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Cover: Life and death in one night - wolf hunting the hare. Mixed media—gouache, acrylics, pen & colour pencils. © Dupati Poojitha.



***Megachile vera* Nurse, 1901 (Insecta: Hymenoptera: Megachilidae): a new record of leaf cutter bee from Kerala, India**

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Family Megachilidae is the third largest bee family in the world with 4,169 species and with 239 species records from India (Ascher & Pickering 2024). They are a family of bees with long-tongue just like the bees of family Apidae but the fore wing of Megachilidae has only two submarginal cells, except in Fideliini (Michener 2007). Genus *Megachile* Latreille, 1802 comprises of Leaf-cutter bees, resin bees and mason bees (Sardar et al. 2021). They are robust, non-metallic bees with tergal fasciae, and females of this genus bear abdominal scopa (Gupta 1993). Bees of this genus are excellent pollinators of many crops. Prakash & Bijoy (2022) recorded two new reports of *Megachile* bees from Kole wetlands of Kerala. In the present study, a specimen of *Megachile vera* Nurse, 1901 was collected from Palakkal which is a part of the Thrissur North Kole. A single female specimen of *M. vera* was caught in white pan trap that was kept in the study site during field day. This species has been reported from various states of India (Figure 1) including Rajasthan (Alwar, Deeg, Sikar, Kota, Udaipur) Haryana (Hisar, Sonipat), Gujarat (Deesa, Veeraval, Dantiwada), Punjab, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal (Gupta 1993; Kumari et al. 2019; Sardar et al. 2021; Ascher &

Pickering 2024). According to Gupta (1993) the species, *M. vera*, belongs to subgenus *Eutricharaea* Thomson. But based on the latest update of world bee species guide and checklist the subgenus of the species is uncertain (Ascher & Pickering 2024). So, here we are not categorizing the species into subgenus level.

Detailed redescription of *M. vera* is provided here along with images. Species identification was done using original description by Nurse (1901) and subsequent detailed description by Gupta (1993). Labomed Luxeo 6z microscope was used for identification and Leica DMC4500 digital camera mounted on a Leica M205 C stereo microscope was used to take images of the specimen. This species is a new addition to the bee fauna of Kerala.

***Megachile vera* Nurse, 1901 (P.150)**

Major diagnostic features of *M. vera* includes dull orange colouration beneath fore femora, apex of trochanter and femur of meso and metathoracic legs and terminally tapered, slightly upturned apex of abdomen.

Female: Total length: 11.09 mm

Head: Black with white pubescence; strongly punctate: white pubescence absent on middle region of

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clypeus, supra clypeus and vertex; clypeus with medio-longitudinal smooth line; supra clypeus impunctate; apical margin of clypeus with emarginations; scape, pedicel black, flagellomeres light brown; pedicel and F1 almost equal in length; F1 slightly shorter than F2; mandible 4 dentate, base covered with white pubescence, incomplete cutting edge in 2nd and complete cutting edge in 3rd interspace; gena with slightly yellowish-white pubescence; genal area close to mandible with long white branched hairs; vertex strongly punctate with incurved margin.

Mesosoma: Closely and coarsely punctate; scutum slightly convex, anterior and lateral margins with yellowish-white pubescence; disc of scutum and scutellum bare or with few yellowish-white hairs; scutellum slightly convex with rounded posterior margin; wings hyaline with brown veins; tegulae brown, finely punctate; propodeum finely and closely punctate, covered with long yellowish-white hairs; legs with white hairs except on the underside of tarsi; fulvous hairs on the underside of tarsi; fore femora underneath, apex of trochanter and femur of mid legs, trochanter and femur



Image 1. Habitat of the collected specimen. © Anju Sara Prakash.

of hind legs dull orange; base of claws with setae.

