

A new trip report of Sri Lanka as someone dislike !

But how to do differently ?

First, mammals are rarely seen every day in the same tree or in the same field, and also in the same part of a forest !

Second, guides don't want to loose their jobs and they request us not to discribe the exactly places we visited. And after all, it's a pleasure to look for by ourself, in a place where many trip reports, even if they are not very detailed, speak about always the same species which is a fact of real opportunities of seeing wild life...

We booked, from March 18th to March 27th 2013, with Deepal Warakagoda of « Birds and Wild Life Team » ([www.birdandwildlifeteam.com](http://www.birdandwildlifeteam.com)). This Travel Agency organised for us prospections in wet and dry zones, in rain and cloud forests, in low and high lands... so, we had all the opportunities to see a maximum of different species.

Finally we saw 48 species of mammals, 177 of birds, 9 of snakes... Our guide, kind and very efficient (day and night), Dulan Ranga Vidanapathirana had, certainly, a great part of the successfulness for our trip.

We had full days of prospection : usually we were in the fields from 6 am to 12, with a short break for breakfast. After lunch and a short rest we were again looking for wild life from 3 and half pm to 8 .After diner, at 9 pm, we had other observations till 1 am ! Very long days with hot weather (30°C minimum in the low land places) !

First visit **near the international airport** of Katunayake. The garden of the hotel gave us the opportunity to see India Palm Squirrels (saw daily, every where), Indian Grey mongooses (*Herpestes edwardsii*), 4 Indian Flying Foxes (*Pteropus giganteus*), Fulvus Fruit Bats (*Rousettus leschenaulti*).

In a nearby secondary wet zone forest, we found at night : 1 Asiatic Long-tailed Climbing Mouse (*Vandeleuria oleracea*), 3 Golden Wet-Zone Palm Civets (*Paradoxurus aureus*) and 1 Red Slender Loris (*Loris targigradus*).



Golden Wet-Zone Palm Civet  
(*Paradoxurus aureus*)

Next stop for 3 days and 3 nights : **Sigiriya**. Note that walking in the forest nearby the rock is dangerous because of the presence of wild elephants dreaded by local people ! So we prospected by car at night.

We had observed : many Indian Hares (*Lepus nigricollis*), 3 Small Indian Civets (*Viverricula indica*), 2 Asian Palm Civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*), 4 Golden Dry-Zone Palm Civets (*Paradoxurus stenocephalus*), only 2 Jungle Cats (*Felis chaus*) and 1 Fishing Cat (*Felis viverrina*), 1 Long Tail Climbing Mouse (not identified), 7 Grey Slender Loris (*Loris lydekkerianus*), many Sry Lankan Yellow-Spotted Chevrotains (*Moschiola kathygre*). It was almost a full moon period for all the trip and it seems not to be a good point to see night mammals. During the day time : numerous Toque Monkeys (*Macaca sinica*), numerous Tufted Grey Langurs (*Semnopithecus priam*), 8 Purple-Faced Leaf Monkeys (*Trachypithecus vetulus*), many Sri Lankan Giant Squirrels (*Ratufa macroura*), numerous India Palm Squirrels (*Funambulus palmarum*), 3 Short Tailed (Brown) Mongooses (*Herpestes brachyurus*).



Golden Dry-Zone Palm Civet  
(*Paradoxurus stenocephalus*)



Small Indian Civet  
(*Viverricula indica*)

Our guide, Dulan, introduced us in houses or small caves for bats. So we saw : Woolly Horseshoe Bats (*Rhinolophus beddomei*), 2 Black-Bearded Tomb Bats (*Taphozous melanopogon*), 4 Lesser False Vampire Bats (*Megaderma spasma*), Rufous Horseshoe Bats (*Rhinolophus rouxii*), 1 Indian Roundleaf Bat (*Hipposideros lankadiva*), *Hipposideros galeritus*, 4 *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* cf (black).



Indian Roundleaf Bat  
(*Hipposideros lankadiva*)

Then, 2 days and nights in rain forest near **Kitulgala**. Very few mammals have been seen in the day light : the wet zone form of Sri Lankan Giant Squirrels (*Ratufa macroura*), the very fast Sri Lankan flameback Jungle Squirrel (*Funambulus layardi*), and impossible to miss India Palm Squirrels (*Funambulus palmarum*).

During our night walks, we met : 1 Golden Wet-Zone Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus aureus*), 1 Asian Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*), 1 Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*), a non identified rat, many greater Short-nosed Fruit Bats (*Cynopterus sphinx*), 1 Lesser False Vampire Bat (*Megaderma spasma*), 3 Red Slender Loris (*Loris targigradus*), 2 Sri Lankan White-spotted Chevrotains (*Moschiola meminna*) and leeches !



Sri Lankan White-spotted Chevrotain  
(*Moschiola meminna*)

2 full days in **Yala** national park and 3 nights in neighbourhood of Tissamaharama.

Because of the full moon, night drives were not so successful as we hoped ! Only one species of Cat : the Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*) met 4 times. And : 1 Asian Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*), 1 Small Indian Civet (*Viverricula indica*), Indian Gerbils (*Tatera indica*), Kelaart's Pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus ceylonicus*), Dusky Roundedleaf Bats (*Hipposideros ater*), *Hipposideros galeritus*, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* cf (black).

The park : a nice place with rocks, pools, forest, sea side, with many mammals. If we missed Sloth Bears and Striped-Necked Mongooses, we saw in good conditions : Leopards (*Panthera pardus*) 4 times, 23 Ruddy-Mangooses (*Herpestes smithii*), 7 Golden Jackals (*Canis aureus*), Tufted Grey Langurs (*Semnopithecus priam*), Toque Monkeys (*Macaca sinica*), numerous Eurasian Wild Boars (*Sus scrofa*), only 1 herd of Sambar (*Cervus unicolor*), many Chitals (*Axis axis*), many Wild Buffalos (*Bubalus arnee*), many Asian Elephants (*Elephas maximus*), many Indian Hares (*Lepus nigricollis*), Sri Lankan Giant Squirrels (*Ratufa macroura*), India Palm Squirrels (*Funambulus palmarum*), and a large colony of Indian Flying Foxes (*Pteropus giganteus*).



Ruddy-Mongoose  
(*Herpestes smithii*)

Last stop with our guide in up lands of **Nuwara Eliya**. No mammals for all the night walk. In the day light, India Palm Squirrels (*Funambulus palmarum*), 1 Sri Lankan Dusky-Stripped Jungle Squirrel (*Funambulus obscurus*), 1 Ceylan Highland Shrew (*Sincus murimus montans*), Purple-Faced Leaf Monkeys (*Trachypithecus vetulus*). Traps in a house produced : a House (Black) Rat (*Rattus rattus*) and a Lesser Bandicoot.

By our own, we visited **Horton Plains**. Early in the morning we used the classic and crowded path of the World's ends. We saw many Sambar Deers (*Cervus unicolor*), drops and tracks of Leopards, and we heard troops of Purple-Faced Leaf Monkeys. Perhaps, others paths are more quiet !

Certainly this trip report is not clear enough for spots, but it gives at least the reference of a good Wild Life Travel Agency with very clever guides and a list of mammals by place possible to see. Remember, choose dates of trip during the new moon (less light) to be more lucky during night walks and drives...