

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261478694>

Rusty-spotted cat in Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Uttar Pradesh State, India

Article · January 2012

CITATIONS

5

READS

440

1 author:



Meraj Anwar

WWF India

15 PUBLICATIONS 104 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Monitoring of tiger and associated species in Nihal-Bhakra corridor, Uttarakhand, india [View project](#)

ISSN 1027-2992

CAT

N° 56 | SPRING 2012

news





CATnews is the newsletter of the Cat Specialist Group, a component of the Species Survival Commission SSC of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is published twice a year, and is available to members and the Friends of the Cat Group.

For joining the Friends of the Cat Group please contact Christine Breitenmoser at ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch

Original contributions and short notes about wild cats are welcome

Send contributions and observations to ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch.

Guidelines for authors are available at www.catsg.org/catnews

CATnews is produced with financial assistance from Friends of the Cat Group.

Design: barbara surber, werk'sdesign gmbh
Layout: Christine Breitenmoser
Print: Stämpfli Publikationen AG, Bern, Switzerland

ISSN 1027-2992

The designation of the geographical entities in this publication, and the representation of the material, do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the IUCN concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Editors: Christine & Urs Breitenmoser
Co-chairs IUCN/SSC
Cat Specialist Group
KORA, Thunstrasse 31, 3074 Muri,
Switzerland
Tel ++41(31) 951 90 20
Fax ++41(31) 951 90 40
<urs.breitenmoser@ivv.unibe.ch>
<ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch>

Contributing Editor: Peter Jackson
7 Lake Close, London SW19 7EG
United Kingdom
Tel/Fax: ++44 (20) 89 47 01 59
<peterfr.jackson@virgin.net>

Associate Editors: Keith Richmond
Brian Bertram
Sultana Bashir
Javier Pereira

Cover Photo: Persian leopard in Bafgh, Iran
Photo DoE Iran/CACP/UNDP/
ICS/Panthera

MERAJ ANWAR^{1*}, DABEER HASAN¹, JOSEPH VATTAKAVAN¹

Rusty-spotted cat in Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Uttar Pradesh State, India

Rusty-spotted cat *Prionailurus rubiginosus*, one of the smallest of the wild cats in the world was photo-captured and sighted for the first time in Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary of Uttar Pradesh State. It was recorded seven times between 18 January and 17 May 2011, through camera traps and a direct sighting at six different locations.

The rusty-spotted cat has only recently been reported from the Indian Terai region for the very first time, photo captured in the Pilibhit forest division (Anwar et al. 2010). Pilibhit forest division is about 130 km (aerial distance) away in the north-west from Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary. The rusty-spotted cat is the least known of the small cats in the Terai region, unlike the jungle cat *Felis chaus*, leopard cat *Prionailurus bengalensis* and fishing cat *Prionailurus viverrinus* which are even known by villagers of the area by their vernacular names (Jungali billi, tendua billi and matsya billi, respectively). The species is known to be endemic to India and Sri Lanka only, but the possibility of its occurrence in the Terai of Nepal also cannot be ignored. Rusty-spotted cats are usually found in moist and dry deciduous forest types as well as scrub and grassland (Patel 2011), but are likely absent from evergreen forest in India (Nowell & Jackson 1996) and are also reported

from crop fields and near human habitation (Nowell & Jackson 1996, Mukherjee 1998, Nekaris 2003, Athreya 2010).

A camera trapping project was carried out in Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary between 4 March and 17 April, 2011, primarily to estimate the tiger population. A total of 80 camera traps at 40 stations covering approximately a 200 km² large area, during 45 days, revealed the occurrence of the rusty-spotted cat in the sanctuary. This is the first record of this species in Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary. It was not reported from a similar camera trapping exercise during an earlier tiger monitoring project carried out in the same area in 2007 (Jhala et al. 2008).

Rusty-spotted cats were photo-captured at four different camera stations (Fig. 1): camera trap station number 6 on 6 March at 22:05 h (Fig. 2), number 7 on 10 March at 03:06 h (Fig. 3), number 10 on 13 March at 22:25 h (Fig. 4) and number 12 on 7 April 2011 at 03:03 h.

In addition to this project, cameras deployed at sites of human-wildlife conflict also photo-captured rusty-spotted cat twice at the camera station no. 17 (Fig. 1) at 01:50 h and 02:08 h on 18 January 2011. It was also sighted by the first author in an unsuccessful attempt of crossing a road (Fig. 1, 29° 17' 33.2" N / 81° 08' 45.6" E) which connects Bichhia (human settlement) with the Kailashpuri dam area. This sighting occurred at 19:35 h on 17 May 2011.

Unmarked, bushy tail and rusty spots on its grey coat which is peculiarity of this cat, was clearly visible in the high beam of the vehicle. Another peculiar feature observed was its more elongated and low rise body in running posture (Fig. 2 in Anwar et al. 2010) in comparison to other cats similar in size (jungle cat and leopard cat) that co-exist in Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary.

Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh and has a vast and varied heritage of fauna. The vegetation of the sanctuary comprises Northern moist deciduous sal forest, Northern dry plain sal forest, Northern tropical dry deciduous sal forest, Tropical seasonal swamp forest and low alluvial savannah (WWF-India 2007). The area lying well outside the hills in the northern part of the Indo-Gangetic plains is a stronghold of the fauna unique to the area. The innumerable large and small ponds, rivers and seasonal streams, grasslands, densely forested areas, open woodlands and mixed forests provide a unique mixture of shelter, food and habitat conditions for a variety of wildlife. Tiger *Panthera tigris*, leopard *Panthera pardus*, ratel *Mellivora capensis*, chital *Axis axis*, hog deer *Axis porcinus*, sambar *Rusa unicolor*, muntjac *Muntiacus muntjac*, wild pig *Sus scrofa*, Asian elephant *Elephas maximus* and greater one-horned rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* were also captured in the camera traps. This Sanctuary is also home to the critically endangered gharial *Gavialis gangeticus* (Choudhury et al. 2007), endangered Gangetic dolphin *Platanista gangetica* (Smith & Braulik 2008) and the vulnerable swamp francolin *Francolinus gularis* (Birdlife International 2008).

