

NEXT CONTINENT

TRIP REPORT

WILD VIETNAM:

RARE PRIMATES & MAMMALS

2-WEEK EXPEDITION 2026

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Welcome to Next Continent



Next Continent is a proudly Vietnamese ecotourism company based in **Đà Nẵng**, Vietnam. Specialising in premier wildlife tours, we create exceptional nature and wildlife adventures designed with a modern, ethical, and conservation-focused approach, led by highly-trained professional guides.

With over 100 carefully curated itineraries, we offer a wide range of experiences including mammalwatching & primate tours, birding, herping, butterflies, orchids, photography experiences and other natural history trips.

Running tours year-round with our nation-wide team keeps us closely connected to the region's wildlife and communities, allowing us to deliver rich, authentic nature experiences.

For **mammalwatching**, we are committed to promoting Vietnam's reputation as a rewarding destination for serious mammalwatchers and wildlife photographers. Our tours are designed to target some of Indochina's rarest and least understood species, from small mammals and bats to endemic primates, carnivores, squirrels, large mammals, pangolins and more. We are committed to responsible travel that supports conservation and local communities and are best known for creating specialist, customised trips tailored to each guest.

Tour At A Glance:

This report covers our annual **Wild Vietnam: Rare Primates & Mammals Tour**, a 14-day specialist expedition focused entirely on mammalwatching across Vietnam. Only in its second year, the tour saw a major leap in success, growing from 38 species recorded in 2024 to an exceptional 65 species in 2025. As a true measure of encounter quality, one guest photographed over 50 of these species, a remarkable result.

Travelling from the southern lowland forests to the limestone karsts of the north, we explored a wide range of key habitats in search of Vietnam's most sought-after mammals. The tour targeted a broad diversity of species, balancing iconic endemics such as primates with a strong focus on bats, small mammals, elusive forest specialists and carnivores.

This was a typically "hardcore" trip, with early starts, long field hours, and extensive night work using spotlighting and thermal equipment. Access to specialist conservation sites, along with close partnerships with national parks, played a key role in maximising both encounters and species diversity.

Over the course of the expedition, we visited multiple major national parks and lesser-known sites, achieving outstanding results with high diversity and numerous standout sightings. Backed by our nationwide team and real-time updates from across Vietnam, the tour once again demonstrated why it remains one of the most comprehensive and productive mammalwatching experiences currently available in the region.

How To Use This Report

This trip report broadly follows a day-by-day, diary-style account of what we saw and experienced. The focus is primarily on mammals, with other notable wildlife and other biodiversity mentioned where relevant. Full species lists for birds, herps, butterflies, and other general taxa are provided at the end of the report.

This report is intended to present an honest reflection of our experience in the field, from brief but rewarding sightings to exceptional encounters with some of Vietnam's rarest mammals. We recognise how difficult it can be to plan a trip without a clear understanding of what is realistically possible, particularly when targeting elusive species. As such, this report aims to help set expectations and provide a practical reference for those planning a similar journey with Next Continent.

Species are referred to using common and scientific names, generally following the taxonomy adopted by **mammalwatching.com**. In some cases, alternative taxonomy may be used based on regional authorities or relevant literature. Sightings refer to visually confirmed records unless otherwise stated; other detections (e.g. audio, thermal-only, or field marks) are noted where relevant. Bats recorded solely via spectrogram are listed in the appendix and are not included in the overall tour species total.

All photos are contributed by tour participants and members of the Next Continent team (and credited at the end of the report). Like every tour, not all species were photographed; however photographic records are indicated clearly in the summary tables at the end, and of course, throughout this report.

Results reflect intensive field effort, strong team coordination, and extensive guide planning across both day and night surveys throughout the tour.

For those want to jump ahead to a comprehensive overview of mammals recorded on the tour, a full summary (and other details) can be found at the conclusion of this report **(page 94)**.

For conservation reasons, some locations and specific details have been intentionally generalised to protect vulnerable species, sensitive sites, and our local partners.

Next Continent operates in full compliance with local laws and regulations, working closely with conservation organisations, park authorities, and local government, and adhering strictly to ethical wildlife watching standards.



Common Giant Flying Squirrel
(Petaurista philippensis)



WHERE TO FIND US:

To learn more about **Next Continent**, chat with our team, begin planning your next mammalwatching expedition, or learn more about wildlife watching in Vietnam and Indochina, get in touch with us anytime using the contact method that works best for you.

