

SRI LANKA 19 – 24 July 2018

Introduction

Tempted for a long time by earlier trip reports from Sri Lanka I finally managed to set up a trip to this great island.

This was a part of a longer trip (6 weeks) and due to this and for high cost I cut it down to a 5 nights trip and focused on two areas only. 2 nights in Wilpattu NP and 3 nights around Sigiriya. My main targets were the three smaller cats and Sloth bear.

I guess everything already have been said about this areas so I will skip further information about them. I used the famous an VERY excellent service from <http://www.birdandwildlifeteam.com/> and my guide were **Dulan Ranga Vidanapathirana**.

Couldn't be more satisfied with the service. Always willing to put in alot of hours spotlighting and do what it takes to find a certain species. This is what real wildlife guiding is all about. I wish this could be the standard all over the world. Great company as well.

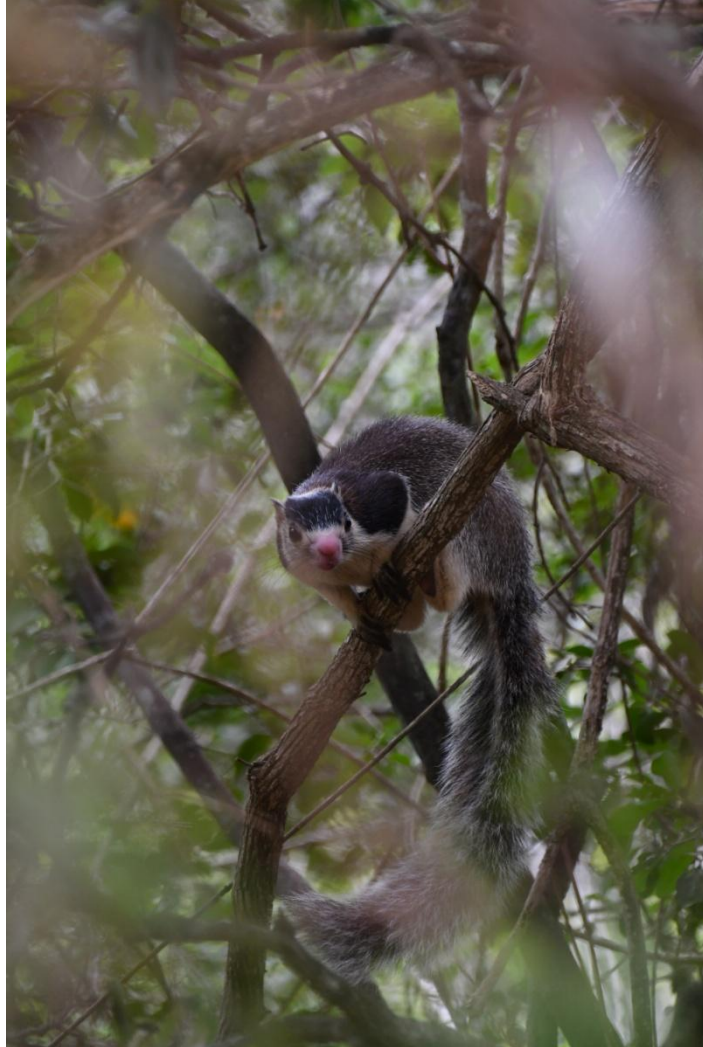
Thanx alot Dulan for this wonderful trip!

Okey, over to the sightings then. This is my species-list for this 5 days and YES...it was a real success regarding my smaller cats...

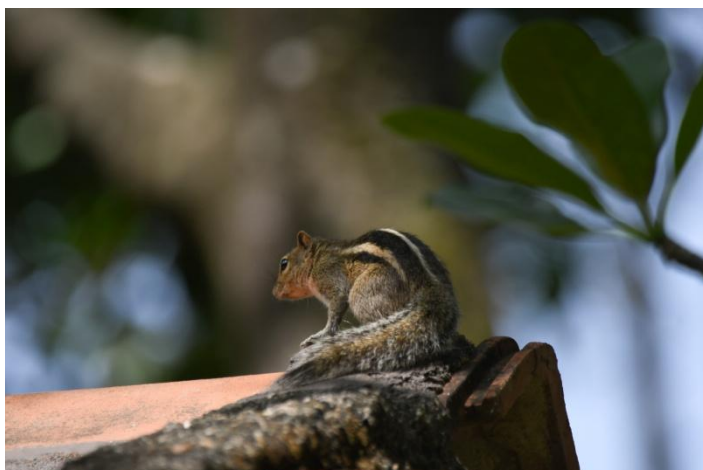
1. Indian hare --- Day 1,2,3,4. Many of them. Very common both in Wilpattu and Sigiriya.



