

First published record of Asian Palm Civet, *Paradoxurus philippinensis* in Mt. Arayat National Park, Pampanga province, Philippines

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Photographs by: Yu-Sing Lin.

Subject identified by: Ace Kevin S. Amarga, Desamarie Antonette P. Fernandez.

Location: Mt. Arayat National Park, Magalang municipality, Pampanga province, Luzon Island, Philippines
(15°12'19.4" N, 120°44'09.6" E)

Elevation: 650-700 metres ASL.

Habitat: Lowland secondary forest.

Date and time: 04 July 2023, 19:17 hrs.

Identity of subject: Asian Palm Civet, *Paradoxurus philippinensis* (Mammalia: Carnivora: Viverridae).

Description of record: During a short biodiversity survey an adult *Paradoxurus philippinensis* was spotted and photographed resting on a tree branch approximately 10 meters above the ground (Fig. 1) in lowland secondary forest (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1. Adult *Paradoxurus philippinensis*

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Fig. 2. Lowland secondary forest, Mt. Arayat National Park

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Remarks:

The photograph (Fig. 1) clearly shows an Asian Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus philippinensis* Jourdan), one of two civet species occurring in the Philippines; the other extant species is *Viverra zangalunga* Gray (Heaney et al. 2016). The former was first described as *Viverra hermaphrodita* by the German zoologist Peter Simon Pallas (Pallas, 1777). Subsequently, the French zoologist Claude Jourdan described *Paradoxurus philippinensis* from specimens collected from Luzon & Mindanao islands (Jourdan, 1837). Many published accounts of Asian Palm Civet in the Philippines were under the name *P. hermaphroditus* (e.g., Heideman et al., 1987; Heaney et al., 1991, 1999, 2006; Esselstyn et al., 2004; Marler et al., 2018) while some references used *P. philippinensis* (e.g., Thomas, 1909; Timm & Birney, 1980; Gruezo & Soligam, 1990). However, based on genetic analyses of *Paradoxurus* civets, Veron et al. (2015) suggested that the Asian Palm Civet occurring in the Philippines is *P. philippinensis*, along with those occurring in Borneo and Mentawai Islands (Indonesia).

Paradoxurus philippinensis tends to occupy a wide range of habitats including primary and secondary forests, as well as agroforests and cultivated lands such as coconut and coffee plantations. This species is omnivorous and has been reported to utilize a variety of food items including *Ficus* spp., wild banana, palm fruits (e.g., *Saribus rotundifolius* and *Pinanga insignis*) as well as invertebrates and vertebrates (Gruezo & Soligam, 1990; Heaney et al., 2016; de Guia et al., 2020). Due to their predominantly frugivorous diet, *P. philippinensis* plays an important role in forest regeneration via fruit and seed dispersal. In terms of distribution, this species is found across the Philippine archipelago and has been recorded on several islands including Basilan, Catanduanes, Dinagat, Luzon, Mindanao, Mindoro, Negros, Palawan, and Panay (Günther, 1879; Timm & Birney, 1980; Heideman et al., 1987; Esselstyn et al., 2004; Heaney et al., 1991, 2006, 2016).

Despite being a renowned protected area, Mt. Arayat volcano lacks published documentation and checklists of several faunistic groups. To our knowledge, this account represents the first published record of the Asian Palm Civet (*P. philippinensis*) in Mt. Arayat National Park. Furthermore, additional ecological research on population trends, dietary items and threats is recommended to further understand the natural history of *P. philippinensis* in Mt. Arayat National Park.

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