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RESPONSE

COMMENTS ON THE “A CHECKLIST OF MAMMALS WITH HISTORICAL RECORDS FROM DARJEELING-SIKKIM HIMALAYA LANDSCAPE, INDIA”

P.O. Nameer

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Avasthe & Jha (1999) and Srinivasulu & Srinivasulu (2012). According to Srinivasulu & Srinivasulu (2012), Brown Bear is seen in the Himalayas in India, but there is no specific mention of the presence of Brown Bear in Sikkim. Avasthe & Jha (1999), on the other hand, being a non-peer-reviewed publication, cannot be accepted for establishing the occurrence of a species from a hitherto unreported region. Moreover, McLellan et al. (2017) does not report the species from Sikkim.

Appendix I, # 146. Eurasian Otter, *Lutra lutra*

The Eurasian Otter is included primarily based on either historical or 'grey literature, from both Darjeeling (Dalgilesh 1906; Wroughton 1916a, 1917; Agrawal et al. 1992), as well as Sikkim (Wroughton 1916b; Sanborn 1932; Avasthe & Jha 1999; Chattopadhyay et al. 2006). Chattopadhyay et al. (2006), a recent study, included *Lutra lutra* from Sikkim after Ghose & Biswas (1982), who did not provide any evidence. In this context, the presence of Eurasian Otter in this region cannot be accepted.

Appendix I, # 152. Himalayan Stoat or Ermine, *Mustela erminea*

The Ermine has been claimed to be occurring in Sikkim based on Vijayan et al. (2004) and Lepcha et al. (2017). However, Vijayan et al. (2004) make only a passing reference about the 'sighting' of an ermine from Sikkim, without any further details. Furthermore, neither any notes nor any pictures were provided; while Lepcha et al. (2017) could not be verified, but this being a non-peer-reviewed publication, more evidence are required before this species can be included in the Sikkim mammal list. Moreover, Ermine is known only from the Ladakh region in India to this date (Reid et al. 2016).

Appendix I, # 164. Red Muntjac, *Muntiacus vaginalis*

Though a taxonomic revision was proposed for *Muntiacus muntjac*, splitting the currently known species into three species has not been recognized (Mattioli 2011). Therefore, this species name should be changed to *Muntiacus muntjac*.

Appendix I, # 168. Takin, *Budorcas taxicolor*

A recent taxonomic revision of the Takin has led to two subspecies being elevated to distinct species, the Mishmi Takin *Budorcas taxicolor* and the Bhutan Takin *Budorcas whitei* (Groves & Leslie 2011), and it is the latter species that occurs in Sikkim.

Appendix I, # 172. Argali, *Ovis ammon*

The Altai Argali, *Ovis ammon*, is currently confined to Eastern Russia, Eastern Kazakhstan, Western Mongolia and North-West China (Groves & Leslie 2011), and the species present in India, including Sikkim, is the Tibetan Argali *Ovis hodgsoni*.

The comments and clarifications provided above need to be considered before the checklist of Naulak & Pradhan (2020) is used by biodiversity managers, scientists and interested public. It will also be beneficial if the authors correct the above errors and publish a corrigendum. This will help prevent misleading information to enter the published literature in future. Finally, there are also some errors in the spelling of scientific names (for e.g., *Mustela ermine*), which also need to be thoroughly checked, corrected and updated.

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– P.O. Nameer, Pp. 18956–18958

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