

# Malabar Civet

The Malabar civet, also known as the Malabar Large-spotted Civet, is a critically endangered small mammal that is native to the Western Ghats mountain range of southwestern India. It belongs to the Viverridae family and is related to mongoose and civet cats.

The Malabar civet is a nocturnal and solitary animal that feeds on small mammals, birds, insects, and fruits. It has a distinct appearance with a long body, short legs, and a bushy tail. Its fur is reddish-brown with white spots, and it has a white stripe that runs from the nose to the forehead.

Due to habitat loss and hunting for its meat and fur, the Malabar civet has become one of the rarest mammals in the world, with only a few sightings reported in recent years. Conservation efforts are ongoing to protect the remaining population and their habitat, but more work is needed to prevent their extinction.

# Malabar Civet

Serial No.	Characteristics	Description
1	Common Name	Malabar civet
2	Scientific Name	Viverra civettina
3	Length	55 to 65 centimetres
4	Colour	Dark brown or black with white spots on the underside
5	Height/Girth	Height: up to 30 centimetres (including the tail)
6	Tail length (if mammal)	Tail length: up to 25 centimetres

7	Height till shoulder (if mammal)	N/A
8	Average Weight	3 to 5 kilograms
9	Food Habits	Carnivorous, feeding on small mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects
10	Habitat	The Malabar civet is found in the Western Ghats mountain range of southwestern India, in tropical evergreen forests and moist deciduous forests.
11	Interesting Facts	The Malabar civet is one of the rarest and most elusive mammals in the world, with only a few confirmed sightings in the wild in recent years. It is also listed as critically endangered due to habitat loss and poaching for its meat and musk glands.

## Features

The Malabar Civet (*Viverra civettina*) is a small, elusive carnivore that is endemic to the Western Ghats of India. Males and females have similar physical characteristics, with a sleek, dark brown to black coat that is marked with white spots and stripes on their underside. They have a pointed snout, large ears, and short legs with retractable claws, which help them climb trees and navigate their forest habitat.

Malabar Civets are typically solitary and nocturnal, and they are known for their shy and secretive behaviour. They have a keen sense of smell and hearing, which they use to detect prey such as small mammals, birds, and insects. Interestingly, they are one of the few carnivores that have a primarily fruit-

based diet, consuming fruits such as jackfruit, mango, and figs when available.

## Food Habits

Malabar Civet is primarily frugivorous, but they will also eat insects, small mammals, and birds. They are also known to consume carrion, which they scavenge opportunistically.

### Habitat

The Malabar Civet is endemic to the Western Ghats of India, which is a mountainous region that runs along the west coast of the country. They are typically found in tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forests, as well as moist deciduous forests.

Within India, the Malabar Civet has a relatively small distribution range, occurring in the states of Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. They are known to inhabit protected areas such as Silent Valley National Park, Anamalai Tiger Reserve, and Periyar Tiger Reserve.

## Vulnerable Species

Malabar Civet is considered to be a Critically Endangered species in India. The major threats faced by this species include habitat loss and fragmentation due to deforestation, human settlements, and agricultural activities. They are also hunted for their musk glands, which are used in traditional medicine and perfumes. In addition, they face the risk of accidental trapping in snares set for other wildlife.

Unfortunately, due to the secretive nature of this species, it is challenging to estimate their population numbers accurately. However, it is believed that their population has

declined significantly in recent decades, and they are now thought to be one of the rarest carnivores in India. It is estimated that there may be fewer than 250 mature individuals remaining in the wild. Conservation efforts are ongoing, including habitat restoration and anti-poaching measures, to protect this rare and elusive species.

These have not been found or sighted since a long time. There is no evidence that they exist any more in the wild. The beautiful animal might be extinct as of now. Which will be a big blow to the biodiversity of Western Ghats and India as such.

## Protected Areas

The Malabar Civet is primarily found in the Western Ghats of India, which is a biodiversity hotspot that is home to several protected areas, including national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

Located in the Palakkad district of Kerala, Silent Valley National Park is one of the most important conservation areas for the Malabar Civet. It is a tropical evergreen forest that is home to a wide range of flora and fauna.

Also known as the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary, Anamalai Tiger Reserve is located in the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. It is a critical habitat for several endangered species, including the Malabar Civet.

Located in the Idukki district of Kerala, Periyar Tiger Reserve is a protected area that is known for its rich biodiversity. It is home to several species of flora and fauna, including the Malabar Civet.

Other protected areas in the Western Ghats that may have populations of Malabar Civet include Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, and Pushpagiri

Wildlife Sanctuary.

# Conservation

To conserve Indian Civet cats, a number of conservation efforts are being undertaken. Some of these include:

**Protection of habitat:** The Indian Civet relies on a variety of habitats, including forests, grasslands, and urban areas. Protecting and restoring these habitats is important to maintain viable populations of the species.

**Law enforcement:** Hunting and trade of the Indian Civet is illegal in many countries, but illegal trade still persists. Effective law enforcement is necessary to curb illegal hunting and trade and to protect the species.

**Awareness and education:** Raising public awareness about the importance of conserving the Indian Civet and its role in maintaining ecological balance is important to reduce demand for hunting and the pet trade.

**Research:** Research on the Indian Civet's ecology, population status, and threats can help guide conservation efforts and improve our understanding of the species.

**Captive breeding and reintroduction:** Captive breeding and reintroduction programs can help increase the population of the species in the wild, but these efforts need to be carefully planned and monitored to ensure success.

Overall, a multi-faceted approach is needed to conserve Indian Civet cats and to ensure their survival for future generations.