Our team is here to help and welcome you on your next big adventure!

CONTACT US!

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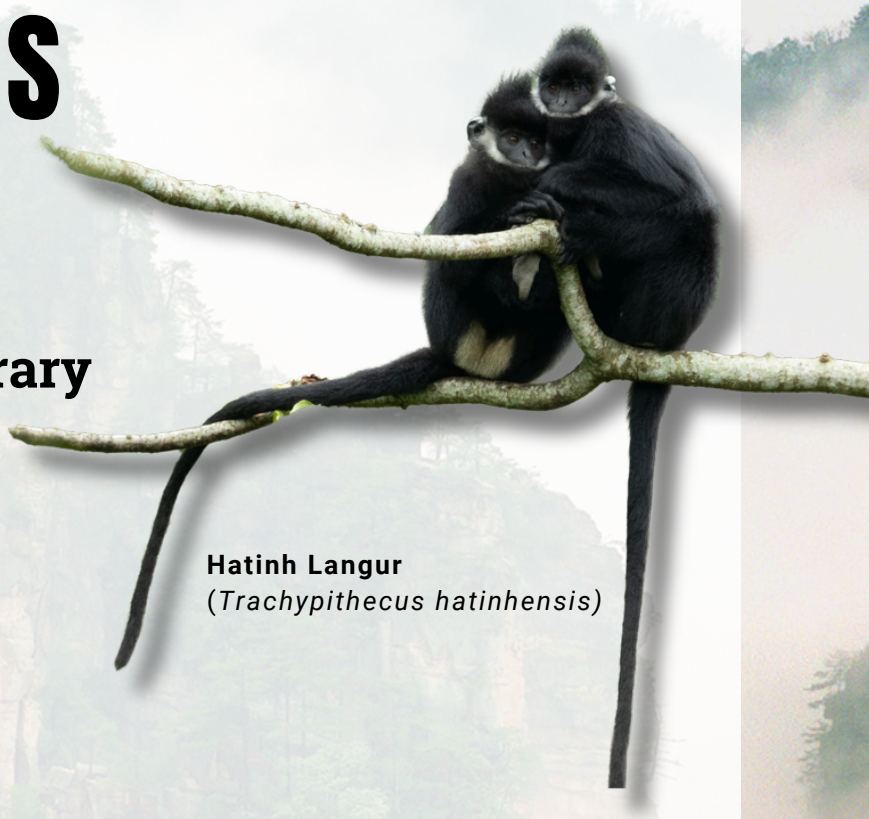


Hatinh Langur
(*Trachypithecus hatinhensis*)

NEXT CONTINENT
WILDLIFE, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND NATURAL HISTORY TOURS

ITINERARY

Day 0: Arrive in Ho Chi Minh City (TP. Hồ Chí Minh)

Days 1–3: Cát Tiên National Park

Day 4: Cát Tiên → Ho Chi Minh City → Đà Nẵng → Tam Kỳ

Day 5: Tam Mỹ → Đà Nẵng

Day 6: Sơn Trà → Bạch Mã National Park

Day 7: Bạch Mã National Park

Day 8: Bạch Mã → Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park

Days 9–10: Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park → Đồng Lê → Vinh

Days 11–12: Cúc Phương National Park

Day 13: Cúc Phương → Vân Long Nature Reserve

Day 14: Vân Long → Hà Nội → End of Tour





PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

This year, we did not offer a formal pre-tour option. However, two participants arranged their own additional experiences prior to the main tour.

One guest travelled with us through the Mekong Delta, targeting one of Vietnam's most spectacular primates, the **Indochinese Silvered Langur (Trachypithecus germaini)**. The second participant (also a dedicated birder) visited the **Đà Lạt Plateau** and recorded the full suite of regional endemics, including the standout **Orange-breasted Laughingthrush**, **Collared Laughingthrush**, **Dalat Bush Warbler**, and **Dalat Red Crossbill**, among many others.

