

## Release of captured Bengal Slow Loris in Patgaon Village, Assam



Habitat where the slow loris was released.



The slow loris in the cage.



The slow loris just after release.



Map showing the location.

Slow Loris is a nocturnal, cryptic, and arboreal primate and it is categorised as Endangered in IUCN Red List (Nekaris et al. 2020). So far, it is the only strepsirrhine group of primates found in northeastern India (Das et al. 2015). It is listed in Schedule I, Part A, of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, as amended in August 2022. Slow Loris are known to feed on plant bark, gum, fruits etc. Its range is only known through sporadic reports and a few scientific

investigations (Nekaris et al. 2008). The mixed deciduous forests, semi-evergreen forest and tropical evergreen rainforests are all home to this species (Nekaris et al. 2020). However, lack of information regarding the ecology remains a matter of concern on its further study. The aim of this note is to report the occurrence of Slow Loris in Khar Bakhar, Patgaon Village near Ratanpur Beat office under Kamrup West Division of Kamrup District, Assam, India.

A young female individual of Bengal Slow Loris weighing about 3kg was captured in a household at Khar Bakhar, Patgaon Village near Boko of Kamrup District (between 25.996 N latitude and 91.356 E longitude). The animal was captured when it intruded in the kitchen of the household at 2300 h on 06 June 2022. Local people had requested the forest officials to release it back in the wild and as per public demand it was released in the nearby forest area of Patgaon under Bamunigaon range office of Kamrup West Division.

Although, the Bengal Slow Loris is under threat because of its habitat loss, illegal trade, use in traditional medicines and to keep it as pets (Nekaris et al. 2008), yet villagers are deeply connected to the forest ecosystem and are more aware about conservation of the forest. From a study on Bengal Slow Loris in the China border, Nijman et al. (2014), found the illegal trading of this endangered species at Mong La market, Myanmar and said it was traded for meat along with their body parts being used as Asian traditional medicine. On the contrary, the positive thing here is that though most of the local people are less educated, yet they never eat such animals or use it in traditional medicines.

As informed by officials of beat office as well as the villagers, one slow loris that was older than this one was also found at another villager's household approximately one year back in the same area and was released back to a nearby forest. The public is more aware and it will be a positive indication

for conservationists. If conservation programmes are implemented in the near future, public support will be one of the most beneficial factors.

More public awareness efforts among local inhabitants in the area, with a particular emphasis on early reporting of sightings, injuries, and rescues to local forestry personnel are recommended. The slow loris conservation efforts in this study area which lies near Meghalaya border should be taken intensively, so that it will help in knowing the proper niche, food habit along with the breeding behaviour of this primate. This occurrence report of the Bengal Slow Loris in the area will help the wildlife conservationists and concerned authorities to take up appropriate conservation measures through community participation.

#### References

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