

OCCURRENCE OF THE LARGE BROWN FLYING SQUIRREL (*PETAURISTA PETAURISTA PHILIPPENSIS*) IN PHULWARI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, RAJASTHAN

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The Large Brown Flying Squirrel (*Petaurista petaurista philippensis*) was recorded for the first time in the teak forests of Dhariyawad in Sitamata Wildlife Sanctuary in Chittorgarh District and forests of Jhadol, Gogunda and Kotra Tehsil of Udaipur District in Rajasthan by Tehsin (1980). Sharma (1999) was of the opinion that Udaipur is probably the western most limit of the distribution of the Large Brown Flying Squirrel in India.

After 1980, though Large Brown Flying Squirrel was repeatedly seen in the Sitamata Wildlife Sanctuary by many wildlifers and forest officials (O.C. Chandel, pers. comm.) it could not be located anywhere from the forest areas of Jhadol, Gogunda and Kotra Tehsils of Udaipur District. It is totally absent according to the census reports of Phulwari, Kumbhalgarh, Sajjangarh and Jaisamand Wildlife Sanctuaries of Udaipur Wildlife Division.

Phulwari Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in the geographical limits of Jhadol and Kotra Tehsils, and has very good habitat for Large Brown Flying Squirrel. Vast tracts of *Madhuca indica* are present

inside the Sanctuary on the foothills and plains. Even a good number of hollow trees are present everywhere in the Sanctuary. Despite all these suitabilities, continuous non-reporting of flying squirrel was strange. Hence a decision was made to survey the Sanctuary minutely. For this purpose local tribals (*Bhils*, *Garasias* & *Kathodis*) were contacted to take clues about the presence of Flying Squirrel. It was felt that they knew many things about this cryptic animal. *Bhils* call it *mor-chitri*, *udni-minki*, *khankbola*, *ravaya* and *hulrawan* and *Kathodis* call it *pankha* in their local dialect. With the help of tribals and field staff many night surveys were made in the Sanctuary and at last on 7 November 2000 a Large Brown Flying Squirrel was sighted in the Phulwari Sanctuary for the first time. Two more surveys were conducted in the month of June 2001 and the flying squirrel was sighted both the times in the Sanctuary. The results of the survey are given in Table 1. Besides Sitamata Sanctuary, Phulwari is now the only known Sanctuary in Rajasthan where presence of *P. petaurista philippensis* has been confirmed. Studies are going on to determine its distribution limits in the state of Rajasthan.

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Table 1. Occurrence of Large Brown Flying Squirrel in Phulwari Wildlife Sanctuary

Date of Observ.	No. observed	Host tree	Locality	Forest Block	Range	Special Note
7.xi.2000	2	<i>Madhuca indica</i>	Near Dhovaniya (Dhedmaria Village)	Dhed Mariya RF Kund	Kotra	Area has dense forest
6.vi.2001	1	<i>Madhuca indica</i>	Near Dhovaniya (Dhedmaria Village)	Dhed Mariya RF Kund	Kotra	Area has dense forest
22.vi.2001	2	<i>Mitiusa tomentosa</i>	Temple of Ashapura Mataji	Dhed Mariya RF Kund	Kotra	Area has dense forest
	2	<i>Adina cordifolia</i>	(God-Kaucha Village)			

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