

# Fantastic Facts

## Nicobar Flying Fox *Pteropus faunulus* Miller, 1902

### Distinguishing characters:

This is the smallest flying fox species within India. It is endemic to Nicobar Islands. The dorsal pelage is dark rufous brown in colour and the face hair is grizzled white and gray. The ventral surface is grayish-brown in colour. A distinguishing feature of this bat is its triangular ears.

### Body measurements:

The head-body length is about 170mm, forearm length about 115mm and weight about 170g.

### Habit and habitat:

This is a solitary species, seldom roosting in groups. It also feeds singly. Like all fruit bats it helps in dispersal of seeds. It roosts

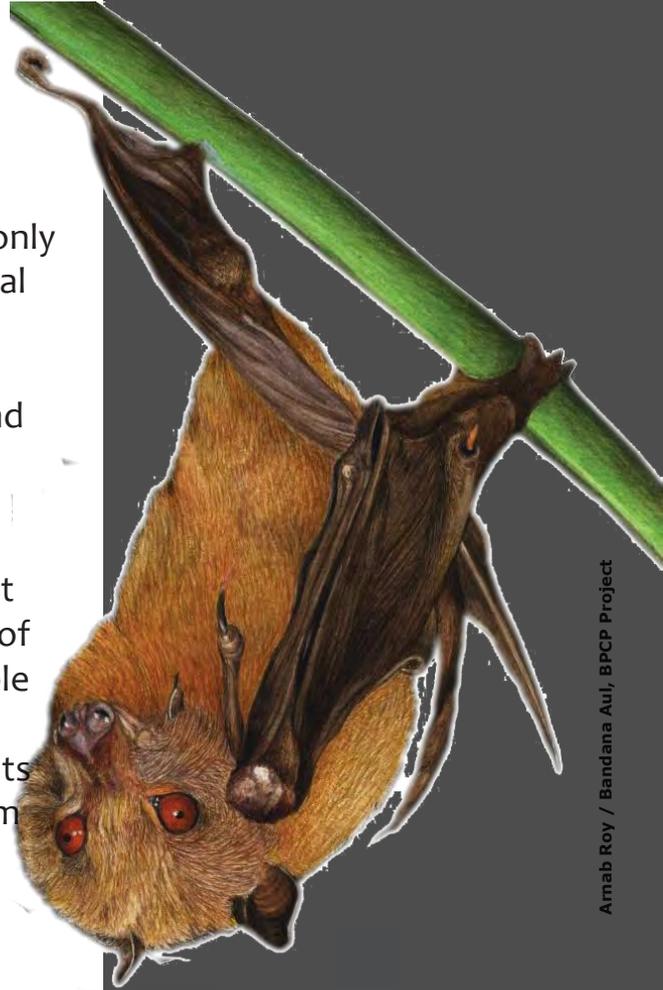
in tree hollows and under fronds of big trees.

### Distribution:

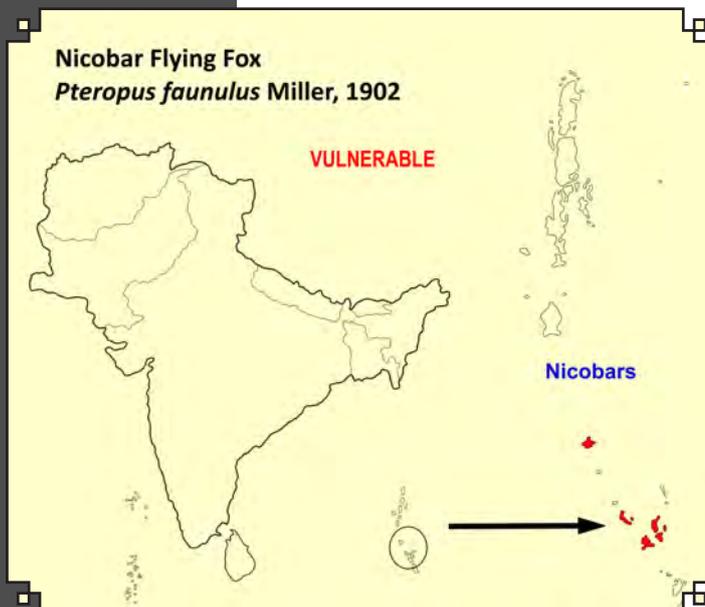
This species is found only on six islands of central Nicobar -- Bompuka, Kamorta, Katchal, Nancowrie, Tressa, and Trinket Islands.