2. Grizzled giant squirrel --- Day 3. Also called Sri Lankan giant squirrel. Seen only in Wilppattu



3. Indian Palm squirrel --- Day1,2,3,4,5. Seen all days in Wilppattu and Sigiriya. Very common.



4. Indian giant flying squirrel --- Day 3. Seen only one time in Sigiriya. A quick glimpse. We waited for him to come out of his hole at dusk. He did and glide away...

5. Asiatic long tailed climbing mouse --- Day 1,5. One seen on the ground in Wilpattu and one fell into the open car from above in Sigiriya... suddenly there was a mouse with panic in the car.

6. Black rat --- Day 5. Two seen when spotlighting in Sigiriya.

7. Indian gerbil --- Day 1. Eight seen the first night in Wilpattu while spotlighting. Running back and forward on the road. Then not a single Gerbil...

8. Small indian civet --- Day 2,4. Two seen in Wilpattu and three in Sigiriya while spotlighting.



9. Asian palm civet --- Day 4,5. Four individuals seen in Sigiriya including a female with two babies.

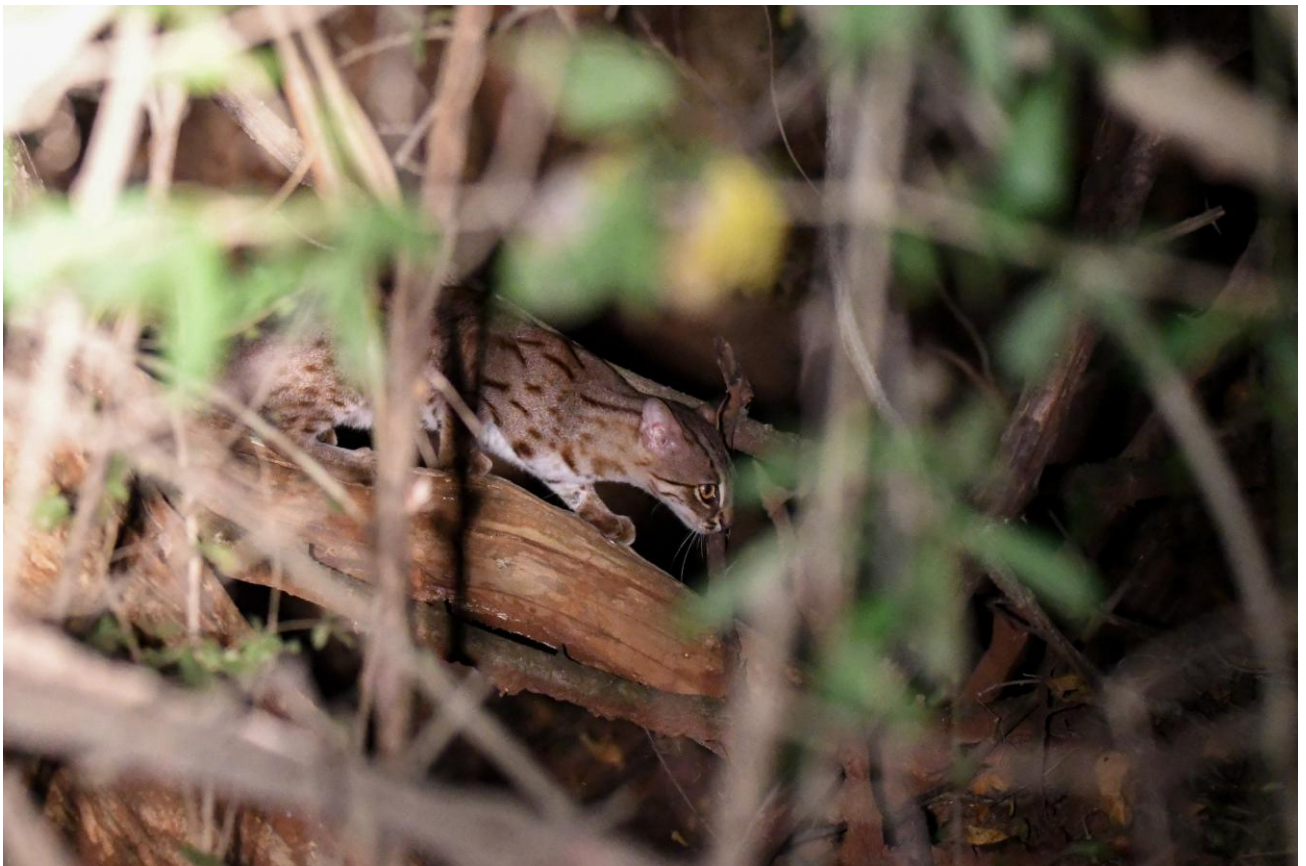
10. Golden palm civet --- Day 4. Quick glimpse of this endemic species in Sigiriya while spotlighting. Two shy individuals disappeared quite quickly in a high tree. Not very easy to see and you need some time for them.

