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FOODS CONSUMED BY ASSAMESE MACAQUES IN WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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During a study on ecology and behavior of Assamese macaques (*Macaca assamensis*) inhabiting different parts of West Bengal, observation was made on dietary items and feeding behavior of several troops in the wild (Mitra, 2002). Feeding behavior and selection of dietary items had direct relationship with human interaction, food availability, vegetation pattern, intergroup interaction and ranging pattern. Along with the habitat modification and the continuous biotic pressures, these free ranging groups are slowly developing the habit of utilizing various foodstuffs that are not considered as their natural food. In spite of their gradual dependence on artificial food items, they have a preference for natural diet and the major share of their

daily requirement still comes from natural vegetation. Assamese monkeys in this habitat utilized 63 plant species, of which 52 were wild and the rest were obtained from different agricultural varieties. Plant parts consumed by them include fruit, leaf, seed, petiole, leaf base, bud, flower, rhizome, epiphytic root and cotyledons. A total of nearly 70 species have been identified so far as their food plants while few other plants have been reported from other parts of their habitat in India. Lindburg (1976) recorded 100 food plant species in his study on dietary habits of rhesus monkeys (*M. mulatta*) Among them, some plants such as *Syzygium cumini*,

Lantana camara, *Ficus benjamina* and *Aegle marmelosa* are common foods for both these macaques. As far as number of plant species is concerned, maximum dietary diversity of the Assamese macaque was observed in May-June and October.

References

- Lindburg, D.G. (1976) Dietary habits of rhesus monkeys (*Macaca mulatta* Zimmerman) in Indian forests. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 73:261-79.
 Mitra, S (2002) Diet and feeding of Assamese macaques (*Macaca Assamensis*). *Asian Primates* 8(1&2): 12-14.

Table 1: List of food plants recorded from the study area

Scientific name	Family	Category	Fl. season	Fru. Season	Zone	Part used	Natur/Artif
<i>Achras zapota</i>	Sapotaceae	Tree	All	3,4,8,9	B	Fruit	N,A
<i>Aegle marmelosa</i>	Rutaceae	Tree	5,6,7	12	A	Fruit	N
<i>Anona squamosa</i>	Anonaceae	Tree		5,6,7	A	Fruit	N
<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>	Leguminosae				B	Seed	A
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	Compositae	Her/Sh			B	Leaf	N
<i>Artocarpus chaplasha</i>	Moraceae	Tree		5,7,8,9	A	Fruit	N
<i>Artocarpus lakoocha</i>	Moraceae	Tree			A,B	Fruit	N
<i>Bassia latifolia</i>	Sapotaceae	Tree	10,11	4,5,6	A	Flower,fruit	N
<i>Berberis sp.</i>	Berbericidae	Her		3,4	B	Fruit	N
<i>Brassica oleracea</i>	Cruciferae	Sh	10,11,12	11,12,1,2	B	Bud,leaf	A
<i>Breynia patens</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Her	3,4,5,6,7	3,4,5,6,7	A,B		N
<i>Bulbophyllum sp.</i>	Orchidaceae	Orchid	4,5,6		A	Root	N
<i>Carex sp.</i>	Cyperaceae	Grass			B	Leaf	N
<i>Carica papaya</i>	Caricaceae	Tree	All	All	A	Fruit	N,A
<i>Castanopsis indica</i>	Fagaceae	Tree	10,11,12	9,10	B	Seed,leaf	N
<i>Cicer arietinum</i>	Leguminosae		All	All	A,B	Cotyledon	A
<i>Citrus aurantium</i>	Rutaceae	Tree	11,12,1,2	11,12,1,2	A	Fruit	N,A
<i>Citrus grandis</i>	Rutaceae	Tree		8,9,10	A	Fruit	N
<i>Cledodendron japonica</i>	Verbanaceae				B	Fruit	N
<i>Coelogyne nitida</i>	Orchidaceae	Orchid	4,5,6		B	Root	N
<i>Coffea bengalensis</i>	Rubiaceae	Her/Sh	2,3,4	6,7,8,9,10,11	B	Fruit	N
<i>Costus speciosus</i>	Zingiberaceae		9,10,11		A	Rhizome	N
<i>Cyperus sp.</i>	Graminae	Grass		4,5,6	A	shoot	N
<i>Diosporea brigeri</i>					A		N
<i>Diospyros sp.</i>	Ebenaceae	Tree	6,7,8,9		A	Fruit	N
<i>Elatostema platyphylla</i>	Urticaceae	Her			B	Leaf	N
<i>Eragrostis intermedia</i>	Graminae	Grass			B	Spikelet	N

