ORIGINAL ARTICLE

New locality records of the Crab-eating Mongoose *Urva urva* in Satchari National Park, Sylhet, Bangladesh

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Abstract.

We report the first records of the Crab-eating Mongoose *Urva urva* in the forest of the Satchari National Park, Sylhet, Bangladesh. An individual was observed and photographed on 23 December 2015 at the forest edge adjacent to a tea garden and another one was observed on 14 August 2015 along a stream.

Keywords: Crab-eating Mongoose, *Urva urva*, locality record, Satchari National Park, Bangladesh

The Crab-eating Mongoose *Urva urva* is locally known as *Kakrabhuk Beji*. The crab-eating mongoose is grey with a well-marked narrow white stripe on the side of the neck. Its tail is bushy with lighter distal tip (Thapa 2013). Feet are black and hairless. Females possess 6 mammae. This species is generally diurnal and preferably solitary or living in small groups (Khan 2008, Gilchrist *et al.* 2009). The Crab-eating Mongoose is considered as Least Concern (IUCN 2015) but locally recognized as Endangered (IUCN Bangladesh 2003). There are three mongoose species in Bangladesh.

Satchari National Park is a mixed evergreen forest of Bangladesh. The park covers about 243 hectares and is comprised of the Raghunandan Hills Reserve Forests within the Satchari Range. The park is situated nearly 130 km northeast of Dhaka (Mukul et al. 2006). The southern part of the park is bordered by India. Adjoining areas are covered by tea gardens, oil palm trees, lemon gardens, rubber plantation and agricultural fields. The forest holds numerous threatened fauna, such as Hoolock Gibbon *Hoolock hoolock*, Capped Langur *Trachypithecus pileatus*, Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus*, Barking Deer *Muntiacus muntjak* and Kalij Pheasant *Lophura leucomelanos*. The climate is tropical, and the annual average rainfall is about 4,162 mm and the relative humidity fluctuates between 74% and 90%.

On 23 December 2015 at 10h57, a Crab-eating Mongoose was observed at the edge of the tea garden at Satchari National Park (24°7’25.65” N, 91°27’5.43” E). The tea garden is adjacent to the forest. The observed crab-eating mongoose was apparently foraging on the ground. Photographs of that individual are shown on Figure 1 to 3. Furthermore, on 14

August 2015 at about 08h10, while we were walking in the stream of the forest, we observed an individual of crab-eating mongoose foraging near the stream. When the mongoose perceived our presence, it ran away. No photograph was taken.

Figure 1. Crab-eating Mongoose *Urva urva* foraging on the patch between the forest and the tea garden at 10h57, 23 December 2015 (Photo: Md. Ashraf Ul Hasan).

The Crab-eating Mongoose is a regularly seen mongoose in much of mainland Southeast Asia (Duckworth 1997, Than Zaw *et al.* 2008). They are found in stream banks, swamps, paddy fields, lowland wet evergreen forest, mixed evergreen forest and even secondary forest (Pham-Chong-Ahn 1980, Menon 2003, Chutipong *et al.* 2014). They are often reported from deciduous forest in Thailand, Cambodia and southern Vietnam (Duckworth 1997, Van Rompaey 2001, Than Zaw *et al.* 2008, IUCN 2015). Khan (2008) and Feeroz *et al.* (2012) also indicated that this species can be found in the Northeast and Southeast of Bangladesh, including the small mangrove patch in Teknaf, and deciduous forests in Gazipur and Sherpur. However, there was no record in the Satchari National Park. Choudhury (2004) surveyed the biodiversity of the Satchari Reserve Forest and reported 13 carnivore species, but did not record Crab-eating Mongoose was found. Our observation provides the first sighting record of Crab-eating Mongoose at Satchari National Park. In both observations, the mongooses were alone and foraging on the ground.

Figure 2. Crab-eating Mongoose *Urva urva* at the Satchari National Park, Bangladesh, 23 December 2015 (Photo: Md. Ashraf Ul Hasan).

Figure 3. Crab-eating Mongoose *Urva urva* disappearing into the forest at Satchari National Park, at 10h58, 23 December 2015 (Photo: Md. Ashraf Ul Hasan).

Satchari National Park is a crucial forest for the conservation of many threatened species. Although some research has been conducted in this forest, there is a lack of knowledge and further information are needed to evaluate and improve the conservation of the fauna and flora of the Satchari National Park. Further research on population estimation and ecology of the Crab-eating Mongoose should be conducted and would help setting up conservation priorities for this species.

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