11. Eurasian Wild boar --- Day 1,2,3. Seen inside Wilpattu NP in daytime. They keep their distance, shy.

12. Jungle cat --- Day 1,4,5. One of my targets. Easily ticked off the first night when spotlighting outside Wilpattu NP. 7 Individuals seen. They were everywhere on the grasslands chasing big grasshoppers. Another 2 individuals seen in Sigiriya when spotlighting. None during daytime. Also some hybrids, especially in Sigiriya.



13. Rusty spotted cat --- Day 1. Another target and the hardest one beforehand. Well, I didn't had to worry too long. Already on our first night outside Wilpattu NP we got a fantastic sighting of the worlds smallest feline. In fact we got a double sighting of the same cat. A second look 1 ½ hours after the first one and I got two different pictures of the same individual.



14. Fishing cat --- Day 2,3. Third target and my luck had not abandoned me. One seen outside Wilpattu NP and one seen in Sigiriya. The one in Wilpattu is probably a young cat, quite small. The second sighting in Sigiriya was a much larger cat. The quality of the sightings was phenomenal!



15. Indian grey mongoose --- Day 1,4,5. A troop was seen along the railway at a breakfast stop enroute to Wilpattu from Colombo. Then also quick glimpse in Sigiriya.

16. Ruddy mongoose --- Day 2. Lucky encounter inside Wilpattu NP. Only one sighting.



17. Golden jackal --- Day 1,2,3. Seen during daytime inside Wilpattu NP. Not many. Only one sighting per day.



18. Sloth bear --- Day 1,3. My last target. Seen inside Wilpattu NP on two sightings. The first very brief of around 5 seconds. The second one much longer. Both on very early morning in the first light. They can be a hit or miss in Wilpattu, by no means a guarantee. All targets hereby ticked off. Success!



