Chapter 2

CLASSIFICATION AND GENERAL FEATURES OF THE ANIMAL

Class: Mammalia.
Subclass: Theria.
Infraclass: Eutheria (Placentalia)
Coht: Ferungulata.
Superorder: Ferae.
Order: Carnivora.
Suborder: Fissipeda.
Superfamily: Feloidea.
Family: Viverridae.
Genus: Herpestes.
Species: javanicus.
Subspecies: auropunctatus.

Locality:
Nepal and North India.

Distribution:
North India from Kashmir to Bhutan, Assam, Manipur and Bengal, south of Ganges as far in south as Chilka lake in Orrisa.

This animal is light to dark brown with minute ochreous speckling. The contour hair are 16-20 mm in length while those of tail are 32-42 mm in length. Contour hair are buffy yellow
and blackish with the wool ocherous at the summit and blackish brown at the base. The colour of the legs is like that of the body. The paws, however, are little paler and unspeckled; underside is drabby. Hair of the abdomen are brown at the base with some dark speckling. The tail of the animal is a little greyer than the body. The total length of the animal from snout to the tip of the tail is 41-52 cm of which the tail is 20-23 cm. In winter the animal has a darker coat than in summer.

It is not an uncommon site to notice this animal crossing the busy roads, during the day time, in and around Chandigarh. It feeds on insects, small rodents, eggs and young ones of birds and reptiles.

Capturing of the animal is indeed a very difficult job. There are, however, certain people in this area who have acquired proficiency in capturing the animal even without a cage. The author's attempts to capture the animal with an improvised rat cage did not succeed. As such the investigator had to procure the animals from other sources.