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A noteworthy collection of mammals from Mount Harriet, Andaman Islands, India

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Abstract

The results of a rapid assessment of the mammalian species diversity of Mount Harriet National Park, South Andaman Island, in the Bay of Bengal, India, are presented. Ecological data as well as systematic notes, where relevant, have been provided for the following species: *Cynopterus brachyotis, Rhinolophus affinis, Myotis horsfieldii, Crocidura andamanensis, C. jenkinsi* and *Rattus rattus andamanensis*. The single example of *Crocidura andamanensis* collected was observed climbing walls, a behaviour previously unreported in these insectivores.

KEY WORDS: Mammalia, Vespertilionidae, Rhinolophidae, Pteropodidae, Soricidae, Muridae, rapid assessment, Andaman Islands, India.

Introduction

Mount Harriett National Park (10°43′ – 11°51′N and 92°43′ – 92°47′E), situated 38 km south of Port Blair, covers a 46.62 km^2 area, another 1,700 ha area being proposed for inclusion. Forest types represented include tropical evergreen forest, moist deciduous forest and moist-deciduous forest. The landscape is undulating, with several hill ranges, such as Mount Harriet (365 m above msl), Mount Carpenter (373 m), Mount Goodridge (377 m), Mount Koyob (460 m), Mount Hext (424 m) and Mount Warden (422 m).

The mammalian fauna of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands comprises a rich assemblage of rodents and bats (see Hill, 1967; Miller, 1902; Saha, 1980), many of which are endemic and/or poorly known systematically and ecologically. Information on the distributional patterns and ecological requirements are of great theoretical interest (Lawlor, 1986), besides being crucial for management of protected areas.

Materials and methods

Collections were made using the following techniques—

Sherman traps. These live traps were baited with dried fish. Traps were inspected twice a day.

Pitfall traps. Pitfall traps comprised buckets buried in the soil flush to the top. A lid covered the traps when they were not in use. These were sited along animal trails. As with the Sherman traps, inspections were made twice a day.

Mist netting. Nylon mist-nets were set up at dusk in a variety of habitat types, representing both environmental and disturbance gradients, including primary forests, human habitations and plantations.

All mammals were killed with chloroform and fixed in 9% formalin. Measurements of specimens up to 200 mm were taken with Mitutoyo™ Dial Vernier calipers to the nearest 0.1 mm; those exceeding this