

SMALL INDIAN CIVET

A report on a road kill of *Viverricula indica* from Guwahati, Assam



IUCN Red List:

Global – LC
(Choudhury et al. 2015)

The road killed Civet on the highway

Mammalia

[Class of Mammals]

Carnivora

[Order of Carnivores]

Viverridae

[Family of Civets & Genets]

Viverricula indica

[Small Indian Civet]
[Oriental Civet]

Species described by
É. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire in 1803

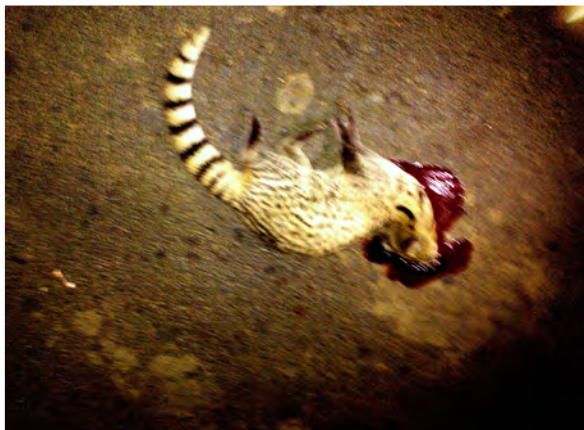
Small Indian Civets *Viverricula indica* are protected under the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 as a Schedule II species. Small Indian Civet occurs in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, most of India, Nepal, southern and central China, Taiwan, Bangladesh, mainland Southeast Asia and various islands of Indonesia (Mudappa 2013). In India, it is distributed from the Himalayan foothills to Kanyakumari in the south (Menon 2014). The species prefers scrub and dry forests to undisturbed evergreen patches (Mudappa 2013). It can live close to human habitation and often finds refuge in attics or drainpipes of houses. Although it has a wide distribution in India, owing to its elusive nature the species is poorly studied for its distribution, ecology or trade, particularly in Assam.



The road killed Small Indian Civet in Assam

Here we report a road kill record of a Small Indian Civet from Guwahati, Assam. On 9 January 2016 at 18.08 hrs, one of us (PM) encountered a vehicle killed Civet on the newly constructed bypass of NH 37. This bypass connects Guwahati city from Jalukbari with NH 37 running behind the Gauhati University campus. Upon inspection, we found that the civet was killed while trying to cross the bypass from a nearby scrub forest to another scrub forest, which was previously contiguous, but fragmented by the bypass.

Human encroachments and developmental activities continue to threaten wildlife by fragmenting their habitat and isolating the residential animals (Mader 1984), the loss of habitat and change in habitat extent beyond the road (Spellerberg 1998) are major threats to wild plants and animals (Forman & Alexander 1998). Roads play a major role in killing animals by collision with vehicles which is mainly dangerous to small mammals, reptiles, amphibians (Hodson 1996), birds and other animal collision with vehicle and trains are common.



Highways in and close to protected areas and non-protected areas are one of the biggest threats to wildlife and their movement

Highways, clearly, have impacts on wildlife including endangered species, however much of the research interest and awareness activities spawn in highways that pass through national parks or other protected areas. Implications on wildlife by highways passing through unprotected areas receive less attention; the threats posed to wildlife are often overlooked. The scrub forests nearby where the civet was found dead also harbour other wildlife such as the Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*, Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes auropunctatus*, Hoary-bellied Squirrel *Callosciurus pygerythrus* and herpetofauna such as the Burmese Python *Python bivittatus*. We have often encountered these wildlife crossing the highway and the adjacent bypass. The increasing traffic pressure in an ever expanding Guwahati worsens the case. Urbanization impacts wildlife populations adversely and flawed planning can further intensify the impacts to a much larger extent. Although incidents such as this may be viewed as just another road fatality, it actually presents a picture of the ground reality of the threats that the urban wildlife is facing due to habitat fragmentation.

References

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