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Observations of interspecific grooming in Tufted grey langurs (*Semnopithecus priam priam*)

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ABSTRACT

In the context of forests, this article discusses interspecific grooming between Bonnet macaques (*Macaca radiata diluta*) and Tufted grey langurs (*Semnopithecus priam priam* and *S. Johnii*).

Keywords: Tufted grey langur, Bonnet macaque, Nilgiri langur, Interspecific grooming

1. INTRODUCTION

For some Old-World monkeys, polyspecific association, or mixed troops of two or more species, have been documented (Struhsaker, 1981). Interspecific social interactions are uncommon in mixed troop Old World monkeys, but they might include aggression, grooming, play, and copulation (Cords, 1987). Grooming Matheson and Bernstein, (2000) and alliance formation are the most typical types of collaboration in social animals, notably primates. In most primate communities, grooming is the most common observable habit, demonstrating the closeness among group members (Ashan, 1994). Grooming has been shown to be effective in reducing stress between group members Terry, (1970), developing social relationships Coelho et al., (1983), and cleaning fur (Hladik, 1975; Freeland, 1976).

Grooming is a type of social relationship in which group members form a social tie. Grooming is also regarded an act of hygienic upkeep by self-grooming, referred to as auto grooming, whereas grooming shared with other members of the group or on parts inaccessible to the groomee is referred to as allogrooming or social grooming (Matheson and Bernstein, 2000; Boccia et al., 1989; Borries, 1992). *S. priam priam* has been categorised as Near Threatened in IUCN Red List. Distribution: TGL South and South East India (State of Andhrapradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu), highly fragmented distribution from the river Krishna in the Andhrapradesh to Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu (Roos et al., 2014).

2. METHODS

The current study was carried out at Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR), located at the southern end of the Western Ghats (77°34 '28' E 8° 21 '27' N) and spread over 895.39 km² across the political boundaries of the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu 27 'N (Figure 1). The total area of the reserve is 895.39 km². The elevation

ranges from 100 m to 1866 m and the characteristics of vegetation vary from dry thorn scrub to montane wet evergreen forest and grassland at higher altitudes. The topography is mountainous. The average annual precipitation along the crest of Ghats varies between 2000 to 5000 mm and in the foothills of the Ghats from 1200 to 2000 mm. The minimum and maximum temperatures are 24 °C and 44 °C. In the perennial river known as the Tamiraparani, the river Peyar, Karaiyar, Kavuthalaiyar, Servalar, Chittar, Pambar and their drainage branches.

