investigation that the forest interior was much cooler and had different vegetation characteristics such as greater canopy cover and larger trees and lesser herbaceous cover, than the edge habitats. *R. rattus*, in contrast to the former, is a ubiquitous generalist species that has managed to colonize six continents and thousands of islands in the wet tropics as well as in arid environments. In addition to *M. mayori*, the fact that the endemics *S. ohiensis* and *F. layardi* and the non-endemic *F. sublineatus* preferentially utilized interior areas, suggest that they may be negatively affected by the creation of habitat edges. On the other hand, those that are tolerant of habitat edges and perhaps benefit by such human modifications are *R. rattus*, *M. booduga* and *F. palmarum*.

Due to edge effects and the differential tolerance of species, the shape of a particular forest patch could be expected to influence the biotic community it supports. Circular forest patches will have proportionately less edge habitat than similar-sized linear forest patches (Bentley et al. 2000). The shape index for forest fragments is calculated as the ratio of perimeter to area (Gkaraveli et al. 2001), which increases as forests become more linear. Based on this premise, the abundance of core forest species should be negatively affected by the shape index, which was observed for *M. mayori.*

Although the fragmentation of Sri Lankan rainforests may not have an overall impact on the species richness of the small mammal community the study clearly demonstrates that it may lead to the decline of certain forest-adapted species. This emphasizes the need to preserve large intact and circular forests whenever possible. The preservation of the smaller forests is also important, since they function as potential "stop over points" that may facilitate the spreading of forest species to nearby patches. Such linkages between forests are particularly important for small mammals that are unable to cover large distances.

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