### Status:

This is one of the most threatened fruit bats of South Asia -- Vulnerable due to restricted distribution and threats to its populations from hunting for medicine and pets, and to its habitat from tsunami. It is believed to be extinct from the island from which it was first described, Car Nicobar Island.



Amab Roy / Bandana Aul, BPCP Project



# FRUIT BATS OF SOUTH ASIA

## PART 1

# Fantastic Facts

## Blyth's Flying Fox *Pteropus melanotus* Blyth, 1863

### Distinguishing characters:

This is a medium-sized fruit bat considerably bigger than *P. faunulus*. The dorsal pelage is black, grizzled with a few gray hairs. The ventral surface is dark to blackish-brown in colour sometimes with a few gray hairs. The ears are large, broad and have rounded tips.

### Body measurements:

The head-body length is about 210mm,

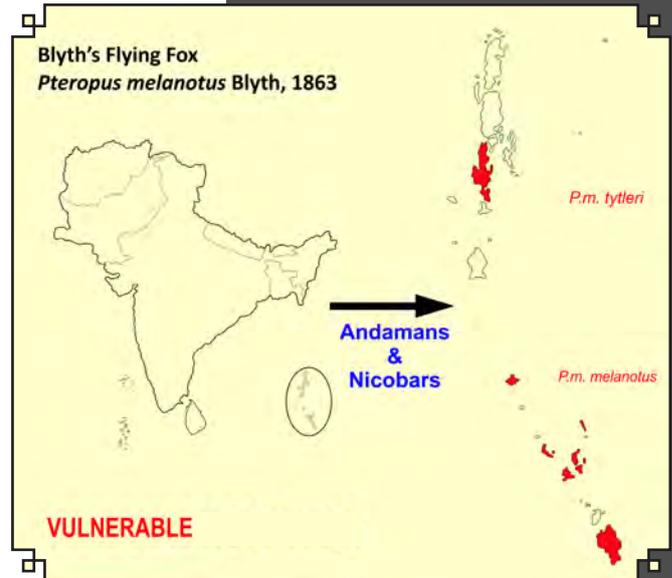
forearm length about 160mm and weight about 620g.

### Habit and habitat:

This is a gregarious species roosting and feeding in groups. It occurs in the mangroves of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and roosts in large numbers on mangrove trees and in small colonies under the fronds of the endemic Nypah palm. This species helps in dispersing seeds, thereby propagating fruiting trees in the mangroves and inland forests.

### Distribution:

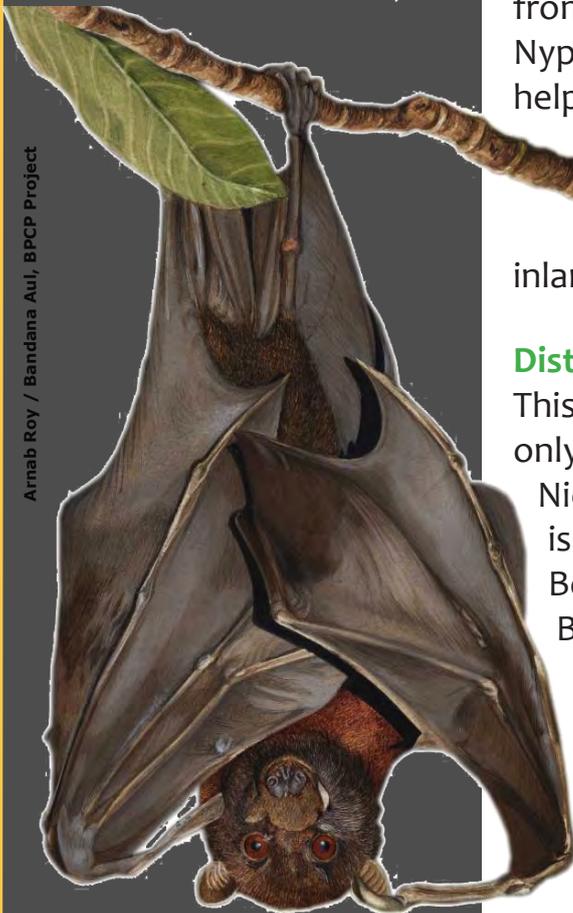
This species is found only on Andaman and Nicobar group of islands including Bompuka, Campbell Bay, Car Nicobar, Great Nicobar, Kamorta, Katchal, Kondul, Nancowrie, Rutland, South Andaman, South



and Trinket Islands. Two subspecies -- *P.m. melanotus* with paler pelage colour occurs in the southern Nicobar Islands, and *P.m. tyleri* with darker pelage colour occurs in the Andaman Islands.

