

## Note on the unusual feeding behavior of Wild Boar observed in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu, India

The Indian Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* is one of the most widely distributed mammals in the World, with its native range extending from western Europe to southeastern Asia (Massei & Genov 2004). Wild Boars are opportunistic omnivores, consuming food of both plant and animal origin. Their diet generally includes plants such as crops, fruits, nuts, roots, and green plants, supplemented with bird eggs, carrion, small rodents, insects, and worms. This note presents the unusual feeding behavior of a Wild Boar in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu, India.

On 30 March 2023, we recorded a pack of Dhole *Cuon alpinus* (n = 7) hunting a male Spotted Deer *Axis axis* in the Masinagudi area of Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. The pack of Dhole successfully captured the Spotted Deer and started eating it while it was still alive. An adult Wild Boar approached the Spotted Deer. Initially, the Wild Boar was driven away by the Dhole pack two to three times. However, the Wild Boar aggressively drove away the Dholes from the hunted Spotted Deer and surprisingly started feeding on the live Spotted Deer.

A similar observation was made in Royal Chitwan National Park, Nepal, where a large Wild Boar displaced an adult Leopard from its kill, a domestic buffalo calf, and partly consumed it (William Oliver pers. obs.). Park staff reported that this boar regularly

commandeered such kills, although no other individual pigs had been observed exhibiting this behavior. This observation indicates strange behavior for Wild Boars in nature.

Wild Boars are omnivores and can be predators that opportunistically consume carrion (Wilson & Wolkovich 2011). However, the relative proportion of scavenged versus preyed-upon vertebrate foods in Wild Boar diets is often unknown (Taylor & Hellgren 1997) because it is frequently impossible to determine whether an animal was killed or ingested as carrion (Wood & Roark 1980). Wild Boar has occasionally been reported to predate larger vertebrates, such as deer fawns and (tethered) goats (Hoogerwerf 1970), although such incidents may involve only a few individuals in the population. Pauwels (1980) noted similar behaviour when referring to the predation of sea turtle nests by Wild Boars in Ujung Kulon. Wild Boars are also predators of ground-nesting birds (Giménez-Anaya et al. 2008) and amphibians (Carretero & Rosell 1999). Even though this is an opportunistic observation, considering its novelty, it should be scientifically documented.

### References

Carretero, M.A. & C. Rosell (1999). *Salamandra salamandra* (fire salamander) predation. *Herpetological Review* 30(3): 161.

**Giménez-Anaya, A., J. Herrero, C. Rosell, S. Couto & A. García-Serrano (2008).** Food habits of wild boars *Sus scrofa* in a Mediterranean coastal wetland. *Wetlands* 28: 197–203.

**Hoogerwerf, A. (1970).** *Ujung Kulon. The Land of the Last Javan Rhinoceros*. Leiden, E.J. Brill, Netherlands, 512 pp.

**Massei, G. & P.V. Genov (2004).** The environmental impact of wild boar. *Galemys* 16(1): 135–145.

**Pauwels, W. (1980).** Study of *Sus scrofa vittatus*, its ecology and behaviour in Ujung Kulon Nature Reserve, Java, Indonesia. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Basel, Switzerland.

**Taylor, R.B. & E.C. Hellgren (1997).** Diet of feral hogs in the western south Texas Plains. *The Southwestern Naturalist* 42(1): 33–39.

**Wilson, E.E. & E.M. Wolkovich (2011).** Scavenging: how carnivores and carrion structure communities. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 26(3): 129–135.

**Arockianathan Samson<sup>1</sup>, Natarajan Balamurali<sup>2</sup>, Jabamalainathan Leona Princy<sup>3</sup>, Jasudass Beulahbah<sup>4</sup>, Jeyasubashini Regupathikannan<sup>5</sup>, Phillmon Smart Edward<sup>6</sup> & Nizamudheen Moinudheen<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre, Bombay Natural History Society, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, 462007, India.

<sup>2</sup>Masinagudi, The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu 643223, India

<sup>3&4</sup> Department of Zoology and Wildlife Biology, Government Arts College, Udthagamandalam-The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu 643002, India.

<sup>5&6</sup> Department of Environmental Sciences, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641046, India.

<sup>7</sup>Valmiki Library, Defence Service Staff College, Wellington, Coonoor, Tamil Nadu 643223, India.

Email: <sup>1</sup>kingvulture1786@gmail.com (corresponding author)

**Citation:** Samson, A., N. Balamurali, J.L. Princy, J. Beulahbah, J. Regupathikannan, P.S. Edward & N. Moinudheen (2024). Note on the unusual feeding behavior of Wild Boar observed in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu, India. *Mammal Tales* #50, In: *Zoo's Print* 39(7): 23–24.