

# Food Preference of Rehabilitated Asiatic Black Bear cubs in Lowland Tropical Forests of Northeast India

Soumya Dasgupta<sup>1,2</sup>, Parthankar Choudhury<sup>1,\*</sup>, N.V.K. Ashraf<sup>2</sup>, P. C. Bhattacharjee<sup>2</sup> and Sunil Kyarong<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Ecology and Environmental Science Assam University, Silchar, Assam, India

<sup>2</sup>Wildlife Trust of India, F-13, Sector-8, Noida - 201301, Uttar Pradesh, India

\*Corresponding Author's E-mail: parthankar@rediffmail.com

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## ABSTRACT

Observations were made on the feeding habits of Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus thibatanus*) cubs during their rehabilitation program in the lowland tropical semi-evergreen forests in Pakke Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh, India. The different food items taken by the bear cubs during their daily incursions in the forest were recorded using instantaneous group scan. While the three bear cubs (of first batch) were recorded to feed on 22 different plant parts of 19 species and 14 food items of animal origin, the remaining five cubs (of second batch) consumed 14 different plant parts of 10 different species and nine items of animal origin. Feeding frequency of plant materials was more than that of animal origin. 48 random vegetation plots were laid to ascertain the abundance of different plant species consumed by the bear cubs in the study area. 13 of the 19 plant species consumed by the cubs were found within the vegetation plots. Plant parts consumed by Asiatic black bear cubs are mostly soft mast unlike the other sub-species of Asiatic black bear (occupying the temperate ranges) where comparatively more hard mast is consumed.

**Key words:** Asiatic black bear, Feeding behaviour, Instantaneous group scan, Pakke Tiger reserve, Rehabilitation.