

The Giant Praying Mantis in the Human Settlement of the Ariviyal Nagar, Northern Province, Sri Lanka

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The giant praying mantis is a general term used to describe several species of large praying mantises found in different parts of the world. Giant praying mantises are fascinating creatures that belong to the order Mantodea, which contains over 2,400 species worldwide. This case study is based on the behavior and adaptation of the giant praying mantis in the human settlement of the Iranamadu, Northern province, Sri Lanka, conducted from June 2023 to March 2024. The selected study area was observed through visual encounters and the opportunistic observations and the photographs captured using a Redmi Note 11E mobile phone. The chosen human settlement was observed at random intervals on random days during the study period. There were 12 individuals recorded in the study period categorized as two species; *Hierodula unimaculata* (Olivier, 1792) and *Mantis religiosa* (Linnaeus, 1758). All of those individuals were recorded from 17.30 h to 04.00 h. During this study, light bulbs were used to trap the insects to prey on them. They were not attracted to light bulbs and only feed on the species belong to the order Coleoptera. There were no individuals found in the months of December and January with the end of the north-east monsoon. Furthermore, the modified ambush behavior was commonly observed during the study period, where predators would choose a fixed location and wait for a few minutes to several hours to fulfill their feeding requirements. They frequently polished their pair of antennae and the pair of grasping legs before and after each meal.

Keywords: Giant praying mantis, Behaviour, Human settlement, Northern province