**Endangered slender loris needs conservation**

The slender loris (Loris lydekkerianus) is one of the nocturnal, small-sized prosimians found in South India and Sri Lanka. It weighs about 265 g and measures about 26 cm in body length. The two subspecies found in South India are *Loris lydekkerianus lydekkerianus* in the dry forests of the Eastern Ghats and *Loris lydekkerianus malabaricus* in the wet forests of the Western Ghats. The coat colour of the species varies depending on the geographical location; the wet forest subspecies tends to be dark in colour, while the dry forest subspecies is lighter.

The slender loris is classified as ‘Highly Endangered’ by the Indian Wildlife Act and ‘Vulnerable’ by the IUCN. Forest fragmentation, hunting and trapping have reduced the existence of the species to pocket populations. Conservation measures are urgently required for its survival; yet, substantive and long-term plans are lacking. The major stumbling block in the conservation of this species is the lack of information on its behaviour in its natural habitat. For decades, many studies have reported its morphology and reproductive parameters alone. Long-term field studies undertaken had focused on the socio-ecology of the species.

A population survey of the slender loris was conducted in the scrub of *Pentanis fascicularis* on the Kuzhiharali river bank (tributary of Thamirabarani River) of Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, India. It was observed that a reasonable number of slender lorises were killed for medical use by the tribal people. Local people believe that oil prepared from the slender loris flesh can be used to treat tuberculosis. Apart from this, the eye extract of slender loris is also used as medicine for eye diseases, which has no scientific support. This pocket of the slender loris population needs to be conserved. The present observation lays emphasis on the long-term behavioural study for management strategies in conservation.


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**Capparis spinosa: unconventional potential food source in cold arid deserts of Ladakh**

*Capparis spinosa* (Capparidaceae) – also called ‘caper’ and locally known as ‘Kabra’ – is an under-utilized wild plant, occasionally used by local people of Ladakh as a leafy vegetable. *Capparis* is an evergreen perennial bush that grows along the roadside, on the slopes, dry, rocky and stony soils. It can withstand extreme temperature (-40°C to +40°C) of Ladakh and is highly drought-tolerant (Figure 1). This plant has multiple uses in cuisine as salad, leafy vegetable, pickle and condiments. Besides these, it helps in soil and water conservation, desertification control and land reclamation in the fragile, cold ecosystem of Ladakh. *Capparis* has all the potential to meet the calorie requirements of the army deployed in the ‘Ladakh’ sector during road close period (November to April) and can play a significant role both in the national and international spice trade in the future.

A sample of 100 g of prepared capers contains energy (23 kcal), carbohydrates (5 g), sugar (0.41 g), dietary fibre (3.2 g), fat (0.9 g), protein (2.36 g), vitamin C (4.3 g), iron (1.7 mg) and sodium (2964 mg). Immature flower buds pickled in vinegar, sauce, or preserved in salt are in great demand in European countries. Previous chemical studies have reported the presence of alkaloids, lipids, flavonoids and glucosinolates, which are known as flavour compounds, cancer-preventing agents and biopesticides. *Capparis* flower buds contain 100.51 mg of rutin equivalent/g methanolic extract, which exhibits antioxidant activity. The seed oil yield ranges from 27.3 to 37.6 g/100 g and contains high vitamin-E (134 mg/100 g) and tocopherol (4961.8–10,009.1 mg/kg), which act as natural antioxidants. Sterol,

*Figure 1. a. Capparis spinosa flower and buds. b. Partially opened C. spinosa flower bud during night.*