### Status:

It is threatened on Andaman and Nicobar Islands in South Asia -- Vulnerable due to restricted distribution, threats to its populations from hunting for medicine and pets, and to its habitat from tsunami and degradation due to human interference. The two endemic subspecies assessed separately are severely threatened and each qualify for Endangered status.



Arbab Roy / Bandana Aul, BPCP Project

# Fantastic Facts

## Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus* Brunnich, 1782

### Distinguishing characters:

*Pteropus giganteus* is the biggest fruit bat in South Asia, and second biggest in the world after *P. vampyrus* of Southeast Asia. The dorsal pelage is narrow, dark brown to black with some hair tips being paler. The hair on the head is slightly longer and golden yellow in colour, nape and mantle being slightly lighter in colour or the same denoted by a distinct demarcation with the dark shoulder and back colour.

The belly is usually the same colour as head and mantle, but variations have been noticed in the intensity and shades. Other distinguishing characters include the lack of a tail, long and hairy snout, well-developed nostrils, almost hairless ears which are tall and pointed.

### Body measurements:

The head-body length is about 270mm, forearm

length about 170mm and weight about 800g.

### Habit and habitat:

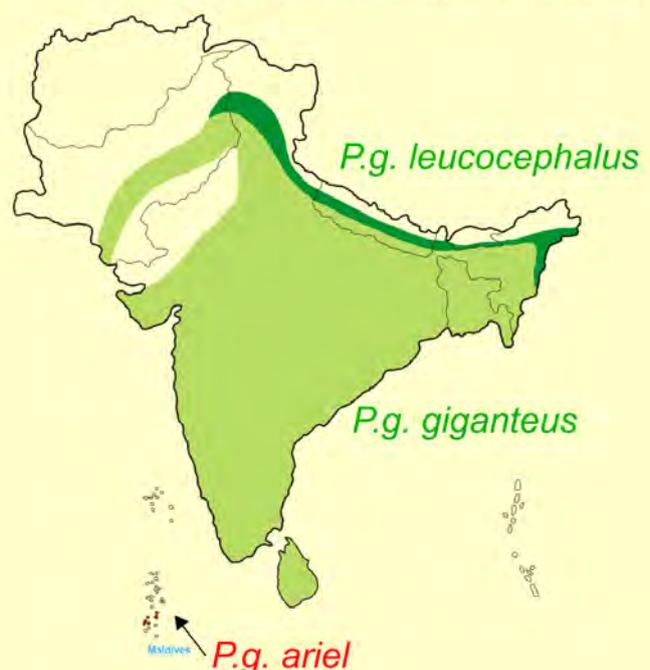
This species is one of the most popular bats in South Asia due to its size and conspicuous large roosting sites usually close to human habitation, roads and water bodies. This species is a good pollinator and helps in spreading seeds far and wide due to the long distances it is known to fly.



Arbab Roy / Dana LeBlanc, Lubee Bat Conservancy

## Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus* Brunnich, 1782

LEAST CONCERN



## Distribution:

Very widely distributed throughout South Asia except Afghanistan. Three subspecies are recognized based on size, distribution and fur length.

The nominate *P.g. giganteus* is the most common, while the Himalayan subspecies *P.g. leucocephalus* occurs up to lower mid-elevations. The distinct *P.g. ariel* is endemic to Maldives. This species also occurs in Myanmar.

## Status:

The species has been assessed as Least Concern in South Asia due to its wide distribution, high adaptability and lack of debilitating threats.

While the Indian subcontinent mainland and Sri Lanka taxa are considered Least Concern, *P.g. ariel* on the Maldives is Endangered because of very restricted distribution and continuous persecution.

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by Sally Walker and Sanjay Molur