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NOTE

FIRST REPORT OF THE ASIATIC BRUSH-TAILED PORCUPINE *ATHERURUS MACROURUS* (LINNAEUS, 1758) (MAMMALIA: RODENTIA: HYSTRICIDAE) FROM WEST BENGAL, INDIA

Suraj Kumar Dash, Abhisek Chettri, Dipanjan Naha & Sambandam Sathyakumar

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First report of the Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine *Atherurus macrourus* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Mammalia: Rodentia: Hystricidae) from West Bengal, India

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The Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine *Atherurus macrourus* is considered to be one of the lesser-known rodent species of southern Asia distributed throughout the northeastern part from central China to Malaysia including countries such as India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia (Molur 2016; Dhendup & Dorji 2017). Although it has such a wide distribution range it is still considered a rare species (Choudhury 2006; Talukdar et al. 2019). It occurs in the subtropical and tropical montane forests at 100–4,571 m (Eisenberg et al. 2015; Talukdar et al. 2019). It is listed as Least Concern by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (Molur 2016) and in India it is protected under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Here we report this species for the first time from the state of West Bengal. Prior to this, the species has been reported only from the northeastern states of

India: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura (Agrawal 2000; Gupta 2000; Choudhury 2006; Datta et al. 2008; Srinivasulu & Srinivasulu 2012; Choudhury 2013; Choudhury 2016; Talukdar & Choudhury 2017; Talukdar et al. 2019). The present record can be considered the western-most distribution range of the Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine as the earlier report mentions the Gedu region of Bhutan as the western-most distribution limit (Dhendup & Dorji 2017) which is ca. 125km away in the east.

As part of our research investigation on the human-leopard interactions in northern Bengal, we deployed camera traps to monitor the Leopard population in Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary in November 2018–February 2019. On 28 January 2019, at 21.09h a single individual of Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine was photo captured in a camera trap deployed in upper Ghoramara Block (26.887N & 88.417E, 640m) of the Latpanchor

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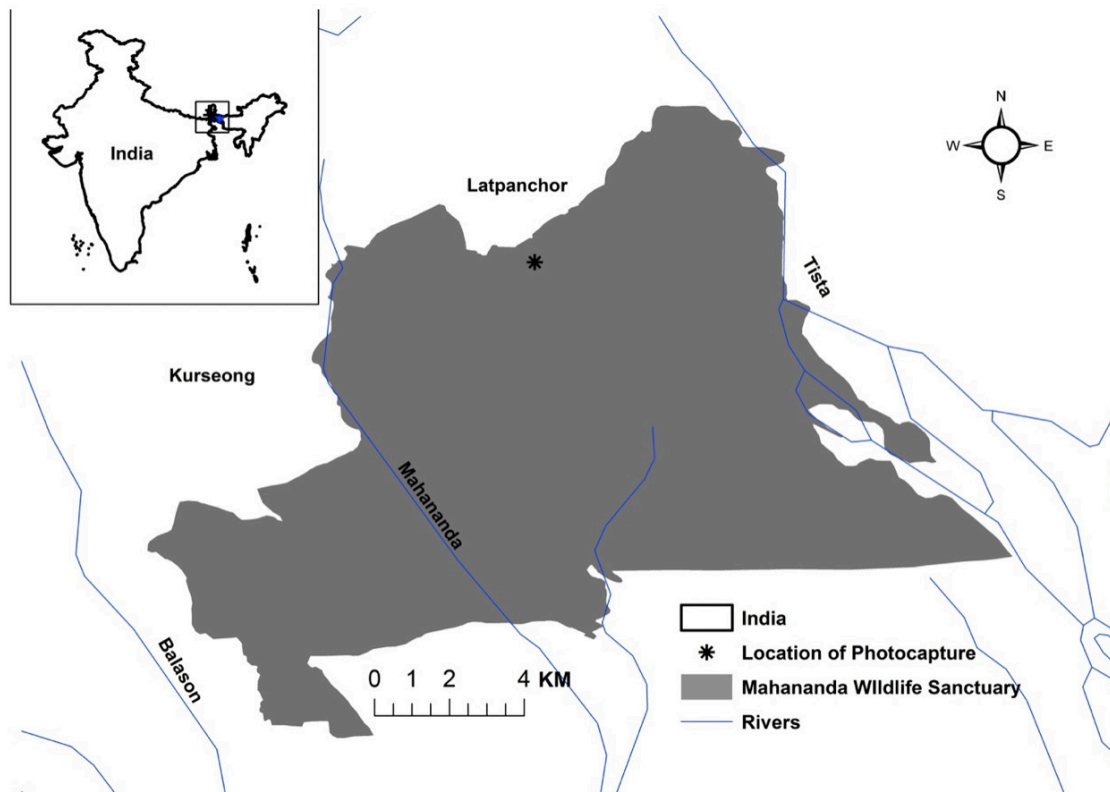


Figure 1. Location where the photo of *Atherurus macrourus* in Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, northern West Bengal, India, was captured.



Image 1A & B. Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine photo captured in Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, West Bengal, 28 January 2019.

Beat, North Range, Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary (Image 1A,B). The photo capture site was characterized by dense vegetation of plant species such as *Baccaurea sapida*, *Bauhinia vahlii*, *Betula cylindrostachya*, *Castanopsis tribuloides*, *Cinnamomum obtusifolium*, *Duabanga grandiflora*, *Evodia fraxinifolia*, *Ostodes paniculata*, *Saurauia nepalensis*, *Schima wallichii*, *Semecarpus anacardium*, *Terminalia myriocarpa*, and

Terminalia crenulata. The present observation on the habitat and nocturnal activity are similar to earlier reports (Agrawal 2000; Choudhury, 2006; Talukdar et al. 2019).

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