

Indian ratel / Honey Badger

The Indian honey badger, with its robust and muscular physique, is a fierce and ferocious predator known for its tenacity and resilience. Its thick, coarse fur, ranging from gray to brown, with a striking black and white stripe down its back, gives it a striking appearance that exudes strength and power.

This solitary creature is primarily nocturnal and adapts well to its environment, with unique physical and behavioral traits that enable it to withstand attacks from predators. Its ferocity is unparalleled, and it can take on much larger prey with unrelenting determination.

The Indian honey badger’s importance in its ecosystem is profound, as it plays a critical role in controlling the population of smaller animals and insects. Its loss would be catastrophic and would have far-reaching consequences.

Despite its significance, the Indian honey badger is threatened by habitat loss and hunting, with its meat and skin being highly valued. The need for conservation efforts is pivotal to protect this incredible creature and its habitat for future generations.

Sl No	Characteristics	Description
1	Common Name	Indian Ratel
2	Scientific Name	Mellivora capensis
3	Length	2.5 to 3 feet
4	Colour	Black or dark brown fur

5	Height / girth (For animals and birds – height, for fishes / reptiles – girth of the body)	N/A
6	Tail length (if it's a mammal)	6 to 7 inches
7	Height till shoulder (If it's a mammal)	Around 1 foot
8	Average weight	10 to 20 kg
9	Food habits	Omnivorous, feeds on small mammals, birds, reptiles, fruits, honey, and insects
10	Habitat	Found in a range of habitats, including forests, grasslands, and agricultural areas
11	Any interesting facts about them	Known for their toughness and ferocity, they are also called “honey badgers.” They have been known to attack and kill venomous snakes, and even take on larger predators such as lions or hyenas.

Appearance

The Indian ratel, also known as the honey badger, is a species of mustelid found in the Indian subcontinent. They are known for their fearless and aggressive nature, and have a reputation for being one of the toughest animals in the world.

Indian ratels have a distinctive coloration, with a broad white stripe on their back that contrasts sharply with their black fur. They have a thick, muscular body, with short legs and a short, bushy tail. Males are larger than females, with

an average length of 70-80 cm and a weight of 12-16 kg, while females are slightly smaller, with an average length of 60-70 cm and a weight of 9-12 kg.

Indian ratels have several special characteristics that set them apart from other animals. One of their most notable features is their strong, sharp claws, which they use to dig for food and to defend themselves from predators. They also have a thick, rubbery skin that is tough and difficult to penetrate, providing them with protection from bites and stings.

Indian ratels are known for their ability to take on animals much larger than themselves, such as lions and hyenas. They are also known for their tenacity and persistence, and will often continue fighting even when badly injured.

Food Habits

Indian ratels are omnivores, meaning they eat a variety of foods. Their diet consists mainly of insects, small mammals, reptiles, and birds, as well as fruit, honey, and carrion. They are also known to raid beehives for honey and to dig up underground burrows to find prey.

Habitats

Indian ratels, also known as honey badgers, are found throughout the Indian subcontinent, including India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. They are typically found in a range of habitats, including grasslands, forests, and scrublands.

In India, Indian ratels are found in many areas, including the Western Ghats, the Himalayas, the Deccan Plateau, and the Thar Desert. They are also found in several wildlife reserves and national parks, including Bandhavgarh National Park, Kanha

National Park, and Sariska Tiger Reserve.

Vulnerable Species

The Indian ratel, also known as the honey badger, is listed as a species of “Least Concern” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) due to its relatively wide distribution and stable population. However, specific information on population size and trends in India is limited.

In India, Indian ratels are not specifically protected by law, and they may be hunted and killed in some regions. They are also threatened by habitat loss due to deforestation, agricultural expansion, and urbanisation, as well as by human-wildlife conflict.

It is difficult to estimate the exact population of Indian ratels in India, but it is believed that they are still present in many parts of the country. However, due to the lack of comprehensive surveys, it is uncertain whether their population is increasing, decreasing, or stable.

Protected Areas

Located in the state of Karnataka, Nagarhole National Park is known for its rich flora and fauna, including large herbivores such as elephants and bison. Indian ratels can also be found in the park, along with other carnivores such as tigers and leopards.

Located in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Bandhavgarh National Park is known for its dense forest and high density of tigers. Indian ratels can also be found here, along with other carnivores such as leopards and wild dogs.

Also located in Madhya Pradesh, Kanha National Park is known for its tiger population as well as its rich biodiversity. Indian ratels are among the many mammal species found in the

park.