

# Small Indian mongoose

## *Herpestes auropunctatus*\*



### KEY FEATURES



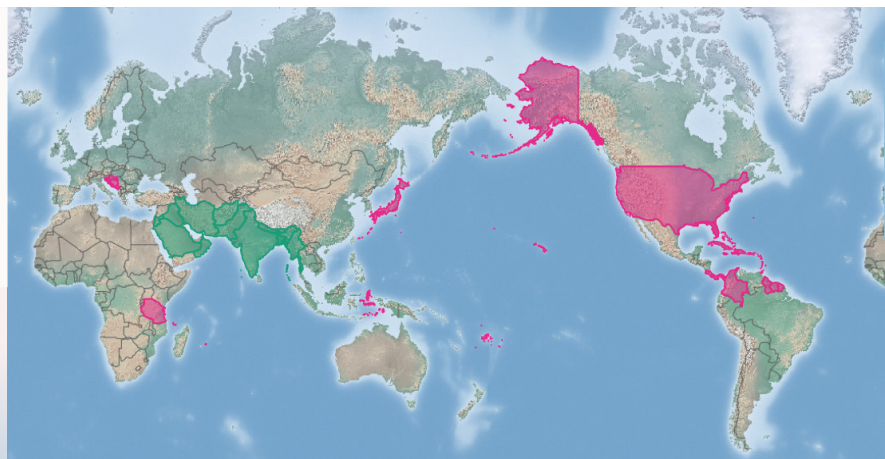
- Small, slender-bodied with short legs, short, rounded ears and an elongated snout (nose)
- The tail is muscular at the base and tapers gradually, ending in tufts of slightly longer fur
- Feet have five toes with long sharp non-retractile claws
- Fur is soft, pale to dark brown flecked with golden spots. Underside is paler than rest of body
- Eyes are amber/brown in adults and blue/green in young animals
- Females range in length from 50–58 cm. Males range from 54–67 cm
- Adult body mass ranges from 305 grams to just over 1 kg in large adult males. Mean mass is 434 grams
- Males have a wider head and more robust body
- Lives 3–4 years, breeds 2–3 times per year
- Varied diet, including smaller mammals, birds, turtles, lizards, snakes and frogs, insects and plant material, depending on what is available
- Prefers grassland and secondary growth over dense forest, and also found around peoples homes. Reported to prefer dry habitats.
- Needs a warm climate, so distribution could increase with climate change



### PATHWAYS

- Introduced
- Native
- Origin not recorded

- Shipping containers
- Biological control



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## IMPACTS



### Environment

Eats many native plants and animals, resulting in population declines. Has probably or certainly caused extinction of at least three species and for many other local extinction.



### Health

Can be infected with rabies and pass this disease to people (and to other animals), but transmission may be low. On Okinawa mongoose have been found to be infected with *Leptospira* and antibiotic-resistant strains of *Escherichia coli* bacteria



### Society and Culture

Not reported, but impacts on native animals will have flow-on cultural impacts if these species are of cultural importance.



### Economy

Not reported, but as it will eat small animals and eggs of birds, it could affect poultry industries and other small animal farming.



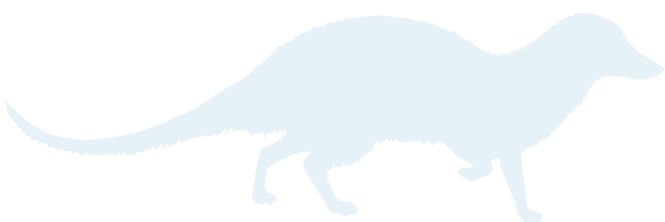
## DISTRIBUTION

### Native range

Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar

### Introduced range

Antigua, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Bosnia-Herzegovina, United States Virgin Islands, Croatia, Cuba, Fiji (Viti Levu and Vanua Levu), French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Hawai'i (Hawai'i, Maui, Moloka'i, Kauai and O'ahu), Hispaniola, Jamaica, Japan (Okinawa, Amami, Kyushu), Tanzania, Martinique, Montenegro, Nevis, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Martin, St. Vincent, Suriname, Trinidad.



\* *Herpestes fuscus* and other related mongoose species are also invasive. Introduced to several locations as a biological control of snakes and rodents. Also called *Mangusta auropunctata*, *Mangusta pallipes*, *Herpestes palustris*, *Herpestes auropunctatus*.

## SOURCES

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Text and map: *Herpestes auropunctatus* (small Indian mongoose) – CABI <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/80508>



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