

Fantastic Facts

Salim Ali's Fruit Bat *Latidens salimalii* Thonglongya, 1972

Distinguishing characters: This medium-sized fruit bat exhibits characteristics of a *Cynopterus* species, except it does not have a tail. The dorsal pelage is short and soft, brownish-black with some gray hairs which gives it a grizzled effect around the back and on shoulders. The ventral pelage is short with very sparse hairs on chin and neck. The ears are blunt, rounded and uniformly coloured.

Body measurements: The head-body length is about 107mm, forearm length about 67mm.

Habit and habitat: It is a wet evergreen forest species occurring in more open areas and roosting in caves. This bat has been seen in broad-leaved montane forests and coffee plantations at an altitude of up to 1000m.

Distribution: This is the only known endemic fruit bat of the Western Ghats, found exclusively in the southern chain of the Ghats, recorded in

the High Wavy mountains, Cardamom hills and in Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve.

Status: This species seems to have a restricted distribution within the Western



Arbab Roy / Juliet Vanitharani

Ghats, making it susceptible to changes in habitat (such as plantations) and other threats such as poaching and cave disturbance. It has been categorised as Endangered.

Salim Ali's Fruit Bat *Latidens salimalii* Thonglongya, 1972

ENDANGERED



FRUIT BATS OF SOUTH ASIA

PART 4

Fantastic Facts

Ratanaworabhan's Fruit Bat

Megaerops niphanae
Yenbutra & Felten,
1983

Distinguishing characters:

This small fruit bat is as big as *Cynopterus brachyotis* in size and in appearance except for the absence of external tail. The dorsal pelage is uniformly brown in colour except for pale shoulders, the ventral pelage is uniformly greyish. The ears are broadly rounded and uniformly coloured.

Body measurements:

The head-body length is

about 85mm, forearm length about 58mm.

Habit and habitat:

bat is presumed to be a deep forest dweller trapped in Namdapha and in Darjeeling before the habitat was cleared. It occurs usually in stream clearings in high elevation forests. Its roosting site is unknown.

Distribution: Very sparsely distributed

from the available information. Only a few locations in eastern Himalaya are known till date, but it is likely that the species could occur in undisturbed

high altitude forests of eastern Himalaya.

Status: The IUCN status of this species in South Asian region is Near Threatened in South Asia given the rapid loss of habitat in the region, change in quality of habitat and other human-induced threats such as development, tourism and encroachments. At global level it is Least Concern.



Arbab Roy / Bates & Harrison 1997. Bats of the Indian Subcontinent

Ratanaworabhan's Fruit Bat
Megaerops niphanae Yenbutra & Felten, 1983

NEAR THREATENED (South Asia)
LEAST CONCERN (Globally)



Fantastic Facts

Hill Long-tongued Fruit Bat *Macroglossus sobrinus* (K. Andersen, 1911)

Distinguishing characters: This is a very characteristic long-nosed fruit bat in the region, much different looking than all the others. It is smaller than *Eonycteris spelaea* which shares the same distribution. The elongated snout is a modification for nectar feeding. The bat lacks external tail. The dorsal pelage is uniformly clay brown and the ventral pelage is uniformly biscuit brown. The ears are

uniformly coloured like the dorsal pelage, ending in narrow but rounded tips.

Body measurements: The head-body length is about 82mm, forearm length about 47mm.

Habit and habitat: This is a evergreen forest species found up to 2000m altitude. It does not occur in disturbed habitats and roosts in small colonies of up to 10 individuals under palm fronds, in banana leaves and under branches of specific trees. It feeds on nectar, pollen, flowers and soft

fruits. It is presumed to not travel long distances and has set routes for feeding.

Distribution: This species is poorly documented in South Asia



Arbab Roy / Modified from F.J. Bonaccorso, 1998. Bats of Papua New Guinea

with only a few known localities in northeastern India. Other locations include those in Southeast Asia.

Status: This species seems to prefer less disturbed areas and thick evergreen forests, which are reducing considerably in northeastern India. It has been categorised as Near Threatened in South Asia although more detailed studies are required immediately.

Hill Long-tongued Fruit Bat
Macroglossus sobrinus (K. Andersen, 1911)

NEAR THREATENED (South Asia)
LEAST CONCERN (Globally)



Fantastic Facts

Blanford's Fruit Bat *Sphaerias blanfordi* (Thomas, 1891)

Distinguishing

characters: This species closely resembles the *Cynopterus* group of bats, which are small. It does not have a tail. The dorsal and ventral pelage are uniformly greyish-brown coloured, thick and long. The wings are uniformly brown. The ears are small, the tip narrowing but blunt. The anterior margin of the ears have a thin white border.

Body measurements:

The head-body length is about 87mm, forearm length about 55mm.

Habit and habitat: This is probably restricted only to mountainous slopes, but very little is known about this poorly studied species.

Distribution: It seems to occur across the low ranges of Trans-Himalaya occurring in India, Nepal and Bhutan in South Asia. It also occurs widely distributed in northern Myanmar, Thailand and

southwestern China, as also in Tibet. The South Asian population is a distinct subspecies called *S.b. blanfordi*.

Status: Although not much is known of this species *per se*, its habitat is under much threat with continuing decline in area and quality. This species is categorised as Near Threatened in South Asia due to this reason, however, further studies are urgently required.

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Blanford's Fruit Bat *Sphaerias blanfordi* (Thomas, 1891)

NEAR THREATENED (South Asia)
LEAST CONCERN (Globally)



Fantastic Facts

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