Metasoma: Tapering towards posterior end and slightly upturned; black with fine, close punctures at base of tergal segments and coarse punctures towards

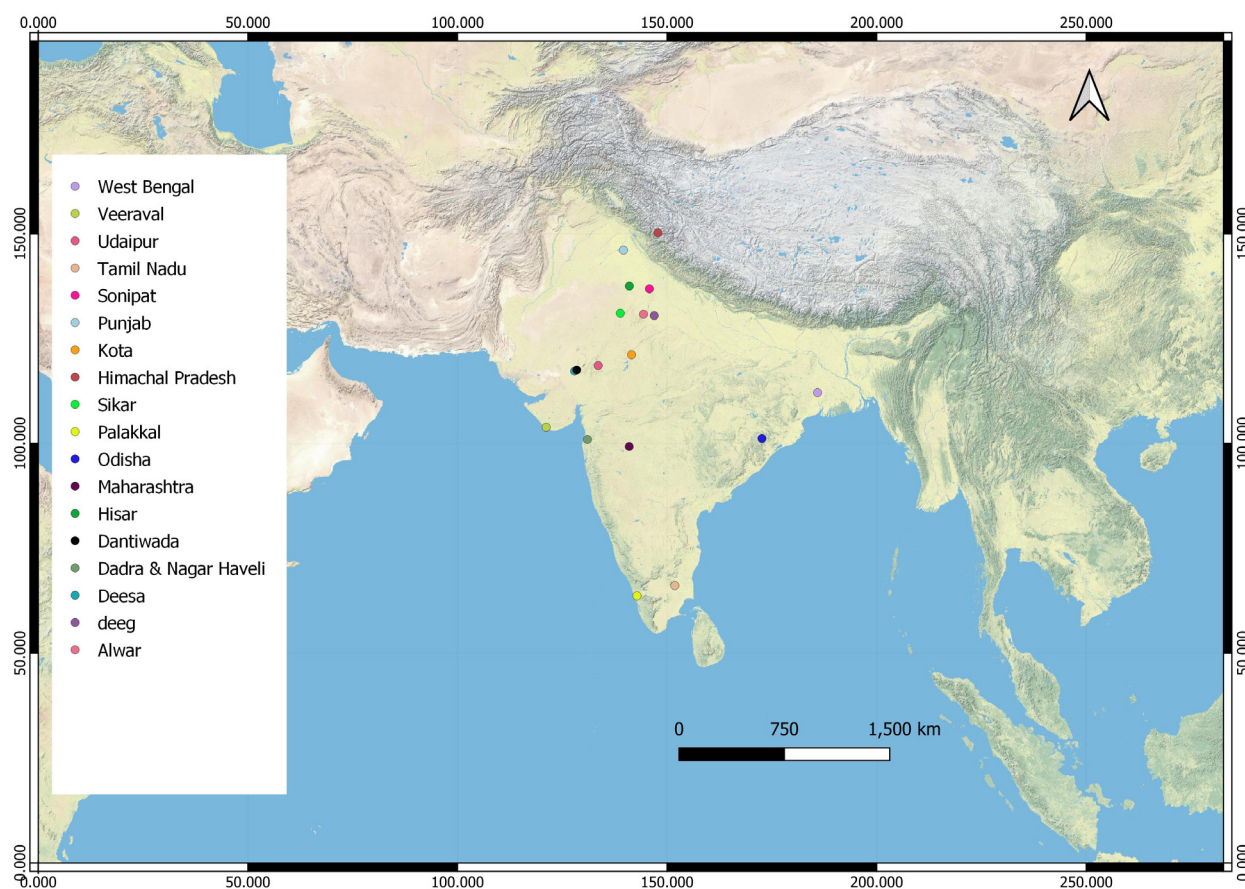


Figure 1. Distribution map of *Megachile vera* from India.

