

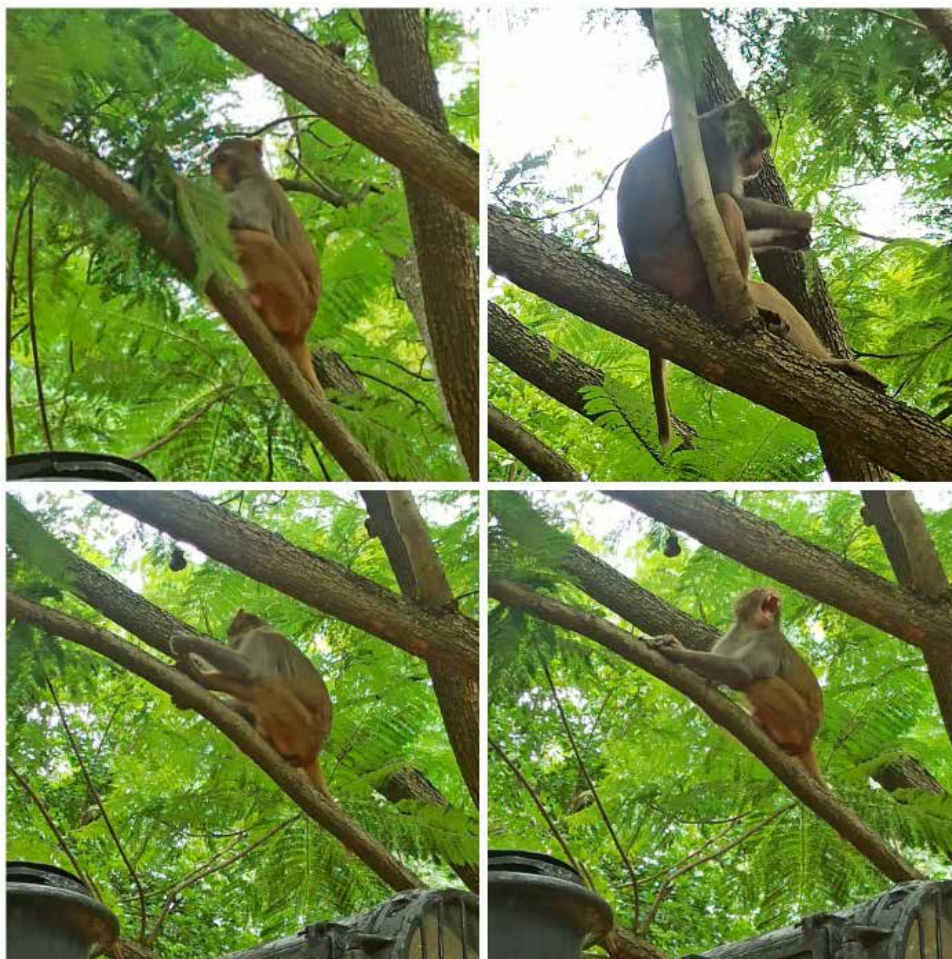
## Urban record of the Rhesus Macaque in Mysuru, Karnataka

Rhesus Macaques *Macaca mulatta* and Bonnet Macaques *Macaca radiata* are among the most common macaque species in India (Fooden 1981, 2000).

The Rhesus Macaque has a wide geographical range extending across Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, China, Burma, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam (Fooden 2000).

Within India, Rhesus Macaques occupy northern and central India, with notable absences in northern Kashmir, the western Himalaya, the Great Indian Desert, and parts of west-central India (Fooden 1989, 2000). In contrast, Bonnet Macaques are endemic to southern India (Fooden 1981).

The subspecies *M. radiata radiata* inhabits areas north of the Kambam valley in the southern Western Ghats, while *M. r. diluta* is restricted to regions south of the Kambam valley (Fooden 1981).



Adult *Macaca mulatta* observed at the Railway Museum, Mysuru, Karnataka.  
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**Observation** On 16 October 2024 at 1355 h, the first author observed a single adult Rhesus Macaque perched approximately 15 m high in a Copperpod tree *Peltophorum pterocarpum* within Mysuru Railway Museum premises (12.3161°N, 76.6430°E), Mysuru City. He observed the individual for approximately five minutes from an estimated ground distance of 20–25 m without optical aids. Photographs were taken using a handheld digital camera, and GPS coordinates were recorded at the site. The macaque exhibited diagnostic features

consistent with Rhesus Macaque, including brownish-grey dorsal pelage with lighter ventrum, pink ischial callosities, a relatively short tail (visibly shorter than head-body length), and facial morphology lacked the pronounced crown hair whorl typical of bonnet macaque. Its body size and facial proportions were consistent with an adult individual. No other macaques were observed nearby.

The combination of short tail length, pelage characteristics, and facial morphology distinguishes the individual from the Bonnet Macaques and reduces the likelihood of misidentification. This observation confirms the presence of the species at this location in Mysuru and contributes to earlier isolated records from the region.

The individual appeared habituated to human presence despite ongoing museum activities. After approximately five minutes, it moved higher into the canopy and was subsequently lost from view.

The present observation adds to previously documented isolated sightings of Rhesus Macaque in Karnataka. Earlier reports include sightings from Kalaburagi District (formerly Gulbarga) (Belur & Gadadhar 2014) as well as newspaper reports from Nagarahole Tiger Reserve and Mysuru City (Star of Mysore 2022, 2024). Although a species geographical range is dynamic, this record from southern Karnataka, approximately 600 km away from the historically recognized boundary separating Rhesus and Bonnet Macaques (Koyama & Shekar 1981) warrants for proper documentation and further investigation.

We hypothesize two possible, non-exclusive mechanisms for these isolated sightings. First, these sightings could be a result of deliberate anthropogenic translocation, a practice documented in human-wildlife negative interaction scenarios (Singh & Rao 2004). Further systematic observations on the frequency, locations of such sightings and their distance from human-primate negative interaction locations to validate this mechanism. Rhesus Macaque is listed under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Any deliberate translocation, release, or transport of the species without authorization constitutes a violation of wildlife protection law and warrants investigation by authorities.

Second, presence of species outside their geographical range could also be facilitated by accidental transport via rail or road network. Several previous observation sites in Karnataka (Belur & Gadadhar 2014; this observation) have been reported near major transport corridors. However, given the limited number of records, this may reflect observer bias toward accessible locations. Further observation is required to establish the evidence of transport-mediated dispersal.

Should repeated observations confirm population establishment, currently undemonstrated, competition with the endemic Bonnet Macaque could emerge as a conservation concern (Kumar et al. 2011). At present, this remains speculative. Systematic monitoring will be crucial to detect any evidence of population persistence and to guide management interventions, if needed.

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