



# COMMON PALM CIVET

## Photographic record of *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* preying on bird in Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Bihar



IUCN Red List:

Global —  
Least Concern  
(Duckworth et al.  
2016)

Camera trap photograph of Common palm civet with Red-billed blue magpie kill in Valmiki Tiger Reserve, 2013

**Mammalia**  
[Class of Mammals]

**Carnivora**  
[Order of Carnivores]

**Viverridae**  
[Family of Civets]

***Paradoxurus hermaphroditus***  
[Common Palm Civet]

Species described by Pallas in 1777

Common palm civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* (Pallas 1777) has widespread distribution and reported to occur in South and Southeast Asia (Duckworth et al. 2016). In India, it is distributed across the country except in high Himalaya and some arid parts of western Indian states such as Gujarat and Rajasthan (Menon 2014) with highest recorded elevation up to 2400m (above sea level) in northeastern India (Choudhury 2013). It inhabits the Terai of Himalayan foothills and sympatric with two species of its family, Small Indian civet *Viverricula indica* and large Indian civet *Viverra zibetha*. Common palm civet can live in a variety of habitats and mostly prefers primary and secondary evergreen and deciduous forest, swamp forest, mangroves,



**Habitat of Valmiki Tiger Reserve in the Himalayan Foothill (Photo by: Kamlesh K. Maurya)**

plantation and human habitation (Duckworth 1997; Krishnakumar & Balakrishnan 2003; Chua et al. 2012; Wahyudi & Stuebing 2014). Due to its wide distribution, large and stable population trend which are highly adaptable to human

presence it is listed as Least Concern by IUCN (2016). Also, it is protected as Schedule II species in Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Common palm civets are small (Menon 2014), solitary, nocturnal omnivore adapted for highly arboreal life. It spend most of its daytime in sleeping or resting in tree hollows (Rabinowitz 1991). The pelt of Common palm civets are short and are usually black to brownish grey with black-tipped hairs all over (Blanford 1888-91). Being an omnivore its diet largely comprised of fruits, vegetables (Blanford 1888-91) and sometimes small vertebrates such as mammals and birds as well as invertebrates such as lizards and insects (Spaan et al. 2014). It is an important seed disperser (Nakashima & Sukor 2010).

The photograph captured during camera traps survey for tiger *Panthera tigris* in Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR) in 2012-2013. The VTR (901 km<sup>2</sup>, 27°10'-27°30' N/83°49'-84°10' E) is located in the West Champaran District which is north west corner of Bihar state near Indo-Nepal border. The vegetation types is dominated by tropical moist deciduous forest interspersed with grassland and swampy habitat and falls within Siwalik range of Himalayan ecosystem.

On 17 March 2013 at 21:48hr, a Common Palm Civet along with a kill of bird has been photo captured in Gobardhana Range of VTR (27°25' 34.4" N, 84°12' 44.9" E), after keen observation of photograph the bird was identified as Red-billed blue magpie *Urocissa erythroryncha*. Red-billed blue magpie is purplish blue bird of Corvidae family with a prominent orange to reddish colour bill. Although it is already been established that Common palm civet occasionally consumes birds, our camera trap image of Common palm civet predated upon Red-billed blue magpie might be a first photographic record



from best of our knowledge and also supporting the findings on food habits of the species (Spaan et al. 2014).

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