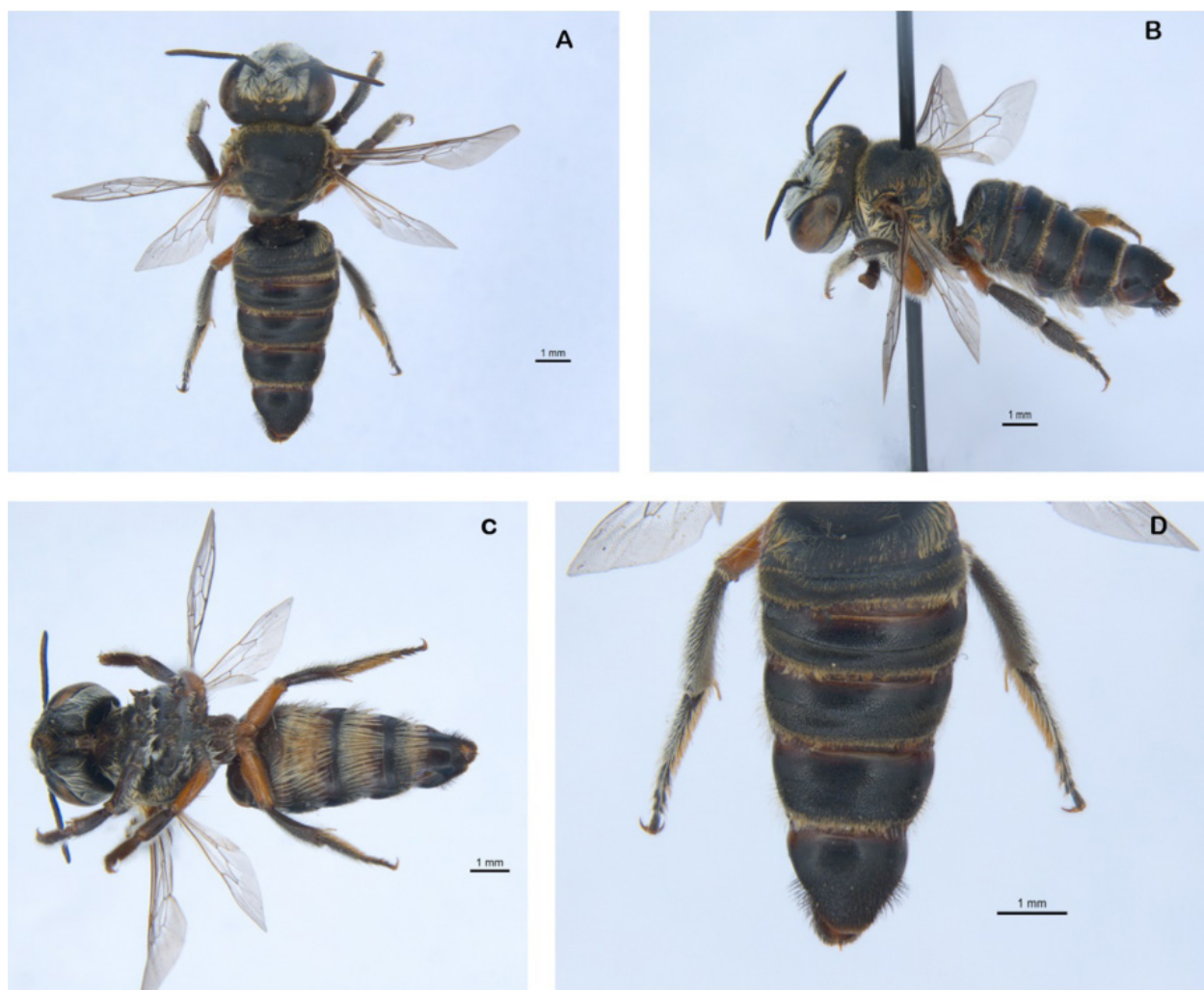


Image 2. *Megachile vera* Nurse, 1901: A—Habitus dorsal view | B—Habitus lateral view | C—Habitus ventral view showing parts of legs with dull orange colour | D—Abdomen showing slightly upturned apex. © Anju Sara Prakash.

apex; T1 covered with long yellowish white hairs; T2–T5 with yellowish-white fasciae; T6 with black hairs; T1–T5 laterally with long white hairs; T6 laterally with long black hairs; Sternum black except slightly brownish on the apical margins of S2–S5; scopal hairs on S2–S5 pale white; scopal hairs on S6 black; S6 finely punctate at base, coarsely towards apex; apical region with fringe of short black hairs.

Material examined: 1 female, 16.ii.2021, Palakkal, Thrissur (10.478735 °N, 76.21322 °E), White pan trap collection.

Remarks: This species resembles *Megachile femoratella* Cockerell, 1918 in having dull orange-coloured femora of legs. Unlike *M. vera*, *M. femoratella* doesn't have terminally tapering abdomen.

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