19. Eurasian otter --- Day 5. Surprising encounter on the last night in Sigiriya of two individuals.



20. Indian flying fox --- Day 5. Huge roosting colony seen on the way back to Colombo from Sigiriya.



20. Leschenault's rousette (Fulvous fruit bat) --- Day 2. Seen in Wilpattu.

21. Black bearded tomb bat --- Day 4. Seen in abandoned house in Sigiriya.

22. Long winged tomb bat --- Day 4. Seen in rock crevices were a few individuals dayroosting in Sigiriya



23. Dusky leaf-nosed bat --- Day 3,5. Seen in abandoned house in both Wilpattu and Sigiriya.

24. Schneider's leaf-nosed bat --- Day 3,5. Seen in abandoned house in both Wilpattu and Sigiriya.



25. Indian leaf-nosed bat --- Day 3. Seen in abandoned house in Wilpattu.

26. Lesser false vampire bat --- Day 5. Seen in abandoned house in Sigiriya.



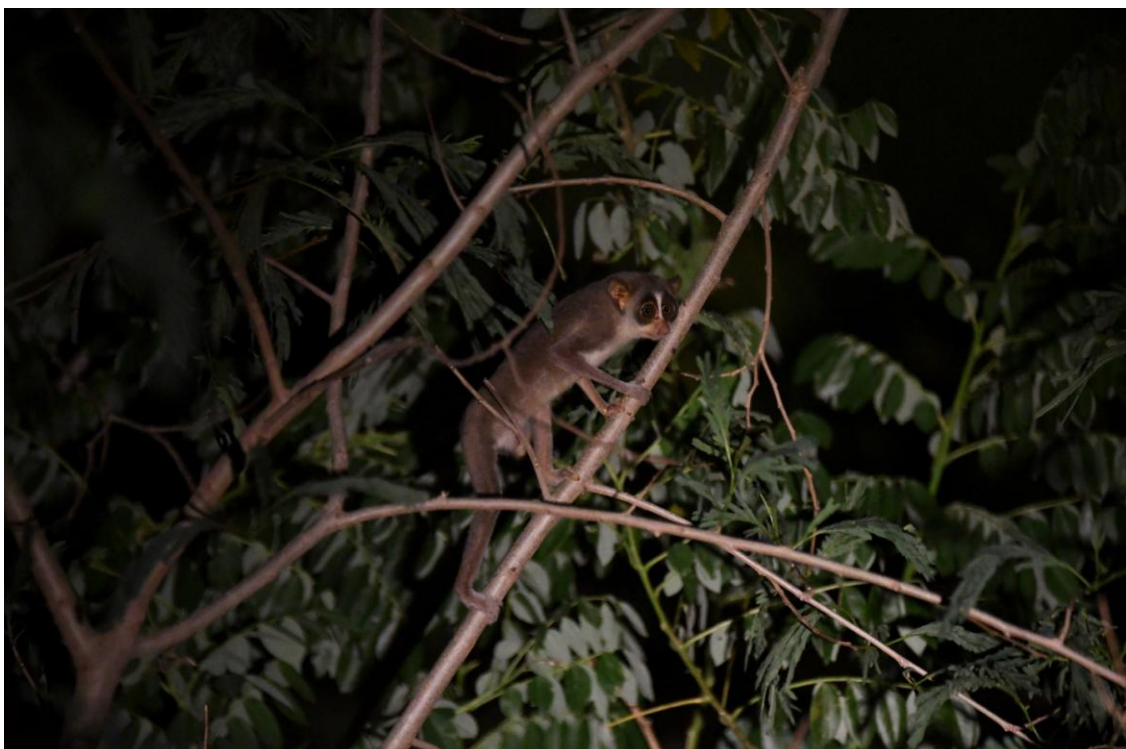
27. Rufous horse-shoe bat --- Day 4. Seen in abandoned house in Sigiriya.



28. Lesser large-footed bat (*Myotis hasseltii*) --- Day 2. Seen in Wilpattu.

29. Least pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus tenuis*) --- Day 3. Seen in Sigiriya.

30. Grey slender loris --- Day 1,2,3. Totally 5 individuals seen when spotlighting in both Wilpattu and Sigiriya. Very nice sightings.



31. Toque macaque --- Day 1,2,3,4,5. Endemic and very common. Especially in Sigiriya where they are everywhere.



32. Tufted gray langur --- Day 1,2,3,4,5. Seen every day. Very common. Especially in Sigiriya.



33. Purple-faced langur (Purple-faced leaf monkey) --- Day 4. Endemic species. One sighting. Seen in Sigiriya where they use to come out from the forest at dusk to sleep close to the water in the moat.



34. Sri Lankan white-spotted chevrotain --- Day 2,5. Endemic species. Common when you spotlight. 2 seen outside Wilpattu and 5 seen in Sigiriya.



35. Sambar deer --- Day 2,3. Seen only in Wilpattu. Not very common and can be hard to see in this two areas.

36. Chital (Spotted deer) --- Day 1,2,3,4. Seen everyday inside Wilpattu NP. Very common here.



37. Indian Muntjac (Red muntjac, Barking deer) --- Day 1,2,3. Common in Wilpattu NP.



38. Wild water buffalo --- Day 1,2,3. Seen inside Wilpattu NP. Common in the park.



39. Asian Elephant --- Day 3. Seen only inside Wilpattu NP. Totally 3 individuals.



Stuff I missed

The major thing I missed was the Leopard in Wilpattu. Always on the wrong place at the wrong time. Missed a pair of them by minutes and so on. We even got an extra "free" morning drive inside the park but without seeing any Leopards.

With all this luck with the smaller cats I am happy to be unlucky with the Leopard :)

Otherwise we cleaned up really well in the "dry zone" with only "wet zone" species left.

There is a minimal chance of Indian crested porcupine and Indian pangolin as well which I didn't see and some more bats and rodents.

39 species in 5 days is nothing else than excellent and the quality of the sightings were extraordinary in many cases.

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