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Cover: A digital art of water birds of Noyyal River and its wetlands in Coimbatore District by Megha A. Kashyap.





Image 1. Ruddy Mongoose *Urva smithii* feeding on a pipistrelle bat in Nagarahole Tiger Reserve, Karnataka, India, 25 December 2022.

Gandhi National Park).

METHODS

We exhaustively searched all relevant information on the predation of bats by mongooses employing Google Scholar and Science Direct search engines. Predation was defined as the consumption of one organism (the prey) by another organism (the predator), in which the prey is alive when the predator first attacks it (Begon et al. 2005). Thus, we used only records that gave us details on capture and subsequent prey consumption. We did not account for studies where the prey was not successfully caught or when caught it was not consumed by the predator. The study followed the search process criteria of PRISMA 2020 updated guideline (Page et al. 2021). Geographical coordinates and elevation of the location were recorded using a Garmin etrex10 global positioning system (GPS) handheld unit.

Nagarahole Tiger Reserve is a part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve receiving about 1,000–1,540 mm annual rainfall with temperatures ranging 12–32 °C and elevation ranging 687–960 m with a total geographical area of the reserve is 843.96 km² located in the Kodagu and Mysore districts of Karnataka, India (Rashmitha et al. 2024). This protected area supports tropical moist deciduous forests (Habib et al. 2020).

The event

A Ruddy Mongoose was photographed by the first author at Sunkadakatte, Nagarahole Tiger Reserve (11.582 N, 76.127 E) on 25 December 2022 between 1200 and 1300 h at an elevation of 746 m. A solitary male Ruddy Mongoose ~30 m away from the first author was seen climbing an eight-foot dead *Terminalia anogeissiana* (locally known as ‘Dindiga Mara’) tree and inserted its pointed snout and one-fourth of its frontal body into tree hole to catch the pipistrelle individual. The bat species assessment was based on two factors, viz., size proportional to the mouth of the mongoose and the pelage colour of the body. The mongoose after catching the pipistrelle came out and foraged the individual for about 10 minutes (Image 1). Once consumed, the agile mongoose speedily climbed down the tree and vanished into a grassy bush nearby. An attempt to find and identify remains of prey species around the tree went in vain 15 minutes after the mongoose disappeared from the predation spot.

There have been several anecdotal observations of Ruddy Mongoose individuals (at least two) around the aforementioned site. In fact, the first author has often sighted two Ruddy Mongoose individuals around the same habitat and one feeding on a Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum* (Image 2) a couple of months post this event. To the best of our knowledge, scientific documentation of Ruddy Mongoose feeding on bats is perhaps the first of its kind. Interestingly, Mallick et al. (2021) have reported Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii*, attacking an Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus medius* colony and snatching away an individual from a colony in & around Ajodhya hill area of Purulia, West Bengal, India. In fact, pipistrelle bats are known to be predated by feral cats (Corbett et al. 2003), Black Rats (Pryde et al. 2005), Wolf Snake, Kestrels, Yellow Ants, and giant centipede (James 2005) but none by a mongoose so far. In conclusion, Ruddy Mongoose being strategic hunters could be consuming a variety of food items including bats in this vicinity which needs to be thoroughly investigated and documented. We herein strongly advocate an assessment of resource



Image 2. Ruddy Mongoose feeding on a Jungle Owlet in Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, Karnataka, India, 15 April 2023.

disposal and allocation and other similar environmental parameters for a superior comprehension of the habitats of this rarely documented forest meso-carnivore.

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