A number of mammals were also recorded in **Đà Lạt**, including **Asian Red-cheeked Squirrel (Dremomys rufigenis)**, **Southern Pygmy Slow Loris (Xanthonycticebus pygmaeus)**, and **Northern Smooth-tailed Treeshrew (Dendrogale murina)**. Bats recorded by spectrogram only included **Malayan Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus malayanus)**, **Himalayan Whiskered Bat (Myotis siligorensis)**, **Great Evening Bat (Ia io)**, and **Chinese Water Myotis (Myotis laniger).**



Indochinese Silver Langur
(*Trachypithecus germaini)*

2027



Lyle's Flying Fox
(Pteropus lylei)

In 2027, we will be offering both pre- and post-tour extensions. The pre-tour will be a specialist Mekong Delta extension for participants, targeting key species such as the **Indochinese Silvered Langur**, **Hairy-nosed Otter**, **Irrawaddy Dolphin**, **Lyle's Flying Fox**, **Large Flying Fox**, **Asian Small-clawed Otter**, and more.

The post-tour will follow our popular **4D3N Northern White-cheeked Gibbon Tour**, giving participants the opportunity to observe up to four species of gibbon when combined with the main tour itinerary . Further details can be found on our website.

TOUR REPORT

Day 0:

On Sunday, our mammalwatching group assembled in **Hồ Chí Minh City**, ready to begin the tour. Most participants had already been in Vietnam for several days (as outlined in the pre-tour summaries), while others arrived on the day and made their way to our accommodation in the city. Our group consisted of six participants (two couples and two solo travellers) and was led by one of our specialist mammal, bird and wildlife guides **Thanh Phan**.

Although technically a "Day 0", we were keen to make use of the time. The plan was to meet at 6:30pm for our welcome dinner, but given that this was our most serious mammalwatching itinerary of the year, we opted to kick things off early with some optional pre-dinner urban mammalwatching.

The thinking was simple: while the itinerary is designed to give multiple opportunities for key target species, getting the easier and more accessible mammals early allows us to focus our core field time on the more difficult and highly sought-after species later. This approach proved highly effective throughout the tour, and it was great to have a group fully aligned with this mindset from the outset (something that is often underrated, but invaluable on a serious wildlife-focused expedition!).

Unsurprisingly, when we floated the idea via email in the days leading up to the tour, the response was unanimous, **the mammalwatchers wanted to go mammalwatching!**

We met in the lobby at around 4:30pm and after quick introductions, handshakes, and a few good stories (*"...where did you get your Clouded Leopard?"*), we grabbed cameras, binoculars, a red-light torch, and an Echometer Touch, and set off across town.

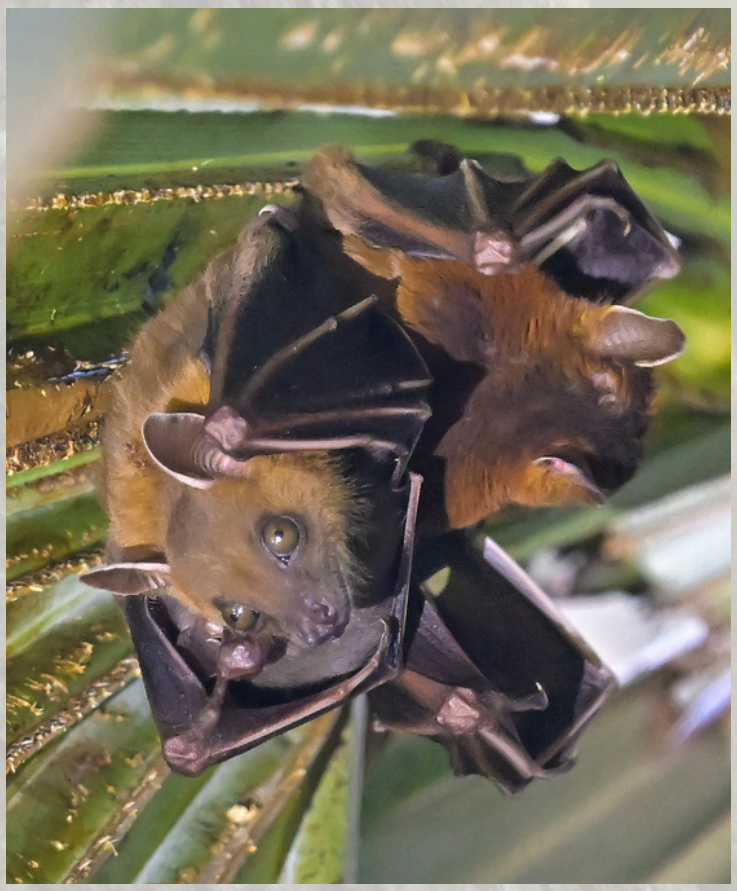
Anyone who has been to **Hồ Chí Minh City** will know it is Vietnam's largest (and easily its most chaotic!) city. For some in the group, it was a bit of an education in roadcrossing and sidewalk navigation, but we got there in the end.

