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### NOTE

**FIRST RECORD OF THE ASIATIC BRUSH-TAILED PORCUPINE  
*ATHERURUS MACROURUS* LINNAEUS, 1758 (MAMMALIA:  
RODENTIA: HYSTRICIDAE) FROM WESTERN BHUTAN**

Tashi Dhendup & Rinzin Dorji

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**FIRST RECORD OF THE ASIATIC BRUSH-TAILED PORCUPINE *ATHERURUS MACROURUS* LINNAEUS, 1758 (MAMMALIA: RODENTIA: HYSTRICIDAE) FROM WESTERN BHUTAN**

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During the nationwide tiger survey of Bhutan in 2014, an Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine *Atherurus macrourus* (Linnaeus, 1758) was photographed in Gedu Territorial Forest Division (89.66858 N & 26.75111 E), located in the south-western part of the country. This is a first record of the species in western Bhutan and the second in the country. The species was first recorded in Bhutan in 2010 in Royal Manas National Park (RMNP) (Tempa et al. 2013) and occurred at elevations up to 1,408m (WWF 2013) in sub-tropical montane forests. It was found mostly near water sources. The Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine is a species of rodent in the Hystricidae family. Bhutan currently has three species of porcupines: Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine, Himalayan Crestless Porcupine *Hystrix brachyura*, and the Indian Crested porcupine *Hystrix indica*.

Data from 35 camera trap stations were available for analysis and the Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine was recorded from only one station with two independent captures: one in March and one in April and occurred at 1,517m in sub-montane forests. Both the captures

occurred at night indicating a nocturnal behaviour.

An account of the species occurrence in Bhutan was previously not published and hence, Bhutan was not featured on the distribution map of the species on the IUCN red list assessment in 2016. Known to be the smallest and rarest of the porcupines in South Asia, the Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine has a widespread distribution in northeastern South Asia and mainland Southeast Asia (Molur 2016). Though classified as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the species is showing a decline in population trend across its range primarily due to habitat loss, and subsistence harvesting for food. Habitat in Gedu division is threatened by small-scale logging, habitat degradation and conversion, non-wood forest product collection and other resource exploitations. Porcupines, in general, are also seen as a pest to agricultural crops and are often trapped by farmers and eaten. A least studied taxon in Bhutan, the species needs research efforts and conservation measures to protect them from extirpation.

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Image 1. Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine photographed in Gedu Territorial Forest Division







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