

PEST ALERT

Small Indian Mongoose



(*Herpestes auropunctatus*)

(*Herpestes javanicus*)



The small Indian mongoose was first introduced in the 1880's to the Hawaiian Islands. It was brought to Hawaii in an attempt to control rats in sugarcane plantations.

Mongoose have long bodies, short legs and small rounded ears placed on the side of the head. Their tails average half to three-quarters their body length. Males are slightly larger than females.

The structure of the teeth and feet reflect the diet. The small Indian mongoose has well-developed carnassial teeth used to shear flesh. Their feet have four or five digits each tipped by long, non-retractile claws adapted for digging.

Although insects make up a large part of its diet, it is a serious enemy of native animals because it preys on ground-nesting birds and their eggs, such as seabirds and the *Nene*.

Small Indian mongooses are diurnal, active in daylight, and at night they withdraw into dens.

Females may become pregnant at nine months.