Night Life

Brown Palm Civet

Also called Jerdon's palm civet, the brown palm civet *Paradoxurus jerdoni* is a small carnivore that is endemic to the Western Ghats region of India. Nocturnal and solitary, the species is not easy to sight, and until a couple of decades ago, very little information was available about the ecology or behaviour of the species. The brown palm civet is predominantly frugivorous and typically consumes small-seeded and pulpy drupes and berries. Like other civets, the brown palm civet is a major seed disperser. As seeds are carried away from the parent trees and deposited undamaged into the forest floor via their scats, this species is seen as an effective seed disperser. The brown palm civet has been able to survive in small fragments in the Western Ghats; this ability combined with its seed dispersal activities, indicates that it could play an important role in the restoration of degraded forest patches in the Western Ghats region. Although the brown palm civet has been able to survive in fragmented landscapes, it is endemic to the Western Ghats, and the increase of monoculture plantations in the region and consequent loss of tree diversity threaten the long-term survival of the species.

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Photo Credit: Kalyan Varma

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