

A TINY GUIDE TO SRI LANKA'S

MICE



THE
CEYLON PRESS

In a
Word
or Two

Sri Lanka is home to a very respectable range of mouse species, three of which are endemic to the island - Mayor's Spiny Mouse (which actually comes into two distinct but impossible to tell apart variants); the very rare Sri Lankan Spiny Mouse; and the almost equally rare Ceylon Highland Long-Tailed Tree Mouse.

These tiny patriotic native creatures are joined by a range of others mice typically found in other parts of South and South East Asia including the fetching Indian Field Mouse, the almost-domesticated Indian House Mouse, the Indian Long-Tailed Tree Mouse (host to an especially undesirable tick), and the rather clumsily named Ceylon Field Mouse, whose home actually stretches from Sri Lanka to Cambodia.

1

THE CEYLON FIELD
MOUSE

As widely distributed as only the most successful mammals are, the Ceylon Field Mouse is to be found well outside the island's shores from India to Cambodia - as well as within them.

It happily populates almost all kinds of habitats.

It is often called the Fawn Colour Mouse for its light fur, and grows to little more than 15 centimetres in length, nose to tail.



Image courtesy of Finn Mouse's Site.

2

THE CEYLON
HIGHLAND LONG-
TAILED TREE
MOUSE

Discovered in 1929 by the Dutch tea planter, Adriaan Constant Tutein-Nolthenius, the Ceylon Highland Long-Tailed Tree Mouse (*Vendeleuria Oleracea Nolthenii*) is an increasingly rare creature, little more than 21 centimetres in length, nose to tail. It is found in Sri Lanka's hill country where it lives in trees, venturing out only by night.

Like most mice, it has reddish brown fur, that occasionally grows darker but, compared to its many cousins, presents somewhat disappointingly small ears.

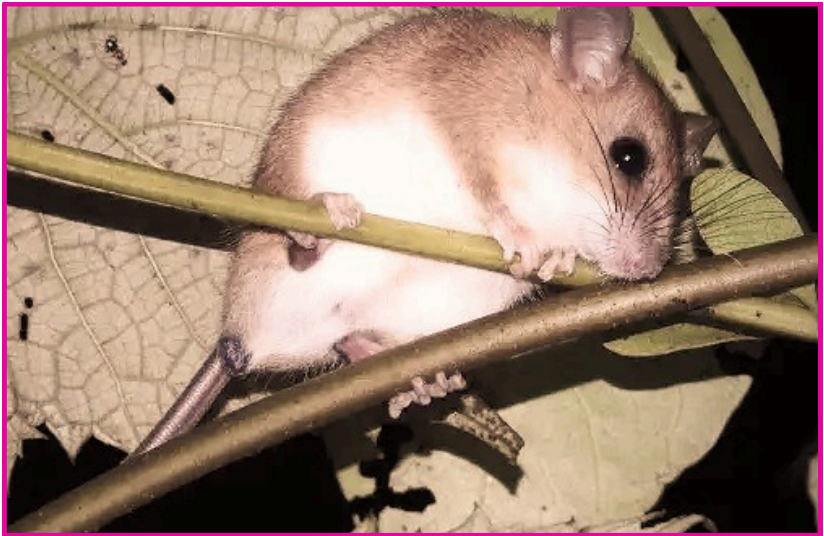


Image courtesy of ANIMALIA.

3

THE INDIAN FIELD
MOUSE

The tiny (13 centimetres in length, nose to tail) Indian Field Mouse is one of those mammals of the Indian sub-continent that has long term residency rights in Sri Lanka where it is found almost everywhere.

It is all a mouse aims to be, with a small rounded hunched body, lovely rounded smooth ears, and light brown to white fur.



Image Public Domain.

4

THE INDIAN HOUSE
MOUSE

Beloved of mouse pet owners, science and regularly used in laboratories, the Indian House Mouse (*Mus Musculus Castaneus*) is what most commonly comes to mind when something thinks of a mouse. It is widely distributed across Asia and elsewhere and in urban areas it has become an almost tame companion to the humans its lives around.

Rarely more than 20 centimetres in length, nose to tail, it is one of the world's most studied and understood mammals, its typical behavioural characteristics itemized even down to the differences exhibited if it lives in sandy dunes rather than an apartment.



Image courtesy of elifsciences.org

5

THE INDIAN LONG-
TAILED TREE
MOUSE

Common throughout South and South East Asia, the Asiatic or Indian Long-Tailed Climbing Mouse (*Vandeleuria Oleracea*) grows to little more than twenty centimetres in length, nose to tail, and sports reddish brown fur that fades to white on its underparts.

It is widely distributed – but not a creature to go out of your way to befriend for it is notorious for spreading the tick-borne viral Kyasanur Forest Disease that causes headaches, chills, muscle pain, and vomiting and can take months to recover from.



Image courtesy of Sudhir Bhandarkar.

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MAYOR'S SPINY
MOUSE

Mayor's Spiny Mouse (*Mus Mayori*) inhabits the smaller end of the mouse spectrum, and comes in two (still quite widespread) variants – *Mus Mayori Mayori*, which inhabit the hill country; and *Mus Mayori Pococki* which prefers the low wetlands. Telling them apart is almost impossible, and both are covered with reddish grey fur and exhibit rather unsatisfactorily small ears. Seeing them is also a challenge for they are both nocturnal creatures. One of their more interesting (albeit worrying) points of mouse difference is their capacity to carry quite so many other creatures on them: from mites, ticks, and sucking louses to small scorpions.



Image courtesy of Pearl of the Earth.

7

THE SRI LANKAN
SPINY MOUSE

A mere maximum of 18 centimetres length, from nose to tail, the Ceylon Spiny Mouse (*Mus Fernandoni*) is found only in Sri Lanka, one of its prized endemic species. It is now so endangered that it can be seen in a few locations, becoming sadly ever more rare

than nightclubs on Neptune. Its reddish grey back and sides morph into white underparts, with huge gorgeous smooth scooped out ears that stand like parasols above large dark eyes. It is a mouse to fall in love with.



Image courtesy of iNaturalist.



THE CEYLON PRESS

A small island surrounded by large oceans. Sri Lanka is a well-kept secret. The Ceylon Press aims to make its story more accessible.

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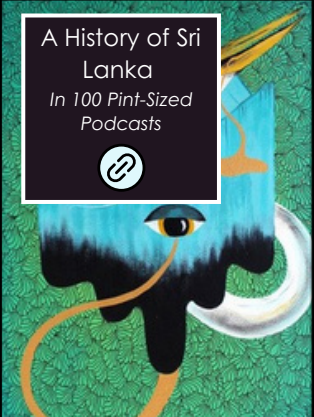
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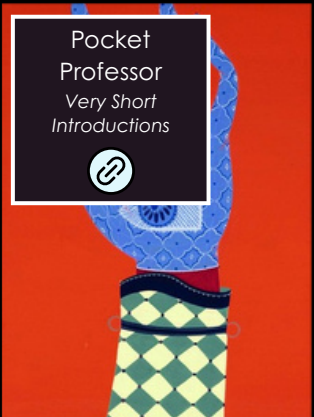
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