

A NOTE ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LITTLE INDIAN FIELD MOUSE,
MUS BOODUGA (GRAY) [RODENTIA ; MURIDAE],
WITH AN ALTITUDINAL RECORD

AJOY KUMAR MANDAL
Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta

ABSTRACT

The occurrence of the Little Indian Field Mouse, *Mus booduga* (Gray), at a village named Nelang (c. 3695 m), Uttar Kashi District, Uttar Pradesh in India collected during Indian Kalidhang Expedition 1974, is reported. This represents the highest altitudinal record of this species in its range of distribution. Previous records of its distribution have also been discussed.

INTRODUCTION

While examining a small collection of rodents from the Indian Kalidhang (c 6436 m) Expedition 1974, present in the Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta, a small grey-bellied mouse with bicoloured tail was found. On closer examination it turned out to be an example of the Little Indian Field Mouse, *Mus booduga* (Gray). The specimen was collected from a village named Nelang (c 3695 m) in Uttar Kashi District, Uttar Pradesh. The details of the specimen are given below. The external measurements were taken in the field by the collector. All measurements are expressed in mm.

Material : 1 ♀ ; Zoological Survey of India Registration Number 20840 ; in alcohol; 6 July 1974 ; H. C. Ghosh collector.

Measurements : External : Head and body 73.0 ; tail 68.0 ; hindfoot 15.0 ; ear 10.0.

Cranial : Occipitonasal 20.3 ; condylobasal 19.2 ; nasal 6.9 ; palate 10.4 ; bulla 3.2 ; molar tooth row 3.2 ; anterior palatal foramina 4.5 ; diastema 5.3.

According to the extant literature its distributional range is from Pakistan to Burma through India and Nepal. As there

are some contradictory remarks about its distribution in the Indian subregion and also its occurrence in the Himalayas, it becomes necessary to discuss the previous views.

Blanford (1891) said, "it occurred in the Peninsular India and Sri Lanka generally and not recorded from the Indus Valley (except from Karachi) or the Himalayas." It is therefore evident that in Blanford's time there was no record of its occurrence in the Himalayas. However, Wroughton (1914) was the first to report it from the Kumaon (Nainital and Almora) and Rohilkhand (Pilibhit) areas at altitudes varying from 250 m to 2155 m in the Himalayas, followed by Lindsay (1926) from Gopalpur (c 2770 m) (Kangra Valley, Himachal Pradesh), Ellerman & Morrison-Scott (1951) from Kumaon and Ellerman (1963) from Kumaon and Rohilkhand areas on the basis of Wroughton's (1914) report mentioned above. The record of this species within Indian territory as given by Hinton & Lindsay (1926), Lindsay (1926), Roonwal (1950), Kurup (1968), Prakash, Jain and Rana (1971), Sharma and Sharma (1976), Agrawal (1980) and Mandal (1981) are all from altitudes lower than that of not only Nelang (c 3695 m) but also Gopalpur (c 2770 m).

Although Blanford (1891), Ryley (1913), Wroughton (1915) and Phillips (1935) mentioned its occurrence in Sri Lanka, other authors like Ellerman (1963) and Marshall (1977) disagreed by stating that those mice were not *Mus booduga*. As Ellerman is considered to be an authority on rodents of the Indian subregion, his views are given much weightage in this regard. The mouse is common throughout the island up to an altitude of c 1850 m.

Regarding its distribution in Pakistan, Blanford (1891) mentioned its occurrence in Karachi, Siddiqui (1961) and Ellerman (1963) in Rawalpindi (c 220 m), Verma (1968) in Jammu, Sialkot and Lahore sectors (maximum altitude Jammu c 315 m), Sharma and Sharma (1976) at Poonch, Udhampur and Baderwah in Jammu and Kashmir State (maximum altitude Poonch c 978 m). Roberts (1977), however, states that it occurs in Sind and Punjab but "it does not appear to have penetrated the Baluchistan hills or the Himalayas", which in the light of the evidences put forward above, does not seem correct.

David (1970) reported this species for the first time from Nepal in Birganj Forest Division (c 200 m), but unfortunately his specimens were lost during transit. Agrawal and Chakraborty (1971) mentioned its occurrence in Bhojbhawanpur (c 165 m) in Banke District, Nepal. Now, from these reports it appear that this species occurs in Nepal up to an altitude of c 200 m (Birganj Forest Division).

Wroughton (1915), Ellerman and Morrison-Scott (1951), Ellerman (1963) and Marshall (1977) mentioned its occurrence at Mt. Popa (c 1531 m) in Burma.

Although Varma and Mahadevan (1970) have found *Mus booduga* from eastern Hima-

layas (Darjeeling District of West Bengal and Sikkim), yet their records cannot be considered here as they have not mentioned the exact locality from where they got the specimens.

