded for the first time from Digha and a paper on the same is under preparation. During the month, efforts were made to strengthen the number of existing aquarium animals. About 309 specimens (bivalves, gastropods, crabs, shrimps



Yellow Boxfish (*Ostracion cubicus*)



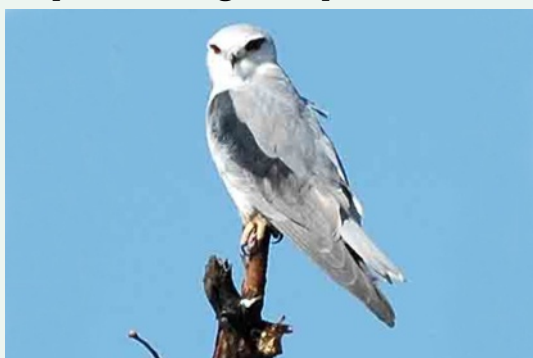
Catfish (*Clarius magur*)

and fishes) were collected through local surveys. Guest lectures were arranged to various groups of University, College & School students on marine biodiversity conservation. Advisory services were rendered to 4 Ph.D. scholars of Centre for Coastal Marine Biology, Ratnagiri. A staff member of the station attended the XIth Leadership Course on 'Environmental Awareness and Wildlife Conservation', from 24th to 27th at ZSI, Kolkata.

In this Issue

Northern Regional Station, Dehra Dun

One intensive survey was conducted in river Ganges, Haridwar for the project Ecological and Molecular study of fresh water turtles. 8 species of nematodes and 11 species of Lepidoptera were identified. Studies on the Project "The Fauna Uttarkhand State" have been completed and the final report submitted. The study groups involved include mammals, Aves, reptiles, centipedes, nematodes, bees and wasps (Hymenoptera) and butterflies. 1 research paper has been published, 1 got accepted and 3 submitted.



Black-shouldered Kite, *Elanus caeruleus*



Hanuman langur, *Semnopithecus entellus*

17 visitors from a local school visited the station's Museum. A senior scientist of the station attended the TRACK meeting of WII, Dehra Dun. 4 research papers were reviewed (2 Indian and 2 foreign) and advisory services rendered.

Publication:

Vijay., Tak, P.C., Sati, J.P., Bhutia, P.T. 2009. Pollution threats to water birds of Asan Conservation Reserve, Dehra Dun, Uttarkhand, *Bionotes*, 11(1): 231

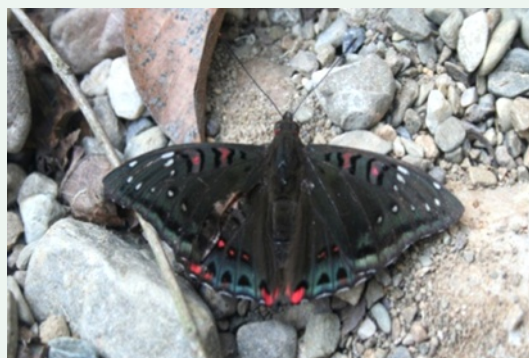
In this Issue

High Altitude Zoology Field Station, Solan

Faunal documents on Simbalbara Wildlife Sanctuary, Sirmour and Pong dam wet land were finalized comprising of 363 and 638 species (of various groups) respectively. A project assigned to one of the Scientists of Station on Snow trout is under final stage of publication. Under the ongoing projects on Pangi valley, Churdhar Wildlife Sanctuary and Ladakh, 5 species of Rhopalocera, 3 species of Orthoptera and 1 species of Pisces have been identified. A checklist of Birds of Pangi has been published in



Wooly Hare at Hemis National Park, Ladakh (J&K)



Euthalia lubentina- new record for Simbalbara WLS

Newsletter for Birdwatchers and a paper on Butterflies has been accepted in an International Journal (*Tropical Lepidoptera Society Notes*). One research paper has been reviewed and advisory service rendered.

Publication:

Uttam Saikia, H. S. Mehta, Indu Sharma and A. K. Sidhu, 2008. Preliminary observations on the avifauna of Pangi Valley, District Chamba, Himachal Pradesh. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers*, 48(6): 2008.

