

Recent records of Short-tailed Mongoose *Herpestes brachyurus* from Johor, Peninsular Malaysia

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SIGHTING RECORD : 1

Identity of subject: Short-tailed Mongoose, *Herpestes brachyurus* (Mammalia: Carnivora: Herpestidae).

Observer: Nick Baker.

Photograph by: Nick Baker.

Subject identified by: Nick Baker.

Location: Near Kota Tinggi-Mersing road, at the edge of Panti Forest Reserve, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia.

Elevation: 35 metres

Habitat: Lowland, freshwater swamp forest.

Date and time: 13 September 2016, 09:05 and 10:00 hrs.

Description of record: A solitary *Herpestes brachyurus* was glimpsed at 09:05 hrs active at the edge of a shallow pool, part of a shaded, slow-flowing stream. Immediately upon disturbance, the mongoose quickly retreated into streamside vegetation and the sound of a splash was heard which indicated that it had entered the stream. At 10:00 hrs on the same day another sighting was made at the same pool, and again the mongoose quickly retreated into vegetation at the edge of the pool and a splash was heard. Images were acquired of a lone male exploring a dry forest floor in the same area (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1.

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SIGHTING RECORD : 2

Identity of subject: Short-tailed Mongoose, *Herpestes brachyurus* (Mammalia: Carnivora: Herpestidae).

Observer: Nick Baker.

Photograph by: Nick Baker.

Subject identified by: Nick Baker.

Location: Gunung Arong Forest Reserve, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia.

Elevation: 40 metres

Habitat: Forest-edge, near freshwater swamp forest.

Date and time: 04 April 2016, 08:10 hrs.

Description of record: A lone *Herpestes brachyurus* was photographed in forest edge habitat, close to freshwater swamp forest (Fig. 2) as it made its way parallel to Jalan Tanjung Resang, which is a sealed, rural road cutting through the forest reserve. The mongoose was just 10 metres from the road.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.

All images © Nick Baker

SIGHTING RECORD : 3

Identity of subject: Short-tailed Mongoose, *Herpestes brachyurus* (Mammalia: Carnivora: Herpestidae).

Observer: Nick Baker.

Photograph by: Nick Baker.

Subject identified by: Kelvin Lim.

Location: Gunung Pulai Forest Reserve, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia.

Elevation: 60 metres

Habitat: Rocky stream gully in lowland, secondary forest.

Date and time: 06 October 2014, 12:00 hrs.

Description of record: A solitary *Herpestes brachyurus* was photographed traversing a rocky stream in a shaded, forested gully, before it disappeared beneath the trunk of a fallen tree (Fig. 3).

GENERAL REMARKS

There appear to be few, carefully documented records of *Herpestes brachyurus* from Johor, the southernmost (and third largest) state in Peninsular Malaysia. Jennings & Veron (2011) included two records from Johor on their predictive distribution map for the species, but for both records there were no details of type of record (visual sighting, photograph, specimen etc.) or precise coordinates. Wells (1989) discussed a mounted specimen (ZRCNUS 4.1508) acquired from "the Old Johor museum, Johor Baru town, and safely presumed to have been collected locally": whether this specimen is one of the two Johor records in Jennings & Veron (2011) is not clear. Yong (2006) included *Herpestes brachyurus* in a species list for Pantii Forest Reserve in southern Johor, but included no reference, sighting details or images to support this.

The images shown here were all acquired by day close to aquatic habitats. Two of the records (Panti and Gunung Arong forest reserves) were near lowland, freshwater swamp forest habitat and the other record (Gunung Pulai) was in a rocky gully with a permanent stream.

At each location there is varying degree of human disturbance due to the proximity of main roads (the record at Gunung Arong was just 10 metres from a sealed road with occasional traffic) or of the general public (the records from Panti and Gunung Pulai forest reserves were close to secluded, but well-worn trails at the edge of areas of public access).

It is likely that the records presented here for Gunung Pulai and Gunung Arong forest reserves (and possibly Panti Forest Reserve) are the first to be properly documented for these forested areas (see Fig. 4 : location map).



Fig. 4. Location map of Gunung Pulai, Gunung Arong and Panti forest reserves.

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Note that in Malaysia, land designated as "forest reserve" is primarily set-aside for the rotational extraction of native timber, typically on a 30-year cycle: this does not imply any protection of the habitat requirements of wildlife in the area. After commercially viable timber extraction is exhausted, forest reserves are often degazetted for other uses (oil palm, rubber or non-native timber plantations, housing, industrial development etc.), although occasionally some parts may be designated as national or state parks.

References:

Duckworth, J.W., Mathai, J., Ross, J. & Wilting, A. (2016). *Herpestes brachyurus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. < <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/41610/0>> (Accessed 05 March 2017).

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Wells, D. R. (1989). Notes on the distribution and taxonomy of peninsular Malaysian mongooses (*Herpestes*). *Natural History Bulletin of the Siam Society*, 37: 87-97.

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