<i>Eupatorium pladulosum</i>	Compositae	Her						
<i>Eurya acuminata</i>	Theaceae	Sh				B	Leaf	N
<i>Ficus benjamina</i>	Moraceae	Tree				B	Leaf	N
<i>Ficus hookeri</i>	Moraceae	Tree		9,10,11		A	Fruit	N
<i>Ficus nemoralis</i>	Moraceae	Sh		11,12		B	Fruit	N
<i>Ficus oligodon</i>	Moraceae	Tree		3,4		B	Fruit	N
<i>Gynocardia odorata</i>	Flacourtiaceae	Tree				A	Fruit	N
<i>Holmskioldia pangueina</i>	Verbanaceae	Cli		5,11,12,1		A	Fruit	N
<i>Horsefieldia kingii</i>	Myristicaceae	Tree	10,11,12,1			A	Flower	N
<i>Hypis suaveolens</i>	Labiatae	Her		5,6		B	Fruit	N
<i>Inula cappa</i>	Compositae	Sh	10,11,12			A,B	Shoot	N
<i>Jambosa formosa</i>	Myrtaceae	Tree	11,12,1,2,3,4			B	Leaf	N
<i>Juglans regia</i>	Juglandaceae	Tree	11,12	3,4		B	Fruit	N
<i>Lantana camara</i>	Verbanaceae	Sh	2,3	9,10,11		B	Fruit	N
<i>Leucoseptrum canum</i>	Labiatae	Tree	All	All		B,A	Fruit	N
<i>Litchi chinensis</i>	Sapindaceae	Tree	2,3			B	Bud	N
<i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i>	Solanaceae	sh		3,4,5			Fruit	A
<i>Machilus odoratissima</i>	Lauraceae	Tree	3,4,5			B	Fruit	N
<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Anacardiaceae	Tree				A	Fruit	A
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Rosaceae	Tree	All	All			Fruit	A
<i>Melia azedarach</i>	Meliaceae	Tree	3,4	4,5,6		A	Fruit	N
<i>Morus laevigata</i>	Moraceae	Tree		3,5,6			Leaves	
<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>	Musaceae	Tree	All	All		A	Fruit	N,A
<i>Ostodes paniculata</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Tree	4,5,6	10,11		B	Leaf	N
<i>Rhus succadanea</i>	Anacardiaceae	Tree	2,3,4,5,6	6,7		B	Leaf	N
<i>Saccharum spontaneum</i>	Gramineae	Grass	All	All		A	Shoot	N
<i>Sechium edula</i>	Cucurbitaceae	Cli		11,12,1,2		B,A	Fruit,leaf	N,A
<i>Solanum torvum</i>	Solanaceae	Sh	All	All		A	Fruit	N
<i>Spermocoe hispida</i>	Rubiaceae	Sh				B	Leaf,twig	N
<i>Syzygium cumini</i>	Myrtaceae	Tree		4,5,6		A	Fruit	N
<i>Tectona grandis</i>	Verbanaceae	Tree	6,7,8,9	11,12,1		A	Petiole	N
<i>Tetrastigma bracteolata</i>	Vitaceae	Cli	2,3,4	12,1		A	Fruit	N
<i>Thevetia coronarium</i>	Apocynaceae	Sh	4,5,6,7,8	10,11,12,1		A	Fruit	N
<i>Thysanolaena maxima</i>	Graminae	Grass	6,7,8,9,10			B	Leaf base	N
<i>Tithonia diversifolia</i>	Compositae	Sh	11,12			B	Inflorescence	N
<i>Zea mays</i>	Gramineae	Gr		6,7		A,B	Cotyledon	N

HER = HERB; SH = SHRUB; CLI = CLIMBER; TR = TREE; 1-12 DENOTES EACH MONTH OF A YEAR CONSIDERING 1 AS JANUARY AND 12 AS DECEMBER; FL. SEASON = FLOWERING SEASON ; FR. SEASON = FRUITING SEASON

Fig 2. Seasonality of flower and fruit production in the home range of two focal groups



ANTI-PREDATOR BEHAVIOR
OF STUMPTAIL MACAQUES
IN GIBBON WILDLIFE
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Primates are sensitive to the risk of predation (Dunbar, 1988), and both actual predation and the risk of predation influence the behavioral strategies of species. Primates often fall prey to predators such as carnivorous mammals (Teleki, 1973; Busse, 1976; Hausfater, 1976; McGrew *et al.*, 1979; Takahata *et al.*, 1984; Wright, 1984; Cheney and

Wrangham, 1978) and raptors (Janson, 1984). Leopard, dog, python, and birds of prey are some of the identified predators of primates in different habitats and elicit different responses from different species although all primates have predator alarm calls (Dunbar, 1988). There is no report on the potential predators of the stumptail macaque (*Macaca arctoides*) and its anti-predatory behavior.

During long-term observations (1998-1999) of a group of stumptail macaques in Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam, India, all encounters of stumptail macaque with clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), dog, and birds such as kite and hawk were recorded to study the response pattern to these potential predators.