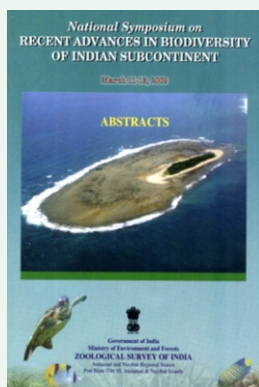
In this Issue

Andaman and Nicobar Regional Station, Port Blair

A field survey was carried out in Ritchie's Archipelago, Middle Andaman, from 24th to 29th. 2 species of mammals, 84 species of birds, 4 species of lizards, 17 species of fishes, 21 species of butterflies, 12 species of echinoderms, 15 species of molluscs and 3 species of soft corals (Alcyonacea) were identified. A National Symposium on "Recent Advances in Biodiversity of Indian Subcontinent" was organized by the station from 11th to 13th. 125 delegates participated from across the country and 66 oral presentations were made during the symposium. Issues pertaining to floral and faunal diversities of coastal, marine, terrestrial, freshwater and wetland ecosystems, conservation of

biological resources and management strategies were discussed among the scientists, academicians and wildlife conservators. The symposium was inaugurated by Mr. Vivek Rae, Chief Secretary of A&N Administration.

GLIMPSES OF THE NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ORGANISED BY A&NRS



Abstract volume of the Symposium papers



Dr. Ramakrishna, Director, ZSI addressing the gathering

In this Issue

Western Ghats Field Research Station, Kozhikode (Calicut)

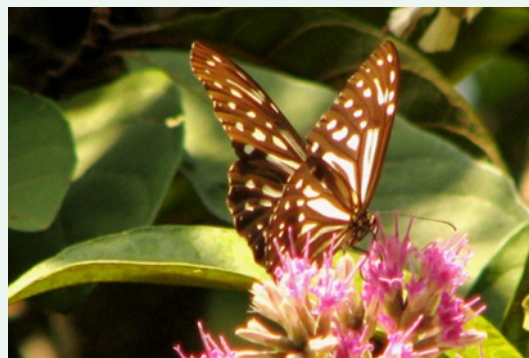
Freshwater fishes pertaining to 8 species under 7 genera and Odonata (Insecta) belonging to 7 species under 6 genera were identified out of the material collected from Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnataka.

An annotated check-list of Amphibia of India with a detailed discussion on the amphibian diversity in India has been prepared and is being further processed for publishing.

A paper entitled 'Parasitic Hymenoptera: Our Valuable Bioresources' was accepted for publishing in the Proceedings of the National Conference on Biotechnological Approaches for Ecofriendly Insect Pest Management organized by the Department of Zoology, University of Madras, Chennai.

Identification service was rendered to the forest officials of Thamaracherry forest range, Kozhikode on confiscated Rose-ringed Parakeets and Malabar giant squirrels.

Scientists of the station reviewed 8 scientific papers for various journals and offered advisory services. During the month, 739 visitors paid their visits to the museum.



Parantica nilgiriensis Moore
(Endemic to highlands of Western Ghats)



White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus*

In this Issue

ANIMAL OF THE MONTH

Stripe-necked mongoose, *Herpestes vitticollis* Bennet



Photo: ZSI, Calicut.

Stripe-necked mongoose,
Herpestes vitticollis Bennet

This is the largest Indian mongoose, well characterized by its size and a black stripe from ear to shoulder. Head and body length is about

54 cm and tail about 35 cm. Its weight is around 3.2 kg. The general coat colour is grizzled grey, tinged with rusty red, the redness deepening towards the hinder parts of the body. Legs and feet are dark brown to black. Tail is shorter than head and body when compared to other mongooses.

The Stripe-necked mongoose is found in Southwest India and Sri Lanka. In India, it has been recorded in deciduous and evergreen forests, swampy clearings, plantations, open scrub and along watercourses. It is rare in the northern part of its range in India, but abundant in southern Western Ghats. In Sri Lanka, it is found in lowland dry zone forests across a range

of elevations from high hills to lowlands.

It is solitary, diurnal and crepuscular in habits. It hunts on whatever it can manage. Small mammals, birds, birds' eggs, reptiles, frogs, fish, crabs, insects, grubs, and roots are eaten. Not much is known about its breeding habits. However, its typical litter size is two to three and an animal in captivity was recorded to have lived for nearly 13 years.

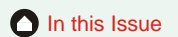
The stripe-necked mongoose is on Schedule IV of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and Appendix III of CITES.

Status: IUCN - Lower Risk/ least concern, due to its wide distribution, presumed large population, occurrence in a number of protected areas and tolerance to some degree of habitat modification.

References:

Cheruvat, Dinesan; Radhakrishnan, C. and Muhamed Jafer Palot. 2006. *Handbook on Mammals of Kerala*: 1-154 (Published by the Director, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata).

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/41619>



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