

DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION STATUS OF SOME MAMMALS IN BANGLADESH

N. A. Siddiqui
M. Faizuddin

The paper deals with the status and distribution of 21 species of mammals covering 8 families, namely, Cervidae, Felidae, Suidae, Bovidae, Elephantidae, Lorisidae, Cercopithecidae and Hylobatidae.

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is blessed with 119 species of mammals (Khan 1982). The abundance of such a large number of species in a small territory has been possible because of a diversified flora, a characteristic of tropical forests. However, the existing mammalian population indicates a distinctly deteriorating trend during the past several decades. No systematic survey of mammals has ever been carried out for the area now under the territories of Bangladesh. It is, therefore, difficult to quantify the magnitude of loss. Our knowledge is limited to some old records made by Blanford (1888) and Pocock 1939, 1941) and some recent works (Choudhury 1969, Mountfort 1969, Husain 1974, Khan 1982). None of these records is complete and upto-date and, therefore, further studies are needed in this direction. A reconnaissance survey was made during 1978 and 1979 to assess the status and distribution of some mammals of Bangladesh. This paper discusses the status and distribution of 21 species covering 8 families.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The forests of Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Sylhet, Mymensingh and the Sundarbans were visited. Data were collected by direct spotting, by indices (foot print, call, droppings, damage, etc.) and by information received from the local people and forest staff. Their distribution and status are given in Table 1.

DISCUSSION

A good number of mammalian species like Wild Buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*), Black Buck (*Antelope cervicapra*), Gaur (*Bos gaurus*), Hog Deer (*Axis porcinus*), Swamp Deer (*Cervus duvauceli*), Clouded Leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) and all the three Asiatic species of Rhinoceros have disappeared from Bangladesh for ever. Husain (1974) claimed that the country had lost about 8 percent of the mammalian species during the last 100 years or so. The position is even worse if the population size is taken into consideration. Khan (1980) estimated only 150 elephant heads in Bangladesh

Table 1. Distribution and status of some mammals of Bangladesh

Family	Species	Status	Distribution		
			Recorded by indices	Recorded by direct spotting	Recorded by local people and forest staff
1	2	3	4	5	6
Bovidae	<p>Serow (<i>Capricornis Sumatraensis</i>)</p> <p>Gayal (<i>Bos frontalis</i>)</p>	<p>Almost extinct</p> <p>A very small population (wild), some domesticated animals maintained by tribal people of CHT</p>		<p>Durgapur (Myn)</p> <p>Harina (CHT)</p>	<p>Panerchara (Ctg), Subalong (CHT)</p> <p>Kalinga (Syl)</p>
Cercopithecidae	<p>Banor (<i>Macaca mulata</i>)</p> <p>Asami Bandor (<i>Macaca assamensis</i>)</p> <p>Parahlia Bandor (<i>Macaca fascicularis</i>)</p> <p>Shuorleza Bandor (<i>Macaca nemestrina</i>)</p>	<p>Most common in all forest areas and in some villages and cities, live in colonies</p> <p>Less common, restricted to deep forests</p> <p>Small population along Ctg. coastal belt</p> <p>Very small population</p>		<p>Teknaf, Ukhia, Karerhat (Ctg), Subalong, Massalong, Shishak (CHT), Lowachara Kalichara (Syl), Nalianala Madhupur (Myn), Sarankhola, Chandpai (S'bans)</p> <p>Pablakhali, Subalong (CHT), Lowachara, Kalichara (Syl)</p> <p>Whykheong (CHT)</p> <p>Thainkhali (Ctg)</p>	<p>Whykheong, Thainkhali, Inoni (Ctg)</p> <p>Rajkandi, Patharia Hill Tillaghor Kalinga (Syl), Nalianala Burigoalni (S'bans)</p> <p>Whykheong, Ukhia (Ctg), Kalinga (Syl)</p> <p>Teknaf, Thainkhali (Ctg)</p>

