First photographic record of the Indian Flying Fox from Jammu District, India

Image 1 (a,b). Dead specimens of Indian Flying Fox at the site. © Rahul Vikram Singh.

The Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus medius* (Pteropodidae) is distributed across southern Asia, including countries like India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. There are no previous records of this bat residing in Jammu, a city of Jammu & Kashmir, India. Indian Flying Fox is widely spread throughout this range (Figure 1), but unfortunately there are hardly any scientific records available about its population. According to the IUCN Red list, it is classified as Least Concern (LC) species. The Indian Flying Fox is hunted for food and medicine in some parts of its range (Molur et al. 2008).

On Friday, 13 August 2019, during photography session at 09.00h, something fell down from the Putranjiva tree *Putranjiva roxburghii* Wall on the ground (Image 2). At first, I thought it was a dead crow but when I went closer, it seemed like a flying fox to me. I immediately investigated the dead specimen and studied its morphological characteristics by comparing them with those written in Animalia (http://animalia.bio/indian-flying-fox). After the complete analysis, it was confirmed that it was an Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus medius* (Image 1). At the same night, I spotted a colony of Indian Flying Fox in two different places, one was the same place at Putranjiva tree *Putranjiva roxburghii* and the other was at 200m distance from the same place at Jamun tree *S. frniticosum*. There were around 10–15 individuals flying around the tree. It was impossible to capture

images due to the darkness in the shade of the trees. There is no previous scientific record on the report of this species in Jammu region. Thus, its occurrence puts on record the first-time existence of this species in the Shivalik range of Jammu region. Present sighting of Indian Flying Fox in Jammu region showed that this region is unexplored for other bat species. According to the author's best knowledge, this is the first report about the Indian Flying Fox from Jammu region.

Present evidence of the Indian Flying Fox in Jammu region indicates that weather condition, food availability and good shelter supports the growth of population of the Indian Flying Fox. Although Least Concern, individual numbers have decreased regularly (Venkatesan 2007), due to habitat loss and hunting, and from adverse weather conditions (Laurence 2010). In 2010, Ali recorded the decline rate of *Pteropus giganteus* about 48% and this was estimated in Assam during the ten-year study from 2001–2010.

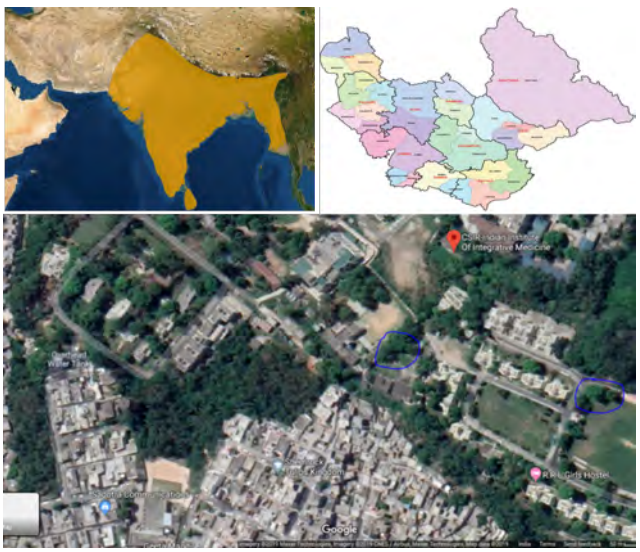

Figure 1. Distribution of the Indian Flying Fox (google map) along with Jammu District (study site).

Image 2. Putranjiva's Tree *Putranjiva roxburghii* Wall at site. © Rahul Vikram Singh

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