



# First photographic report on occurrence of Madras Tree Shrew from Mangrove-entangled Indian Sundarbans

Sundarban is the only mangrove which posses the charismatic Royal Bengal Tiger population. Tiger reserves are generally focused on their population and their demographic ecology, apart from that, prey-base and associated fauna are also important to sustain an ecosystem and wildlife management.

Recently, trap cameras were installed in 573 locations throughout the Sundarban Tiger Reserve during the All India Tiger Estimation 2022. A pair of trap cameras (Cuddeback C1 camera) was installed beside Bagmara Channel (locally called Khal).

A Madras Treeshrew a.k.a. Indian Treeshrew *Anathana ellioti* of the family Tupaiidae and order Scandentia was captured in one of the trap cameras in the east range on 18 December 2021 around 1129 h. Previous works on mammalian fauna of the Indian Sundarbans were well



Grid map location of Bagmara Channel. © Sundarban Tiger Reserve, West Bengal.



Zoomed picture of Madras Treeshrew. © Sundarban Tiger Reserve, West Bengal.



studied, but no such record of the tree shrew species is found from mangrove deltaic region till date (Mallick 2019).

Literary survey on tree shrews supports the presence of *Anathana ellioti* in central India, southern India, Odisha, and Purulia District of West Bengal (Mallick 2019; Debata & Palei 2020) but not in the Sundarban landscape. This communication is presumably the first report of the occurrence of *Anathana ellioti* from mangrove delta.

The identified location is in close proximity to Indo-Bangladesh International border, separated by waterways. *Anathana ellioti* is listed under ‘Least Concern’ species as per the IUCN Red List (Molur 2016) and in Appendix II of CITES.

It generally feeds on seeds, fruits, insects, birds, and small mammals. The



**Anathana ellioti found in trap camera © Sundarban Tiger Reserve, West Bengal.**



**GPS location of the compartment of Sundarban Tiger Reserve. © Sundarban Tiger Reserve, West Bengal.**

morphology and ethology of the species resembles a squirrel, hence it is difficult to identify the species (Tiple & Talmale 2013). This finding demonstrates that a strategically placed trap camera not only records a majestic apex predator and its prey but also lesser-known elusive wildlife which remain incognito.

| Camera ID | Grid no. | Compartment / Location               | Beat name | GPS coordinates      | Associated flora   |
|-----------|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|--|
| BG14A     | 2111     | Bagmara 4 Compartment / Bagmara Khal | Bagmara   | 21.644 N<br>89.049 E | Sundari <i>Heritiera fomes</i><br>Gnewa <i>Exocoecaria agallocha</i><br>Pasur <i>Xylocarpus mekongensis</i><br>Garan <i>Ceriops decandra</i> |



## References

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