From this discussion it would appear that the present material of *Mus booduga* from Nelang (c 3695 m) in Uttar Kashi District, Uttar Pradesh constitutes its highest altitudinal record in its range of distribution from Pakistan to Burma *via* India and Nepal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author is thankful to Dr. B.K. Tikader, Director, Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta, for providing facilities of work and to Dr. A. K. Mukherjee, Superintending Zoologist, for going through the manuscript and valuable suggestions and encouragement.

REFERENCES

- AGRAWAL, V. C. 1980. Murids of north-eastern India. Studies on rodents and their control, 1-22. The Meghalaya Science Society, Shillong.
- AGRAWAL, V. C. & CHAKRABORTY, S. 1971. Notes on collection of small mammals from Nepal, with the description of a new mouse hare (Lagomorpha: Ochotonidae). *Proc. zool. Soc., Calcutta*, 24 (1) : 41-46, tab.
- BLANFORD, W. T. 1891. The fauna of British India, Mammalia. Taylor and Francis, London.
- DAVID, L. C. 1970. Notes on the mammals of southern Nepal. *J. Mammal.*, 51 : 162-166.
- ELLERMAN, J. R. 1963. The fauna of India, Mammalia, 3 (Rodentia). Govt. of India, Delhi.

- ELLERMAN, J.R. AND MORRISON-SCOTT, T.C.S. 1951. A Checklist of Palaearctic and Indian mammals. *Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.)*, London.
- HINTON, M. A. C. AND LINDSAY, H. M. 1926. Bombay Natural History Society's Mammal Survey of India, Burma and Ceylon. Report No. 41 (Assam and Mishmi Hills). *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, 31 : 383-403.
- KURUP, G. U. 1968. Mammals of Assam and adjoining areas. 2. A distributional list. *Proc. zool. Soc., Calcutta*, 21 : 79-99.
- LINDSAY, H. M. 1926. Bombay Natural History Society's Mammal Survey of India, Burma and Ceylon. Report No. 44 (Kangra & Chamba). *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, 31 : 597-606.
- MANDAL, A. K. 1981. Report on the occurrence of the Little Indian Field Mouse, *Mus booduga booduga* (Gray) in Arunachal Pradesh, India. *Bull. zool. Surv. India*, 3 (3) : 271-272.
- MARSHALL, J. T. JR. 1977. A synopsis of Asian species of *Mus* (Rodentia, Muridae). *Bull. Am. Mus. nat. Hist.*, 158, article 3, 173-220, figs. 1-54, tabs. 1-5.
- PHILLIPS, W. W. A. 1935. Manual of the Mammals of Ceylon, *Ceylon J. Science*, Colombo Museum.
- PRAKASH, I., JAIN, A. P. AND RANA, B. D. 1971. New records of rodents from the Rajasthan desert. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, 68 : 447-450.
- ROBERTS, T. J. 1977. The Mammals of Pakistan. Ernest Benn Ltd., London & Tonbridge.
- ROONWAL, M. L. 1950. Contributions to the fauna of Manipur State, Assam. Part III. Mammals, with special reference to the family Muridae (Order Rodentia). *Rec. Indian Mus.*, 47 : 1-64.
- RYLEY, K. V. 1913. Bombay Natural History Society's Mammal Survey of India, Burma and Ceylon. Report No. 13 (South Ceylon). *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, 22 : 700-710.
- SHARMA, B. D. AND SHARMA, T. 1976. Some mammals records for Jammu Province (J & K State). *Indian Poultry Review*, 8 (3) : 15-17.
- SIDDIQI, M. S. 1961. Checklist of mammals of Pakistan with particular reference to the mammalian collection in the British Museum (Natural History)—London. *Biologia*, 7 (2) : 93-225.
- VARMA, R. N. 1968. A study of ectoparasites of mammals in the Jammu-Sialkot and Lahore sectors. *Armed Forces med. J.* 23 : 71-82.
- VARMA, R. N. AND MAHADEVAN, B. 1970. Ectoparasites of mammals in the eastern Himalayas and their potential disease relationships. *Indian J. med. Sci.*, 24 : 573-581, 2 maps.
- WROUGHTON, R. C. 1914. Bombay Natural History Society's Mammal Survey of India, Burma and Ceylon. Report No. 15 (Kumaon, U. P.). *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, 23 : 282-301.
- WROUGHTON, R. C. 1915. Bombay Natural History Society's Mammal Survey of India, Burma and Ceylon. Report No. 16 (Dry Zone, Central Burma and Mt. Popa). *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, 23 : 460-478.
- WROUGHTON, R. C. 1915. Bombay Natural History Society's Mammal Survey of India, Burma and Ceylon. Report No. 18 (Ceylon). *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, 24 : 79-96.