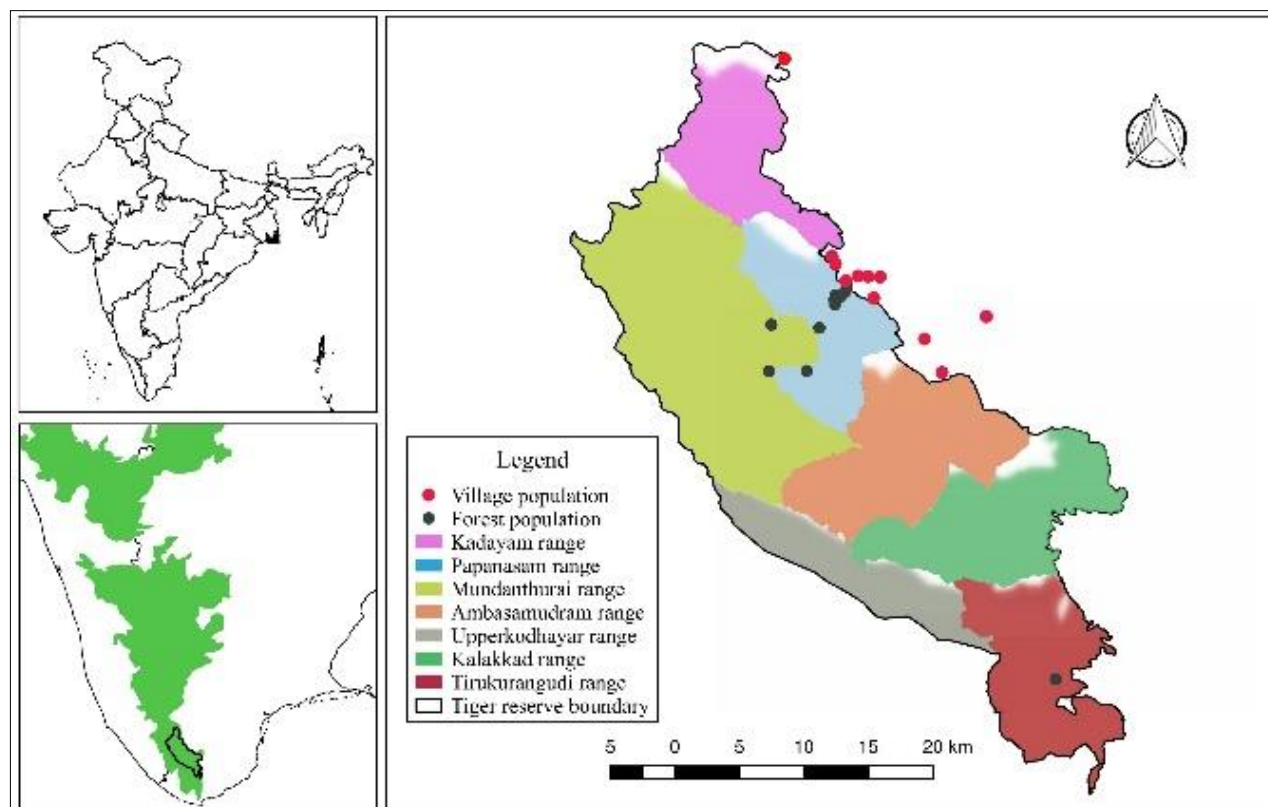


Figure 1 Map of the Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR)

The five primates found in the KMTR are also the Slender Loris (*Loris tardigradus*), Lion-tailed (*Macaca Silenus*), Bonnet macaque (*Macaca radiata*), Nilgiri langur (*Semnopithecus johnii*) and Tufted grey langur (*Semnopithecus priam priam*). Tigers (*Panthera tigris*), leopards (*Panthera pardus*) and Asian wild dogs are among the predatory species (*Cuon alpinus*). Data was collected opportunistically while conducting as a part of the field study on status and behavioural ecology of *Semnopithecus priam priam* at KMTR. TGL and other closely and distantly related primate species grooming behaviour were recorded whenever both species observed together in the study area.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The majority of research on grooming behaviour and its benefits to animals has focused on non-colobine monkeys. However, there are just a few research on colobine grooming behaviour, including *Macaca radiata radiata diluta*, *Semnopithecus priam priam* and *Semnopithecus johnii*. The observations were made as part of a study of Tufted grey langur population structure and distribution. *Interspecific* grooming between Bonnet macaque *Macaca radiata diluta* and Tufted grey langur *Semnopithecus priam priam*, *S. Johnii*, and *S. priam priam* in the forests setting is described in this work. Tufted grey langur (*S. priam priam*) restricted to dry tracts and riparian forests and forest fringes villages. Whereas *S. Johnii* restricted to riparian forests to migrate down but restricted to evergreen forests. Despite during behavioral studies of TGL, I found *S. johnii* in the village adjacent to Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR). This is first record in this area. The observations were made as part of a study of TGL population structure and distribution (Figure 2 & 3).



Figure 2 An adult female TGL being groomed by an adult male *Nilgiri langur* (*S. jhonii*)



Figure 3 An adult female Bonnet macaque (*Macaca radiata diluta*) grooms an adult male TGL.

Allogrooming was observed in Bonnet macaque *M. radiata radiata diluta*, sub species of Tufted grey langur mixed and pure population of TGL. Hence, the study troops are genetically mixed, it becomes important to know, whether they show any mixed behaviour as TGL mostly use the ground, while Nilgiri langurs are purely arboreal (Poirier, 1970). We were also observed dark-colored, dark grey colored in the present study troops both in the forest and villages adjacent to the KMTR. Further, study should be conducted on whether forests and village populations of TGL have any mixed behavior, more arboreal, or they more ground users, or there were few that were dark colored that shows difference like they spend more time on the trees compared to the light colored.

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Conflicts of interests:

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interests.

Funding:

The study has not received any external funding.

Ethical approval & declaration

In this article, as per the animal regulations in Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR), Tamil Nadu Forest Department (TNFD), the authors declared & observed the interspecific grooming between Bonnet macaques (*Macaca radiata diluta*) and Tufted grey langurs (*Semnopithecus priam priam* and *S. Johnii*). The Animal ethical guidelines are followed in the study for species observation, identification & experimentation.

Data and materials availability

All data associated with this study are present in the paper.

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