

Sri Lanka: 12 days (August 6 – 17)

There has been a lot of Sri Lankan trip report of late, so this will not be a very detailed report as all the areas we went to has already been covered in detail by many others. The idea behind this trip report is to provide a taste of tons of mammals that can be seen even for those travelling more leisurely.

Few countries if any offer, the prospect of seeing so many mammals in such a short time in respect to the total number of species possible. Bird and Wildlife Team (www.birdandwildlifeteam.com) seems to be the company of choice and particular the guide named Udithe Hettige. I secured Udithe as our guide, but as this was a family trip, my expectations to see a huge number of species was moderate. The trip was a balanced one, to use Jon's expression from an earlier trip report of his. We had only a few very early mornings and no all-night walks or drives. The few night walks ended at 22 at the latest and the night drives were never longer than 4 hours. I had plenty of time for the pool and (too much) time in the bar. I should mention that I set the time limit and Udithe and Dulan would have liked to continue far longer into the night.

Udithe got dengue fever one month earlier but decided to come anyway as I had booked him (his words). As he had not yet recuperated (the doctor recommended him to do nothing for 3 months), the Bird and Wildlife Team sent a second guide, Dulan, another excellent guide. Needless to say, we were well taken care of and it shows the Bird and Wildlife Team's dedication to provide an excellent service. The vehicle and driver they supplied were to an exceptional standard, the accommodation comfortable and all meals very tasty.

Udithe certainly lived up to his reputation as a world class guide. He and Dulan went out of their way to make sure I could maximize the number of species and having a memorable trip in general and they found most of my target species. Their knowledge of the local wildlife seems to be limitless. The bat identification skills of Udithe are one of a kind I can imagine.

The trip was immensely successful with 63 species of recorded mammals. I spotted all cats, all but one Civet, both Loris and all primates – missed only the southern lowland wet zone sub-species of the Purple-faced Leaf Monkey (heard only).

A note on the seasons:

Udithe recommended that people focusing on mammal watching to avoid the peak season January to April as there is no better season to find them. In addition to plentiful of mammals, you enjoy less crowds and more space.

Itinerary:

- Kitugala: 2 nights
- Sinharaja: 1 night
- Udawalawa: 1 night
- Yala NP: 2 nights
- Nuwara Eliya: 1 night
- Kandy: 1 night
- Sigiriya: 3 nights

List of mammals:

		Kitugala NP	Sinharaja NP	Udawalawa NP + surroundings	Yala NP + surroundings	Nuwara Eliya	Horton Plains	Kandy	Sigiriya	Other
Indian Hare	Lepus nigricollis			x	x				x	
Sri Lankan Giant Squirrel	Ratufa macroura	x							x	
Indian Palm Squirrel	Funambulus palmarum		x	x	x	x		x	x	
Sri Lankan Flameback Squirrel	Funambulus layardi	x					x			
Sri Lankan Dusky Striped Squirrel	Funambulus obscurus						x			
Indian Giant Flying Squirrel	Ptaurista philippensis							x		
Blanford's Rat	Cremnomys blanfordi			x						
Little Indian Field Mouse	Mus booduga			x					x	
Eastern House Mouse	Mus musculus			x					x	
Black Rat	Rattus rattus									x
Indian Gerbill	Tatera indica			x	x				x	
Small Indian Civet	Viverricula indica				x				x	
Asian Palm Civet	Paradoxurus hermaphroditus								x	
Sri Lankan Brown Palm Civet	Paradoxurus montanus								x	
Golden Dry-Zone Palm Civet	Paradoxurus stenocephalus								x	
Jungle Cat	Felis chaus								x	
Rusty-spotted Cat	Felis rubiginosa				x					
Fishing Cat	Felis viverrina			x						
Leopard	Panthera pardus				x					
Soft-furred Metad	Millardia meltada			x						
Indian Grey Mongoose	Herpestes edwardsii			x						
Ruddy Mongoose	Herpestes smithii			x	x					
Brown Mongoose	Herpestes brachyurus						x			
Striped-necked Mongoose	Herpestes vitticollis				x					
Golden Jackal	Canis aureus			x					x	
Sloth Bear	Melursus ursinus				x					
Eurasian Otter	Lutra lutra			x						
Indian Flying Fox	Pteropus giganteus	x			x				x	
Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat	Cynopterus sphinx	x								
Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat	Cynopterus brachyotis								x	
Fulvous Fruit Bat	Rousettus leschenaulti								x	
Black-bearded Tomb Bat	Taphozous melanopogon								x	
Long-armed Sheath-tailed Bat	Taphozous longimanus								x	
Dusky Roundleaf Bat	Hipposideros ater				x					

