

Location and Group Specific Differences in Human-Macaque Interactions in Singapore: Implications for Conflict Management

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Abstract : The changes in Singapore's land use, natural preference of long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*) to live in forest edges and their adaptability has led to interface between humans and macaques. Studies have shown that two-third of human-macaque interactions in Singapore were related to human food. We aimed to assess differences among macaques groups in their dependence on human food and interaction with humans as indicators of the level of interface. Field observations using instantaneous scan sampling and all occurrence ad-lib sampling were carried out for 23 macaque groups over 28 days recording 71.5 hours of observations. Data on macaque behaviour, demography, frequency, and nature of human-macaque interactions were collected. None of the groups were found to completely rely on human food source. Of the 23 groups, 40% of them were directly or indirectly provisioned by humans. One-third of the groups observed engaged in some form of interactions with the humans. Three groups that were directly fed by humans contributed to 83% of the total human-macaque interactions observed during the study. Our study indicated that interactions between humans and macaques exist in specific groups and in those fed by humans regularly. Although feeding monkeys is illegal in Singapore, such incidents seem to persist in specific locations. We emphasize the importance of group and location-specific assessment of the existing human-wildlife interactions. Conflict management strategies developed should be location specific to address the cause of interactions.

Keywords : primates, Southeast Asia, wildlife management, Singapore

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