

From Moolagangal, we started again into the forest. We saw two big *Ficus* trees in the fruiting stage and a number of *Cycas circinalis* plants. We reached the banks of a stream where we had our breakfast and rested for half an hour. We heard the cry of a goat-like animal. Accompanied by Mr. Velusamy, we followed the sound which, according to the forester was 'odd'. We walked almost 3 km to the top of that mountain. We had to walk on a sheet of rock to make it to the top. The sight from the location was heavenly! We could see the entire half of Anaikatty Reserve Forest including Kerala side and the western face of Perumal Mudi, the highest hill in the Bolampatti range. We went back to our breakfast site, disappointed as we did not sight any animal but thrilled to have been to the top of the mountain. We started again at about 11:15 PM and proceeded to walk deeper into the forest.

We walked across the stream, Kodungarai Pallam that separates Tamil Nadu and Kerala and reached Gangal. This is another tribal hamlet being provided with its own solar power station by the Kerala Government. The villagers gave us refreshing tea. We took rest for sometime here as the day had become hotter due to the afternoon sun. We observed *Rauwolfia serpentina*, a popular medicinal plant here. We started again in half an hour and walked down to the stream.

We observed a number of wild mango trees grow here. These mangos are small and are used to make pickles in Tamil Nadu. We walked in the water all along the stream and proceeded uphill

again into the bamboo forests. We could not sight any animal. After an hour, we stopped for lunch by the stream. The water was clean and refreshing after the long walk. We noticed pugmarks of a leopard and its cub on the sand. The pugmarks of an adult deer were also seen. We decided to take a cast and spent about 45 minutes there. One well-defined pugmark was selected and bordered with bamboo sticks sliced equally. Plaster of Paris was mixed with water and poured into the 'square'. After half an hour, the cast was removed and washed and lo! we got a beautiful pugmark of the fore foot of a leopard.

Satisfied, we left the place by 3:30 P.M. and walked uphill. The upward walk was quite tedious and we had to rest a couple of times. We reached Dumanur by 4:45 P.M. where the Ranger was waiting for us, worried! Dumanur is a bigger village compared to the other two. Most of the people are agriculturists. They have a vermicomposting pit. By 5:00 P.M., we left Dumanur by jeep through a motorable road and joined the other groups at Maangarai check post by 5:50 P.M. We shared our experiences with others and were quite surprised to hear that none of the groups had seen elephants! One group had seen two Gaurs.

Though we had not seen the wildest of animals, we had a great trip which, was a real good experience. This will be one of our unforgettable treks! We thank Ms. Sally Walker, for letting us attend this census.

Toddy Cat *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* (Pallas, 1977) with white-coloured sub-terminal tail ring at Jaipur Zoo

Satish Kumar Sharma

The Toddy Cat is a medium sized civet with a long tail, uniformly dark in colour, lacking any trace of darker rings. In some eastern parts of its range the tip of its tail is white (Roberts, 1997).

At Jaipur Zoo, four adult Toddy Cats are available for display. Among them, except for one male, all animals have uniformly dark coloured tails. The exceptional male is a full grown animal with reddish-yellow tinge in the dorsal region of its body and tail with a conspicuous subterminal white ring and tip of dark colour (Fig. 1).

White patches are present below and above the eyes. One white spot is present on each side of the nose. It is in Jaipur Zoo from many years. Its exact native place is not known. So far, in geographical limits of Rajasthan I never come across any 'white-tailed' Toddy Cat. If it is an eastern race, even then the position of white ring in tail region of this captive animal does not match with description of Roberts (1997), hence worth placing on records.

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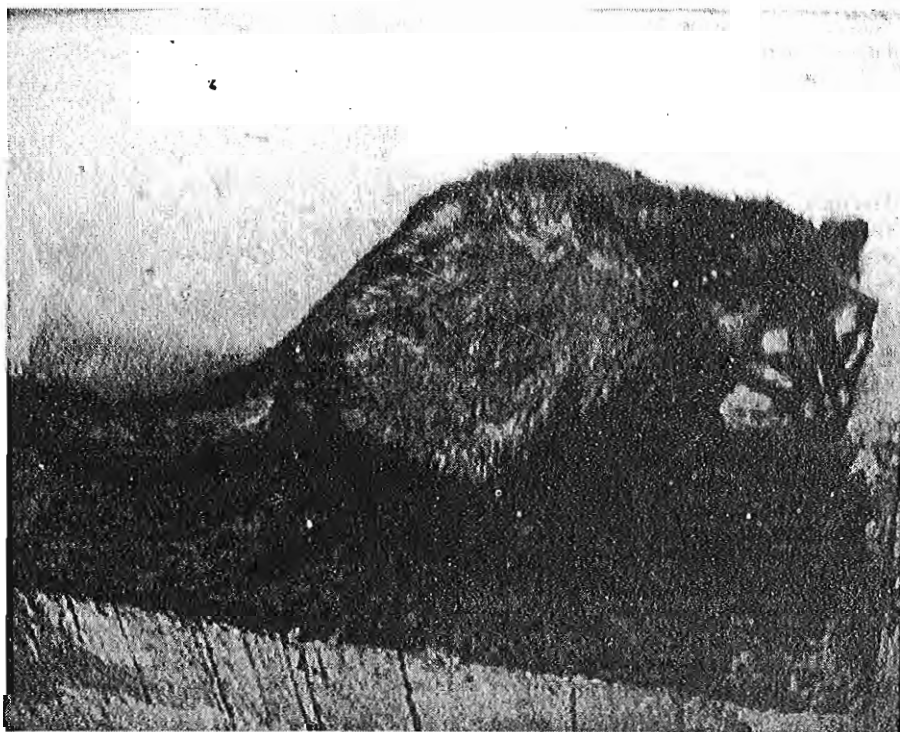


Figure 1. Toddy Cat (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*)

Reference:

Roberts, T.J. (1997): *The mammals of Pakistan*. Oxford University Press.

* Range Forest Officer, (Nahargarh Biological Park), 2, Suresh Nagar, Durgapura, Jaipur 302 018, Rajasthan.