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continued on the back inside cover

Cover: Stripe-necked Mongoose *Urva vitticollis* in poster colours, adapted from photograph by Ashni Dhawale, by Pooja Ramdas Patil.



## New locality record of the Asiatic Long-tailed Climbing Mouse *Vandeleuria oleracea* (Bennett, 1832) (Mammalia: Rodentia: Muridae) from Kohora River Basin, Assam, India

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*Vandeleuria oleracea* (Bennett, 1832) is a 'Least Concern' species belonging to the genus *Vandeleuria* found in southern and southeastern Asia (Aplin & Molur 2017). Although Agrawal & Chakraborty (1980), Agrawal (2000), and Srinivasulu & Pradhan (2003) mention that *Vandeleuria oleracea* has two subspecies, namely, *V. o. oleracea* from southern India and *V. o. dumeticola* from northern India, the present taxonomic changes indicate that *V. oleracea* may be a species complex with subspecies recognized by earlier workers synonymized under *V. oleracea*, pending further studies (Musser & Carleton 1993, 2005; Srinivasulu & Srinivasulu 2012; Wilson et al. 2017).

On 5 June 2023, during our regular field survey, we encountered a small dead individual of a mouse at Rongtara Village of Kohora River Basin, (26.53–26.60 °N & 93.33–93.43 °E; covering an area of 31.50 km<sup>2</sup>)

Karbi Anglong District, Assam (Figure 1). Morphological measurements were taken (Head and body length: 60.66 mm; tail length: 100.31 mm; hindfoot: 14.12 mm, and ear length: 11.35 mm). The mouse was identified as *Vandeleuria oleracea* by its rusty brown dorsum and white ventral coloration with the head and body length less than 100 mm, unicoloured tail, which was much longer, about one and a half times the head and body length; hallux and fifth toe clawless; fifth toe appeared to be opposable (Agrawal 2000) (Image 1).

The mouse was seen dead in the Jhum plantation near a bamboo clump. Later that day, we conducted informal interviews among the local community in Rongtara Village and showed community members photographs of the species (Image 1). According to the local community, the species is rarely seen in the forest (Image 2). The species was known to them and they call

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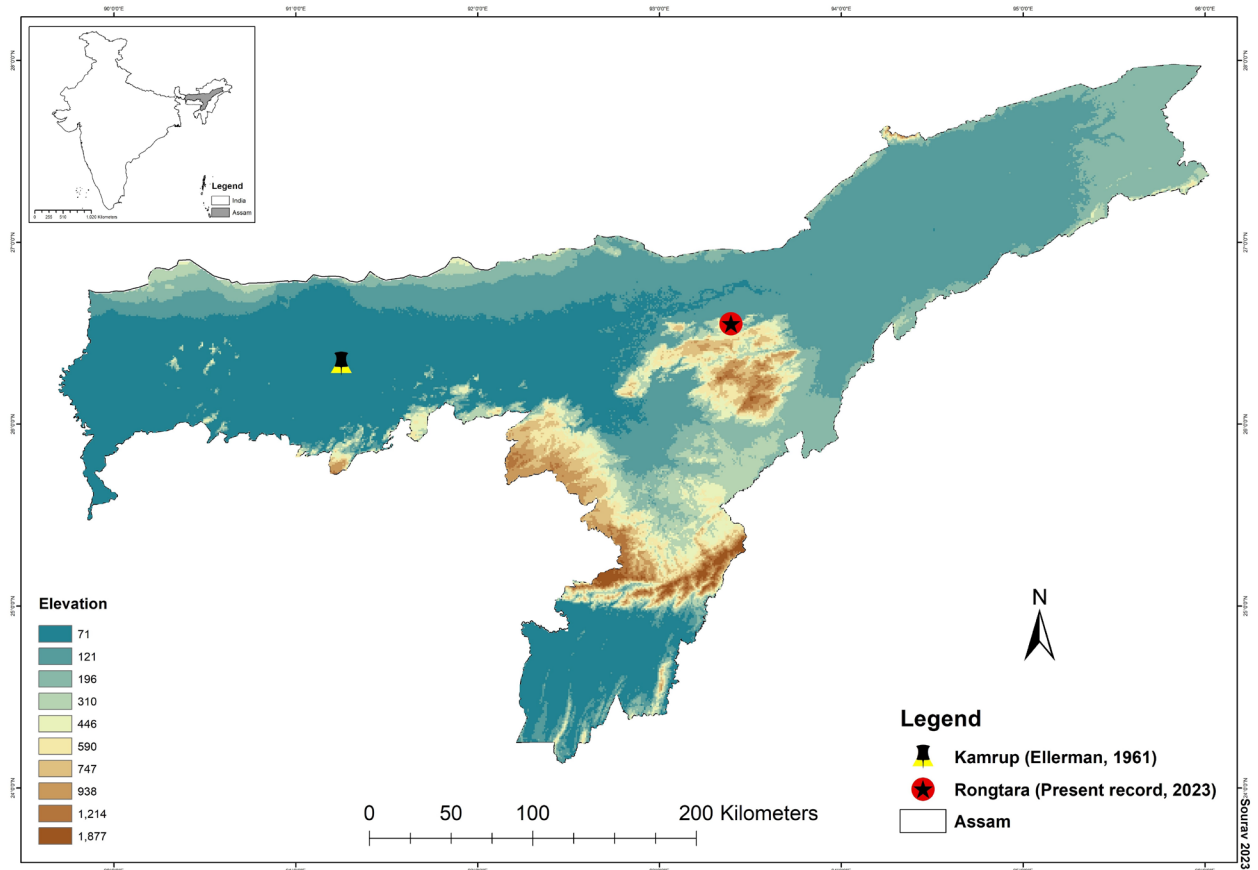


Figure 1. Distribution map of *Vandeleuria oleracea* in Assam with the past record at Kamrup in 1961 and the present record at Rongtara in 2023.



Image 1. Dead *Vandeleuria oleracea* at Rongtara.

it 'Jukikso' in Karbi dialect.

The only known record of *Vandeleuria oleracea* from Assam was from Angarkhata, North Kamrup (Ellerman & Morrison-Scott 1951; Ellerman 1961; Molur et al. 2005;

Chatterjee et al. 2020; Talukdar et al. 2021). The new site record from Rongtara Village is approximately 215 km from the earlier report by Ellerman (1961) (Figure 1). The species inhabits agricultural regions (Jhum) in close



Image 2. Habitat of *Vandeleuria oleracea* at Rongtara.

proximity to secondary bamboo forests. This species is arboreal and exhibits nocturnal behavior, primarily consuming fruits, buds, and flowers.

The present study reported the new locality record from Karbi Anglong that confirms its distribution in Assam and Northeast India with an addition of a second confirmed locality in Assam.

Further studies on the ecology and the habitat of the species are needed to understand the species' habitat requirements. Studies involving an integrative taxonomic approach including phylogenetic studies will help resolve this species complex.

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