

Dwindling Populations of the Microchiropteran Bat, *Hipposideros ater* (Hipposideridae: Chiroptera) in Tirunelveli

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ABSTRACT:

Being a tropical country, India has a wide variety of bat fauna. Bats are one of the unrecognized species of mammals; in spite of their vital role in the maintenance of the agro and forest ecosystem. The dusky leaf-nosed bat, *Hipposideros ater* is a smaller, shy and sensitive bat species. A continuous monitoring of the *H. ater* colony for a period of 12 year in Tirunelveli, South India, reveals that they are highly sensitive and show high fluctuations with sharp decline in the population size mainly due to human intrusions, particularly during breeding seasons. It is recommended that this bat species may be conserved as it is a bio-control agent, by protecting their roosts as well as by constructing bat houses in undisturbed areas.

Keywords:

Hipposiderid bat, bio-control agent, human interference, population decline.