Family	Species	Status	Distribution			
			Recorded by indices	Recorded by direct spotting	Reported by local people and forest staff	
1	2	3	4	5	6	
Cercopithecidae (Contd.)	Mukhpora Hanuman (<i>Presbytis pileatus</i>)	Most common in all forests except Sundarbans, large population		Ukhia, Panerchara, (Ctg), Pablakhali, Gulshakhali, Baghaihat (CHT), Lowachara, Tillaghat, Rajkandi, Kalichara (Syl), Madhupur (Myn)	Thainkhali, Whykhong, Hazarikhil, Korerhat (Ctg). Shishak, Massalong (CHT), Patharia Hill (Syl)	
	Chashmapora Hanuman (<i>Presbytis phayrei</i>)	Less common found only in deep forests		Pablakhali (CHT)	Lawachara, Kalichara, Kalinga (Syl)	
	Hanuman (<i>Presbytis entellus</i>)	Almost extinct			Keshabpur (Jess)	
Cervidae	Barking deer/Maya (<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>)	Most common in all forest areas	Teknaf, Mochani, Nhila, Whykhong, Inoni, Hazarikhil, Baghaihat (CHT) Kalinga, Patharia Hill (Syl), Sarankhola (S'bans)	Ukhia, Panerchara, Karehat (Ctg), Pablakhali, Churakhali, Harina, Shishak, Mahillya, Massalong (CHT), Lowachara, Kalichara (Syl.), Chandpai (S'bans)	Madhupur (Myn)	
	Sambar (<i>Cervus unicolor</i>)	Small population, found only in deep forests	Ukhia, Whykhong (Ctg), Churakhali (CHT)	Pablakhali, Shishak, Baghaihat (CHT)	Thainkhali (Ctg), Lowachara, Patharia Hill, Kalinga (Syl)	
	Cheetal (<i>Axis axis</i>)	Large population only in Sundarbans, almost extinct in CHT		Pablakhali, Shishak (CHT), Sarankhola, Nalanala, Chandpai Burigoalini (S'bans)		

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Elephantidae	Hati (<i>Elephas maximus</i>)	A few herds live permanently in Ctg. and CHT forests, maximum concentration at Churakhali and Mahilya of CHT, a small herd seen in Syl, There are some migratory herds between CHT and Burma and between Syl and Assam.	Teknaf, Whykheong, Inoni, Thainkhali (Ctg), Baghahat (CHT), Patharia Hill (Syl)	Ukhia, Panerchara (Ctg), Pablakhali, Mahilya, Churakhali, Harina (CHT)	Chunati, Dohazari (Ctg)
Felidae	Bagh (<i>Panthera tigris</i>)	Large population in Sunderbans, specially in the south, very limited number in CHT	Sarankhola, Chandpai Nalianala, Burigoalini (S' bans)		Mahilya, Massalong (CHT)
	Cheeta Bagh (<i>Panthera pardus</i>)	Almost extinct			Thainkhali (Ctg) Mahilya, Baghahat (CHT), Patharia Hill, Rajkandi (Syl)
	Ban Biral (<i>Felis chaus</i>)	Common all over			Sundarbans
	Cheeta Biral (<i>Felis bengalensis</i>)	Less common, found all over except S'bans			
	Machh Biral (<i>Felis viverrina</i>)	Common all over, large population			

		D i s t r i b u t i o n			
Family	Species	Status	Recorded by indices	Recorded by direct spotting	Reported by local people and forest staff
1	2	3	4	5	6
Hylobatidae	Ulluk (<i>Hylobates hoolock</i>)	Often seen in Syl and CHT forests		Shishak, Churakhali (CHT), Lowachara, Kalichara, Satchari (Syl)	Whykheong, Ukhia, Hazarikhil (Ctg), Rajkandi, Kalinga, Patharia Hill (Syl)
Lorisidae	Lajjabati Banor (<i>Nycticeilus coucang</i>)	Rare		Pablakhali, Shishak, Baghaihat (CHT)	Rajkandi, Satchori (Syl)
Suidae	Bon Shukor (<i>Sus scrofa</i>)	Large population on the increase, found in all forest areas but less abundant in Sal forests	Teknaf, Nhila, Inoni, Hazarikhil (Ctg), Harina, Baghaihat, Massalong (CHT), Lowachara, Patharia Hill, Tillaghor, (Syl), Chandpai Naltanala (S' bans)	Thainkhali, Whykheong, Korchat (Ctg), Pablakhali, Churakhali (CHT) Sarankhola, Burigoalini (S'bans)	Madhupur (Myn)

Ctg=Chittagong district CHT=Chittagong Hill Tracts Syl=Sylhet district S'bans=Sundarbans
Myn=Mymensingh district Jess=Jessore

which is likely to decrease due to destruction of habitat and migration. For instance, there are ten species of primates (Khan 1982), but the population size of primates according to Green (1978) was only about one lakh forty thousand heads. The forest areas of Bangladesh are steadily shrinking resulting in the reduction of wildlife fauna as habitat determines the species composition and population size.

Wild fauna in hill forests of Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Sylhet districts are richer than those in the plains. All these forests are managed under clear felling system which is definitely detrimental to wildlife habitation. The main causes of wildlife depletion are rapid growth of human population, lack of proper protective measures and ignorance of general public. But the system of forest management is of vital importance for the management and conservation of wildlife.

CONCLUSION

The mammalian fauna population is steadily decreasing both in species and population. It can be saved by developing awareness of the people, tightening the protective measures and applying a compatible forest management system.

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N. A. Siddiqui and M. Fai'uddin, Senior Research Officers, Forest Research Institute, Chittagong, Bangladesh