

A CEYLON
PRESS TINY
GUIDE

A CHECKLIST
TO THE 10
SHREWS OF
SRI LANKA

SHREWS



1 THE ASIAN HOUSE SHREW

The Asian House Shrew - more notably called the Common Indian Musk Shrew - is considered invasive species across South and Southeast Asia. Fifteen-centimetre nose to tail, it is able to live almost anywhere and breeds with ease

2

THE CEYLON JUNGLE SHREW

Nocturnal and endemic and barely twenty centimetres long, nose to nail, the Ceylon Jungle Shrew inhabits the island's subtropical and tropical forests.

3

THE CEYLON LONG-TAILED SHREW

At little more than centimetres nose to tail and covered in red to grey fur, the endemic Ceylon Long-Tailed Shrew is so deeply threatened by habitat loss and logging that it has recently only been recorded in 5 highly fragmented areas in the Central and Sabaragamuwa provinces, despite its record of living as happily in the high mountain forests as much as the lowland ones.

4

THE CEYLON PIGMY SHREW

The endemic Ceylon Pigmy Shrew barely measure nine centimetres, nose to tail and sports fur that is nicely chocolate brown to dark grey. Highly endangered, it has been recorded as living in the low mountain rainforests of the Sabaragamuwa and Central Provinces, with a possible third sighting in the Western Province.

5

THE INDIAN GREY
MUSK RAT SHREW

Very similar in size, habitat and behaviour as the Asian House Shrew, the Indian Grey Musk Rat Shrew is also considered to be an invasive species in Sri Lanka.

6 HORSFIELD'S SHREW

The diminutive nine-inch Horsfield's Shrew remains little understood or studied. Its distribution across India and Sri Lanka is only patchily comprehended, and its habits and description limited to a few notes about its unremarkable brown grey fur.

7

KELAART'S LONG TAILED SHREW

Kelaart's Long tailed Shrew is restricted to the grasslands, swamps and forest of Sri Lanka and southern India. A colossal (for shrews) twenty centimetres in length nose to tail, it has grey black fur and is ever more endangered, largely due to shrinking habitat options.

8 PEARSON'S LONG-CLAWED SHREW

Pearson's Long-Clawed Shrew was discovered in 1924 when it would have been a much more common sight than it is today, commonly found in forests and grasslands – habitats that are now so embattled as to render the endemic creature highly endangered. It is at the petite spectrum of island shrews, measuring just twelve centimetres nose to tail and sporting grey brown fur.

9

THE SINHARAJA WHITE-TOOTHED SHREW

In 2007, after extensive research it was discovered that what had been masquerading in Sinharaja as the Ceylon Long-Tailed Shrew was actually a quite different shrew species, and one that had, till then, not been properly recognised or identified. A closer study of its bone structure, taken with the simple observation that it had a shorter tail, resulted in the formal recognition of this new endemic species. However, the resulting Sinharaja White-Toothed Shrew is so restricted in distribution as to be almost entirely invisible – and has been found in only two areas of the edge of the Sinharaja Forest.

DISCOVER MORE

A HISTORY LIKE NO OTHER

Contrary & creative, Sri Lanka built a tropical Versailles as the West constructed in wattle & daub. When the Cold War ebbed, its own began. The Ceylon Press *History of Sri Lanka* - in eBook and Podcast - unpicks its serpentine history.

BEHIND EACH GREAT STORY

Island Stories: The Sri Lanka Podcast and the Press's *Complete Audio Books* explore the things that make Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan.

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With their short, and readable introductions, The Ceylon Press' *Pocket Professor Very Short Introductions* illuminate Sri Lankan subjects from ancient dynasties to endemic mammals.

COMPANIONABLE LOOK-UPS

The Ceylon Press's subject *Companions to Sri Lanka* makes visible the whole island – from its arts, wildlife, & landmarks to religion, food, & history.

A LITTLE LIGHT RELIEF

And least it gets too serious, enjoy the off-grid *Jungle Diaries* blog & Podcast; and *Archaeologies*, the blank verse diaries of an occasional hermit.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Swarbrick is a publisher, planter, hotelier, hermit, and writer.

He was born in Colombo and raised, with few concessions to modernity, in India, Singapore, and the Middle East. Cornish, he gained his degrees on the Celtic fringe: at the Universities of Wales, and Stirling, prolonging an introduction to accepted working hours for as long as was decently possible.

Having worked at News Corp's HarperCollins UK as board director for various otherwise homeless departments including sales, art and marketing; and HarperCollins India, he ran Hachette's consumer learning division. Prior to this, he launched Oxford University Press's first commercial online business, Oxford Reference Online.

When the doubtful charms of boardroom bawls, bottom lines, and divas diminished, he returned to Sri Lanka, the land of his birth hundreds of years earlier, to rescue a spice plantation and set of art deco buildings that had gone feral in the jungle.

Today, as The Flame Tree Estate & Hotel, it has become one of the country's top ten boutique hotels, run by the kindest and most professional of hospitality teams; and overseen by several small schnauzers.

It also helps fund The Ceylon Press, set up to make Sri Lanka's rich and complicated story, a mystery to many, and a secret to most, more accessible. The Press' books, companions, podcasts, blogs, and guides are freely available at theceylonpress.com. The Press also publishes Poetry from the Jungle, a podcast that recasts the orthodox view of the world's best poets and poems.

ABOUT THE FLAME TREE ESTATE & HOTEL

"It's absolute paradise," wrote one guest recently; "I would fly back to Sri Lanka simply to stay in this place for a couple more days."

Centered on a 25-acre organic spice and timber plantation, The Flame Tree Estate & Hotel has been renovated and furnished with art & antiques; its healthy menus fusing street food with fine dining.

Its 1,000 high rocky hills stalled the Dutch army in 1765; and until the civil war the estate stretched over 100 acres with 3 working elephants.

Today its restored plantations grow cardamom, turmeric, ginger, cloves, pepper, cocoa; rubber, coffee, vanilla; cinnamon, coconuts - and scores of trees from ebony to sapu – best enjoyed from the vantage point of the hotel's infinity pool. Visit www.flametreeestate.com.

It also houses and funds The Ceylon Press whose books, companions, podcasts, blogs, and guides are freely available at theceylonpress.com.

A GIFT FOR READERS

As a reader of this book, you naturally qualify for special treatment should your holiday ever bring you to Sri Lanka and The Flame Tree Estate & Hotel. Simply drop the general manager a note to tell him how you came across us and to make arrangements to best suit your time and budget:

GeneralManager@flametreeestate.com