Night Life

Mysore Slender Loris

The Mysore slender loris *Loris lydekkerianus lydekkerianus* is a nocturnal primate that is found in southern India along the Eastern Ghats. Small-sized and arboreal, the animal is typically found in dry forests and thorny scrub jungles. Sandy brown in colour, the animal has been described as a ‘banana on stilts’ due to its thin and long limbs. Its cryptic movements make the species difficult to sight at night; people usually detect the presence of the loris through the brilliant orange eyeshine that can be seen when light is reflected from the eyes of the slender loris. Even the call of the slender loris aids its cryptic behaviour; although loris individuals whistle to each other when they begin to move around at dusk, most people who hear the call tend to dismiss it as children playing with a toy whistle! Unlike most primates, the slender loris cannot jump across trees, hence it is dependent on overlapping terminal branches to walk through tree canopies. When forest patches become fragmented or lack connectivity at the canopy level, the species is forced to come down to the ground to access a tree, making it vulnerable to predators and road-kill accidents. Apart from these dangers, the species’ survival is also threatened due to the pet and traditional medicine trade.

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