Inclusion of rusty-spotted cat to the above mentioned list of fauna will add to the already rich diversity of the sanctuary and provide further impetus for research oriented management of the habitat to conserve the diverse fauna including the vulnerable rusty-spotted cat.

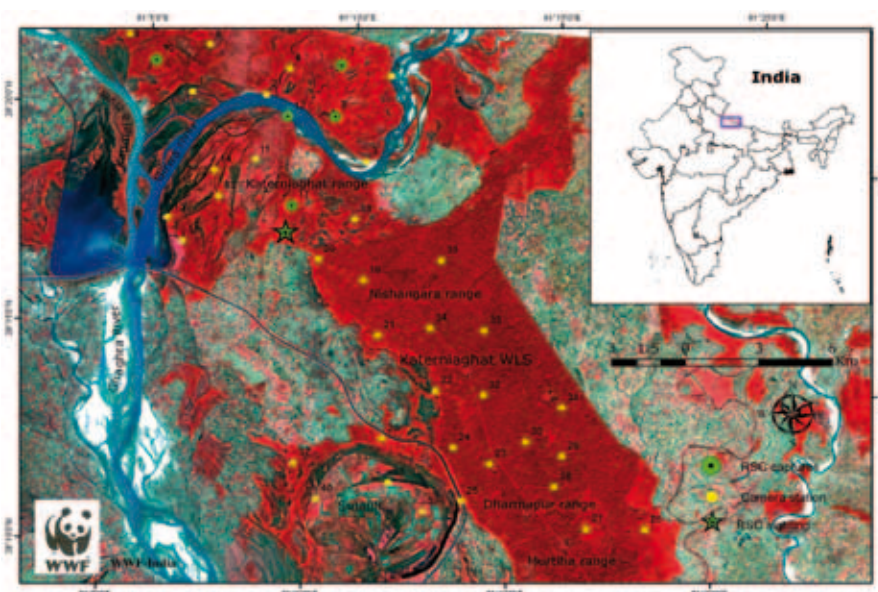


Fig. 1. Location of Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in India (small map) and distribution of camera traps (yellow hexagons) with sites of photo capture (green dots) and place of actual sighting (green star) of rusty-spotted cat. Numerals in the map are camera station numbers.



Fig. 2. Rusty-spotted cat captured in Katemiaghath Wildlife Sanctuary on 6 March 2011.



Fig. 3. Rusty-spotted cat captured in Katemiaghath Wildlife Sanctuary on 10 March 2011.



Fig. 4. Rusty-spotted cat captured in Katemiaghath Wildlife Sanctuary on 13 March 2011.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Mr. Ravi Singh, SG & CEO, WWF-India for providing resources, Mr. B.K. Patnaik, PCCF, Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Shailesh Prasad, Field Director, D.T.R. and Mr. R.K. Singh, D.F.O. Katemiaghath WLS for issuing permission and logistic support to carry out the study. We are also thankful to Dr. SejalWorah and Dr. Dipankar Ghose for coordinating the project logistics.

References

- Anwar M., Kumar H. & Vattakavan J. 2010. Range extension of rusty-spotted cat to the Indian Terai. *Cat News* 53, 25–26.
- Athreya V. 2010. Rusty-spotted cat more common than we think? *Cat News* 53, 27.
- BirdLife International. 2008. *Francolinus gularis*. In: IUCN 2011. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2011.1. <www.iucnredlist.org>. Downloaded on 23 June 2011.
- Choudhury B.C., Singh L.A.K., Rao R.J., Basu D., Sharma R.K., Hussain S.A., Andrews H.V., Whitaker N., Whitaker R., Lenin J., Maskey T., Cadi A., Rashid S.M.A., Choudhury A.A., Dahal B., Win KoKoU., Thorbjarnarson J. & Ross J.P. 2007. *Gavialis gangeticus*. In: IUCN 2011. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2011.1. <www.iucnredlist.org>. Downloaded on 23 June 2011.
- Jhala Y. V., Gopal R. & Qureshi Q. 2008. Status of the tigers, co-predators and prey in India. National Tiger Conservation Authority, Govt. of India, New Delhi and Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. TR 08/001. 151 pp.
- Mukherjee S. K. 1998. Small Cats of India. *Envis Bulletin*. Wildlife Institute of India.
- Nekaris K. A. I. 2003. Distribution and behaviour of three small wild cats in Sri Lanka. *Cat News* 38, 30-32.
- Nowell K. & Jackson P. 1996. Wild Cats. Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan. IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.
- Patel K. 2011. Preliminary survey of small cats in Eastern Gujarat, India. *Cat News* 54, 8-11.
- Smith B.D. & Braulik G.T. 2008. *Platanista gangetica*. In: IUCN 2011. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2011.1. <www.iucnredlist.org>. Downloaded on 23 June 2011.
- WWF-India. 2007. Strategic plan for the Terai Arc Landscape-India. Species Conservation Division, WWF-India. 83 pp.

¹ World Wide Fund for nature-India, 172-B, Lodi Estate, New Delhi-110003, India

*<anwar.meraj@gmail.com>