



Enormous tree fossils  
(*Oryzoides*)  
overshadow a small stream  
in Maragudi, India.  
Lower plate in the High  
Range bordering the Palni  
Hills near Madurai, Kerala.

## ENDEMIC SPECIES OF THE WESTERN GHATS



**MALABAR GLIDING FROG**  
(*Rhombophryne maddisiana*)  
The Malabar gliding frog is a distinctive arboreal amphibian found in the wet tropical evergreen forests of the Western Ghats. It ranges from Kerala and Tamil Nadu all the way north into southern Maharashtra, thus being an excellent indicator for this time of vegetation. Its name is taken from the fact that it uses its feet to act as directional fins as it glides through the air. It has similar looking relatives in the eastern Himalaya (*R. reinwardtii*) and South East Asia (*R. nigropalmatus*).

**MALABAR PIT VIPER**  
(*Ophiophagus habuensis*)  
Widely spread in wet forests across almost the whole range of the Western Ghats, populations of the Malabar pit viper define the critical habitat of the mountain eagle. They like to sit in low bushes and trees in wet areas where they can easily feed on small frogs, geckos and even small rodents. Its bite is mildly venomous and is often encountered by coffee- and tea plantation workers.



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**NILGIRI TAHR**  
(*Hemitragus jayakari*)  
Nilgiri tahr are endangered mountains goats that live amongst the highest, less accessible cliffs of the southern Western Ghats. Like so many other endemics of this region, their nearest relatives are found more than 2,000km away in the Himalayas. The only other two species in the genus are the Himalayan (*H. himalayensis*) and Kazan (*H. jayakari*) tahr. Tahr graze on the grasslands and use the steep cliffs of the terrain to escape predators from tiger, leopards and dogs.

**KURUMBI**  
(*Scrublandusia kurumbia*)  
This shrub that grows in open grasslands is a unique variety of plant that blooms in the high altitude hills of the southern Western Ghats in 12 year cycles. During the blooming, entire hillsides and mountains of natural grasslands, tinged mauve by the flowers. More than any other plant, kurumbi is an excellent indicator of the health of the natural grasslands of the region.



**BLACK & ORANGE FLYCATCHER**  
(*Ptilinopus nigropurpureus*)  
The Black and orange flycatcher is a small but distinguished bird. It is restricted to the sholas of the southern Western Ghats and is thus an excellent indicator of undisturbed habitats. Like the White-bellied shortwing, it is seen in dark undergrowth clumps at dawn and evening, usually as individuals or in pairs.

**NILGIRI LANGUR**  
(*Presbytis leucogaster*)  
The Nilgiri langur is a leaf-eating monkey that is found across different habitats in the southern Western Ghats. They are found in large troops of 8-15 or so individuals in moist deciduous forest to evergreen forests at an altitude range from 500-2,500m. They are locally common in some areas such as the Nilgiri Tiger Reserve but have disappeared from other important habitats (such as the sholas of the Palni hills). They have a distinct booming call that is a signature sound in sholas and lower forests of the Western Ghats. They have relatives in Sri Lanka (*P. vetulus*) and across India and South East Asia (*P. entellus* and *P. pileatus*).



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**SLENDER LORIS**  
(*Loris lydekkerianus*)  
The Slender loris is a rare nocturnal primate found in the central and southern Western Ghats as well as Sri Lanka. It preys on open scrub forest where it feeds on insects during the night. The Sri Lankan loris are now thought to include 2 or 3 sub-species. Little is known about the behaviour of these shy animals. They can be seen in KMTR as well as the lower forests of the Palni Hills near Dindigul.



**RHODODENDRON TREE**  
(*Rhododendron arboreum*)  
Hardy, fire-resistant trees found in open grasslands above 1800 meters in the southern Western Ghats. It is thought that they migrated from the Himalayas at a time when the climate of

**WHITE-BELLIED SHORTWING**  
(*Brachypteryx major major*)  
The White-bellied shortwing is a globally threatened species restricted to shola forests (1800-2000m) in the southern Western Ghats. They are shy birds, which