

got suspicious and went off without actually coming up to its kill. In both the above cases the tiger must have only received a slight wound.

HONNAMETTI ESTATE,

RALPH C. MORRIS.

ATTIKAN P.O.,

Via MYSORE,

June 7, 1928.

V.—MEASUREMENTS OF PANTHERS

Major Logan Home in his letter dated August 1927, asks for particulars of any large leopards. I enclose the details of a particularly large panther, shot by me in Nimar in April 1923. It was a large massive animal and I at first thought it must be a tiger as it had killed a large cow from the local herd. I was alone at the time so have no witness to corroborate the measurements.

Measurements taken with a steel tape

Length between pegs	...	...	...	...	7' 8"
Tail	...	...	...	...	2' 11"
Girth	...	...	...	...	2' 9"
Forearm	...	...	...	...	11"
Neck	...	...	...	...	1' 8"

The present length of the skin (which was salted and not pegged out) is 8' 4".

QUETTA,

J. R. STOCKLEY ROPER,

June 1928.

Lieut., R.A.

VI.—BREEDING HABITS OF THE COMMON MONGOOSE (*HERPESTES EDWARDSI*)

The following notes on the breeding of the common Indian Mongoose may be of interest.

In mid-1926 my daughter obtained a pair of young animals who must have been born about May 1926. The male was given to biting the servants' bare feet and died young, death being attributed to a party of chokras in the neighbourhood. The female, of an unusually timid and retiring disposition, continued to inhabit the bungalow but would not let any one but my daughter, who fed her, handle her.

In February 1927 she took to wandering out into the highways and hedges for about a week or ten days, and early in May she gave birth to a pair of young in the roof of the bungalow. I should

say that she can climb almost as well as a cat and has been seen to jump a vertical height upwards of 4' 2" with a ten-day old baby in her mouth. The animal herself is some 18"-20" long, small of her kind. This family gives us a probable period of gestation of at least sixty days.

Some ten days to a fortnight after the appearance of her nipples and sundry squeaks and scuffings in the roof had roused suspicion, she brought one down when she came for her food, a male which spat and tried to bite when picked up, but soon became amenable.

The mother to my surprise made no objection to her baby being handled by myself or my servants (my family had fled from the approaching South-west monsoon) but after a time having fed she came, calling, and the baby, whom we will call the 'First male', was released and after a thorough exploration of the bungalow, was taken back up into the roof.

The following day a female was brought down and much the same performance gone through. She was a good bit smaller than her brother and as she only lived about three weeks, dying of some stomach trouble, we need not bother to name her. The mother made a fuss calling if they were detained so they were let run loose and soon took to evading any attempts to handle them.

First male continued to run with his mother and to come to food until in September 1927, when he was about half grown, a second pair of babies were produced in the roof. Much the same performance about bringing them down, and I was surprised to see that the mother made no objection to First male joining the family party. Again the female died young leaving the mother with two sons First male and Second male.

In the end of October and early November the mother and First male were seen pairing on three or four different occasions, and at Christmas a third pair of babies was born out in the compound. We have never handled these but from later observation I am able to say that they were male and female, Third male and third female, period of gestation about sixty days again.

On April 1 and 4, 1928, I saw the mother pairing with First male, easily distinguished by his size from Second male. The act was repeated half a dozen or more times, in my view, at intervals of a few minutes on each occasion.

Now comes a puzzle as on April 28, she was seen, again by me, apparently pairing with Second male. Same repeated performance with no attempt at evasion on the part of the female, yet she must have been impregnated on April 1/4, as the fourth pair were produced on June 5, sixty-one days from April 4, and only thirty-eight from April 28. What is one to believe?

Now, in September 1928, the mother, third female and fourth pair, who are again male and female, come in to feed. First male has not been seen for some time though his presence in the roof has been suspected. Second male and Third male gave up coming to food about the middle of August though they probably inspect the bungalow when it is quiet in the afternoon, when they used to

come into my daughter's room for a game that didn't run to handling, just the usual look through my hind legs, jumps and combined family ball wrestle quite a tangle with about four in the ball. They are very intrigued by anything, an egg for preference, in a basin of water. The babies we were able to handle swam well and strong from the beginning though they did not appear to like it.

When the babies were very small the mother used to hide one and be seen convoying the other, the hidden one remaining silent and still until mother returned for it. Later both would run with her. They run close into her side stopping when she does and are very inconspicuous. The mother was seen to attack, furiously, a prowling cat four to six times her size. The cat didn't wait, and I've never seen one travel faster. No notice is taken of a terrier in the house; no familiarity, just friendly neutrality on both sides. They are regularly fed and I daresay there's lots of small game about, but, in a good hour be it said, they have not so far interfered with the chicken run which is easy of access.

Scorpions and such like small game are not uncommon in these parts but none have been seen in my bungalow these past two years.

It has been an interesting performance to watch, as I did not know that they bred more than once in a year though where I got that idea I cannot tell you.

CANNANORE,
September 11, 1928.

A. G. FRERE, I.A., F.Z.S.,
Lieutenant-Colonel.

[Writing to us further on the subject on November 14, Colonel Frere states as follows:—'The mother produced a fifth family on the night of October 28/29, 1928. No pairing had been seen. Her figure was commented upon a week previously and on 29th was seen to be reduced and nipples prominent. Beyond that, only scamperings in the roof, as she had not brought them down when I proceeded to camp on the 10th.'

These notes are of great interest as so little is known of the breeding habits of this exceedingly common animal. Blandford commenting on the breeding of the mongoose says that 'young are seen in the Spring' but it is obvious from Colonel Frere's experience that they may be seen at any time of the year. Eds.]

VII.—A STALWART PARIAH DOG

During my tour in April I got *khabber* one day of a tiger kill 5 miles away, a cow being the victim. On going to sit up I found it was obviously a leopard kill. It was so close to the village that I felt sure the leopard would come late if at all, so I went back to camp. Next morning news was brought that a mile from the previous kill one of my tied-up bullocks had been killed by the same leopard. I sat up till 1 a.m., but the leopard did not come though I heard him 'sawing' in the distance. Next morning there was no kill, but as I had nothing else to do, and this leopard appeared to be an exceptionally big one, and an absolute scourge to the villages,



Frere, A G. 1929. "Breeding Habits of the Common Mongoose (*Herpestes Edwardsi*).*" The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 33, 426–428.

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