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Eastern Ghats' native clicked in mangroves

Krishnendu Mukherjee
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Kolkata: Camera traps placed in the Indian Sunderbans under the All-India tiger estimation exercise have given the foresters a eureka moment by clicking a tiny squirrel like animal inside the forest.

While a team of foresters thinks it can be a Madras tree shrew — generally found in the hill forests of central and southern India — some said there had been earlier records of the animal from the forests of Purulia.

Deputy field director of Sunderbans Tiger Reserve, Justine Jones, said cameras have clicked the animal in the core area. "We have sent the pictures to experts for proper identification. But as of now, we think it can be an Indian/Madras tree shrew," he added.

Among orders of mammals, tree shrews are closely related to primates. They are slender animals with long tails and soft, greyish to reddish-brown fur.

Madras tree shrew is found on the Indian Subcontinent south of the Gange river. Three subspecies have been described — *Anathana ellioti ellioti* of the Eastern Ghats, Biligiriranga and the Shevaroy Hills and other hills

Sunderbans Tiger Reserve



The 'tree shrew' clicked by the trap cameras

of southern India, *Anathana ellioti pallida* from Central India primarily in Madhya Pradesh and Raipur and *Anathana ellioti wroughtoni* from the Satpura range and the Dangs near Mumbai. They have been reported within the Western Ghats ranges. The northernmost record is from Bihar.

Arjan Basu Roy of Nature Mates said there were earlier records of tree shrews from the forests of Purulia. "But I never heard of its presence in the Sunderbans," he added.

Swajit Roy Chowdhury of Nature, Environment and Wildlife Society said: "Tree shrews are not rare and it's possible that they were there in the forest and have been clicked by the cameras for the first time during this exercise."

Rajamouli's power

CINEMA

RRR (Action, Drama)

★★★★1/2

Cast: Jr NTR, Ram Charan, Ajay Devgn, Alia Bhatt

Direction: SS Rajamouli

Duration: 3 hours

Language: Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam

■ *Rajamouli's RRR is a... friends when the... What happens when... other's true intere...*

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