

Hand-rearing the Common palm civet, *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*

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Common palm civet
Baiju Raj

The Common Palm Civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*

The common palm civet, also known as Asian palm civet or the Toddy cat is a small nocturnal mammal commonly found in South and South-East Asia. They are extremely fond of toddy and are hence named Toddy Cat. Primarily omnivorous in feeding habits, they feed on a variety of ripened fruits and also consume several invertebrates.

Little is known about the breeding behaviour of the common palm civet. They reproduce throughout the year and can give birth to up to 5 young while the average litter size observed is 2 kittens. Kittens have been rescued throughout the year irrespective of the seasons.

Commonly seen in not only in forest but also in cities and rural areas, the common palm civet readily breeds under roof tops, false ceilings and abandoned buildings. They are usually seen by the people while cleaning dark and unused spaces of old buildings. Most rescues are initiated once the mother abandons the kittens after being disturbed.

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Do's & Don'ts prior to rescue

1. Ensure that the kitten is truly orphaned or abandoned prior to rescue. A mother cat that has simply gone in search of food will return to the young ones. DO NOT mistakenly rescue kittens with mothers.
2. The kittens can be watched from a distance for a couple of hours to see if the mother returns. Refrain from crowding as the mother will not approach the kittens if there are too many people around the kittens. Once the mother returns, the kittens can be left where they are. She will herself shift them away once they are a little older.
3. Much like the domestic cat, the mothers have often been observed shifting their young ones to another safe place once they have been disturbed.
4. Rescued kittens must be hand-raised and rehabilitated in an appropriate manner and released at the age of 3-4 months.

Hand-rearing Common palm civet kittens



**Common palm civet kitten
Baiju Raj**

Rescued kittens are often found at a young stage before their eyes have even opened – they are extremely delicate and require a lot of care at this stage. The kitten's eye's open at approximately 10 days and such older kittens are easier to look after and most can even feed themselves.

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Housing and caring for the kittens

1. New born kittens with eyes closed:

New-born kittens have delicate immune systems and require a lot of attention as they easily pick up infections. They can be housed in wooden or cardboard boxes and must be placed on a bedding of soft cotton cloth. The kittens must be placed on fresh, clean, dry cloth every time they soil the box. Even though the bedding will be changed frequently, the kittens must be placed back in the same box. Changing the box may make the kittens uncomfortable and insecure and require time for them to adjust to the new surroundings again – this must be avoided. The kittens also require external heat all day long at this vulnerable stage of their lives. Handling must be minimal to avoid the imprinting.

2. Older kittens with eyes open:

Older kittens are comparatively easy to take care of. They may be housed in boxes until they are month old and shifted to enclosures thereafter. Again, refrain from changing the boxes or enclosures unnecessarily. Minimize handling to prevent negative imprinting on the animal which may have a negative impact on the animal's survival after release.

Feeding Common palm civet kittens

<u>Age</u>	<u>Feeding frequency</u>	<u>Feed</u>	<u>Feeding apparatus</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1-3 weeks	5-6 times a day	Diluted cow's milk 60:40	Syringe or bottle	Use a fresh preparation for each feed.
3-6 weeks	6-8 times a day – mainly night	Diluted cow's milk 60:40; fresh squeezed grape juice and pulp	Bottle, syringe or flat dish	Use fresh preparation for each feed.

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6-12 weeks	4-6 times a day – mainly night	Diluted cow's milk 75:25; soft fresh fruits; mashed boiled eggs	Flat dish	Feed should be given in small quantities at frequent intervals. Use fresh preparation for each feed.
12 weeks & above	2-3 times a day	Boiled eggs; shredded chicken and meats; fresh fruits – banana, mango, sapota, berries, etc.	Flat dish or bowl	Fresh water must be provided daily in a separate bowl at this stage. All food can be given after sunset to ensure that the young are following a nocturnal cycle. This is the best time for release in its natural habitat.

“A rescue is completed when the animal is successfully released in its natural habitat”

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