

A record of Brown Mongoose *Herpestes fuscus* in Pampadum Shola National Park, southern Western Ghats, India

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Abstract.

An individual of Brown Mongoose *Herpestes fuscus* was recorded using camera trapping technique in Pampadum Shola National Park, near Bison swamp area. There are a few records of Brown Mongoose from the state so far and hence is considered as a rare species.

Keywords: Camera trapping, high-altitude, shola- grassland ecosystem, small carnivore.

Brown Mongoose is a comparatively large forest mongoose, which is characterised with yellowish-brown coloured fur, black feet and short bushy tail which tapers to a conical point (Menon 2014). Details regarding the behaviour of this species are still unknown and the species is currently classified as Least Concern by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (Mudappa & Jathanna 2015).

Pampadum Shola is one of the three Shola National Parks in Kerala and is a part of Munnar Wildlife Division. It is a montane grassland shola habitat and is a rich abode of biodiversity.

There are a few records of this species prior to the present one from this part of the world. Mudappa *et al.* (2008) recorded this from Peeramedu, Idukki district. It was also recorded from Parambikulam Tiger Reserve and Eravikulam National Park by Sreehari *et al.* (2013). The record from Eravikulam National Park was at an elevation of 2,032 m asl and the one from Parambikulam Tiger Reserve was at 492 m asl which explained the altitudinal range of the species.

The current record of Brown Mongoose from Pampadum Shola National Park is recorded at an altitude of 1,826 m asl (10° 08.229'N, 077° 15.283'E) at 19h42. The animal was camera trapped in a shola habitat on ground. It was solitary and the species was clearly identified by the uniform dark colouration and bushy conical tail. This record supports the finding of Sreehari *et al.* (2013) which established a new altitudinal range for the species, correcting Mudappa (2013) and Mudappa *et al.* (2008).



Figure 1. Camera trapped image of Brown Mongoose *Herpestes fuscus* from Pampadum Shola National Park

The studies on small carnivores are few when it comes to the Shola National Parks of Kerala. The details regarding the species are poorly known and this is a major setback for their conservation. Records like these are supposed to provide more details regarding the habitat and distribution of the species which in turn will help in the conservation activities.

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