

# *Herpestes ichneumon* (LINNAEUS, 1758)



D. Roth

## Egyptian mongoose

AL	-	LT	-
BG	Египетска мангуста	LU	Ichneumon
CZ	Ichneumon	LV	Египтес мангустс
DE	Ichneumon	MK	Египетски мунгос
DK	Faraorotte	MT	-
EE	Ihneumon	NL	Mangoeste
ES	Meloncillo	NO	Faraorotte
FI	Faaraomungo	PL	Mangusta egipska
FO	-	PT	Sacarrabos; Manguço
FR	Mangouste ichneumon	RO	-
GR	-	RU	Египетский мангуст
HR	Egipatski mungos	SE	Egyptisk mungo
HU	Egyiptomi mongúz	SI	Navadni mungo
IR	-	SK	Mungo
IS	Faraósmangi	TR	Firavun faresi
IT	Mangusta egiziana	YU	-

## Distribution

**World:** *Herpestes ichneumon* has mainly an African distribution, being present from the coast of the Mediterranean Sea to the Cape Region in South Africa, but avoiding the extreme deserts and the humid forests. It is also present in the Near East, from Sinai to the south of Turkey, and the Iberian peninsula.

**Europe:** southern Portugal and south-west Spain. At the beginning of the century it was also present in north-west Iberian Peninsula. On a zoogeographical basis the species should be considered as introduced in Europe, perhaps a long time ago.

## Geographic variation

The subspecies *Herpestes ichneumon widdringtonii* Gray, 1842 is the only one present in Europe. It is somewhat bigger and with stronger teeth than the African subspecies.

## Habitat

The species occupies Mediterranean maquis, with a clear preference for humid and riparian habitats. It avoids open areas and uses dense thickets and rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* warrens for breeding and resting. In Malaga province *Herpestes ichneumon* has been reported at about 1000 m. In southern Spain, adult mongooses use home ranges of about 3 km<sup>2</sup> and are diurnal. They are omnivorous, but very young rabbits, taken by digging nests, are an important food.

## Population status

The status of the population is unknown, but numbers and probably range have increased in the last 20 years, in Portugal as well as in Spain. In both countries abundance increases from north to south. In some areas of southern Spain densities reach 1.2 ind./km<sup>2</sup>. At present, *Herpestes ichneumon* is considered a pest by hunters, because of its presumed impact on small game species.

## International legal & conservation status

Bern Convention, Appendix III.

EU Habitats & Species Directive, Annex V.

## Other information

Probably the mongoose range in south-western Europe has undergone fluctuations related to major land-use changes: increased cereal production would reduce the suitable habitat, while set-aside and abandonment of agricultural areas would increase it. Also, the reduction of large predators such as Iberian lynx *Lynx pardinus* and some birds of prey could account for the recent expansion of the mongoose.



## Literature

- Borrvalho *et al.* (1996)  
Delibes (1982)  
Delibes & Palomares (1993)  
Palomares & Delibes (1993a,b)  
Palomares *et al.* (1996)

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