

A Note on the Availability of Bengal Fox, *Vulpes bengalensis* (Shaw 1800) (Carnivora: Canidae) in Magura District of Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Bengal fox is an uncommon mammal in Bangladesh. Limited works on this animal noticed that they are notorious mammalian pest but this is true, only killing is not an ultimate solution for their attack in animal husbandry. Based on information, some countries tried to conserve them in constructive ways and finally they suggested that without killing, we could manage them if they make hazards.

Keywords: Bengal Fox, Behavior, Food Items, Conservation, Magura, Bangladesh.

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is the home of three major canid species—golden jackal, dhole, and Bengal fox of which the former one is widely distributed and latter two species have restricted distribution in the country [1]. It has an offensive odor which is secreted from a gland at the base of the tail. The Bengal fox (*Vulpes bengalensis*) is an endemic animal in Indian subcontinent, ranging from the foothills of the Himalayas (Nepal) to the southern tip of the Indian peninsula, including Bangladesh and Pakistan [2,3]. The Bengal fox is currently found in the western part (river Jamuna) of the country [1]. The objective of this study is to know the present status of Bengal fox specially in Magura District of Bangladesh (Figure 1) for their conservation.

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Figure 1. Magura District of Bangladesh [4].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to observe the availability of this Bengal fox in Magura District, only a torch light was sufficient. At the time of evening or night (7 p. m. – 10 p. m.), some foxes came out from the jungle of nearest town. Foxes were habituated to take food especially bread from the shop-keepers or visitors. A simple field observation helped to complete this write-up.

Results and Discussion

As part of a farmer survey questions reported that Bengal fox (Plate 1) is a nuisance animal for sugarcane and maze as well

as poultry [5]. These animals eat garbage and plant materials but they prefer other animals which are 45% [5] (Table 1). The scat of Bengal fox contained more than one prey items [1]. This species is killing to be threat to local poultry of the country [6]. Since Bengal fox is mammalian pest but in nature, it has a great ecological impact [7]. Due to food, sometimes, they come to close to human. IUCN Bangladesh [8] has declared this species as a vulnerable species. In order to deliver knowledge to protect this species, stuffed sample could play a significant role for everybody (Plate 2).

Table 1. Salient features of Bengal fox

Features	Bengal fox
Size	Size of foxes can vary depending on their species
Habitat	More adaptable in various places
Bonding	Solitary
Status in Bangladesh [8]	Vulnerable (VU) species
Subspecies	It has no subspecies
Aggressiveness	Foxes do not kill jackals
Howl at night	Howls for defending their territory and mating
Food items	Small animals
Natural predators	Eagles, coyotes
Importance	It reduces rodents and lagomorphs
Longevity	3-11 years

Source: [7]



Plate 1. Bengal fox in Magura.



Plate 2. Stuffed Bengal fox in Jamuna Bridge Museum.

CONCLUSIONS

For removing garbage pollution of the country, Bengal foxes are important animal. They kill many pests from the crop fields, so our ecological balance can be maintained. After eating fruits by them, many seeds disperse from one place to another. Since, foxes are considered as mammalian pest, we should manage them. In order to increase the number of Bengal fox, captive breeding could be a significant option.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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