Scattered throughout this sprawling metropolis are a number of urban parks, many of which support a surprising diversity of mammals well adapted to city life. For our first outing, the key targets were Javan Pipistrelle, Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat, and a handful of the common urban squirrel species.

On the way, we picked up our first birds of the trip, including good numbers of **House Swift** gathering at a well-known roost (flying into air vents along the side of a shopping centre) as well as **Red-breasted Parakeet** and **Coppersmith Barbet**.

If there was any doubt about dedication, our tour leader Thanh had spent much of the day checking trees, hollows, and palm fronds for roosting bats. The effort paid off, as we had barely stepped into the first park before he led us straight to our first group of **Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat (Cynopterus sphinx)**.

A useful tip for those visiting Southeast Asia: Cynopterus species often roost in broad palm leaves, where they chew along the edges to create a partially collapsed, tent-like shelter for daytime protection. At this site, we found a solitary individual, along with two small groups of two bats each. Males are often found roosting slightly apart from females, which can sometimes form tight harem groups.



Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat
(*Cynopterus sphinx*)

Next, we picked up our very first **Pallas's Squirrel (Callosciurus erythraeus)**, bounding between two large dipterocarp trees before running up into the higher branches, giving everyone their first views of the species. Soon after, we had much better looks and photos of a cooperative individual as it foraged across the lawn not 5 metres in front of us. As it shot back up a tree, we noticed movement on the trunk, adding our first herp of the trip, a **Vietnamese Blue Crested Lizard**.

At the next stand of trees, we found three more groups of **Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat**, with a few individuals offering even better views.

While scanning the area, we spotted our first (and remarkably only) **Brown Rat (Rattus norvegicus)** of the trip. Despite being one of the world's most widespread species, it was still a lifer tick for some in our group. Our main target here had been Oriental House Rat, but a rat is a rat and a tick is a tick!

Next, we tracked down a pair of **Cambodian Striped Squirrel (Tamiops rodolphii)** chasing each other through the garden trees, at times dashing across the lawn and leaping around the roots of an old fig. Everyone enjoyed excellent views and photos.

While we were photographing the squirrels, Thanh picked up our main target for the evening, **Javan Pipistrelle (Pipistrellus javanicus)**. This is the most common pipistrelle in **Hồ Chí Minh City** and likely the most abundant bat species across the urban landscape, roosting in buildings, roof tiles, tree hollows, and other small cavities. It is also almost always the earliest microbat species to emerge, coming out a good 45 mins before dark.



Pallas's Squirrel
(Callosciurus erythraeus)

Identifying bats in flight is typically very difficult, and not something we typically attempt. However, under good conditions we can pair visual observations with live spectrogram readings using devices like the Echometer Touch (Wildlife Acoustics). Equipped with this, it took less than a minute to confirm that all of the small bats flitting over the park lawns were indeed our target species.

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We spent the next 20 minutes watching and even photographing the pipistrelles, while continuing to search for other species. In the fading light, we picked up our third squirrel, a very vocal **Indochinese Ground Squirrel (Menetes berdmorei)**, another target secured.



Brown Rat
(Rattus norvegicus)



Javan Pipistrelle
(Pipistrellus javanicus)

Before wrapping up, we searched for a few additional species, including Oriental House Rat and Finlayson's Squirrel. A brief glimpse of what appeared to be another variably-marked **Pallas's Squirrel** gave us hope, but it wasn't to be.

On the way out, we passed an unexpected Jedi lightsaber duel (yes, we kid you not!), and added our second herp of the trip, **Flat-tailed House Gecko**, as well as a few interesting birds such as **Two-barred Warbler**, **Large-billed Crow**, and **Swinhoe's White-eye**.

Our first hour had been a real success and the whole group was in a great mood, ready for a generous welcoming spread of southern Vietnamese cuisine for dinner, a fitting way to officially begin the tour, and more importantly, to celebrate an outstanding start with six mammal species already recorded (all on Day 0!).



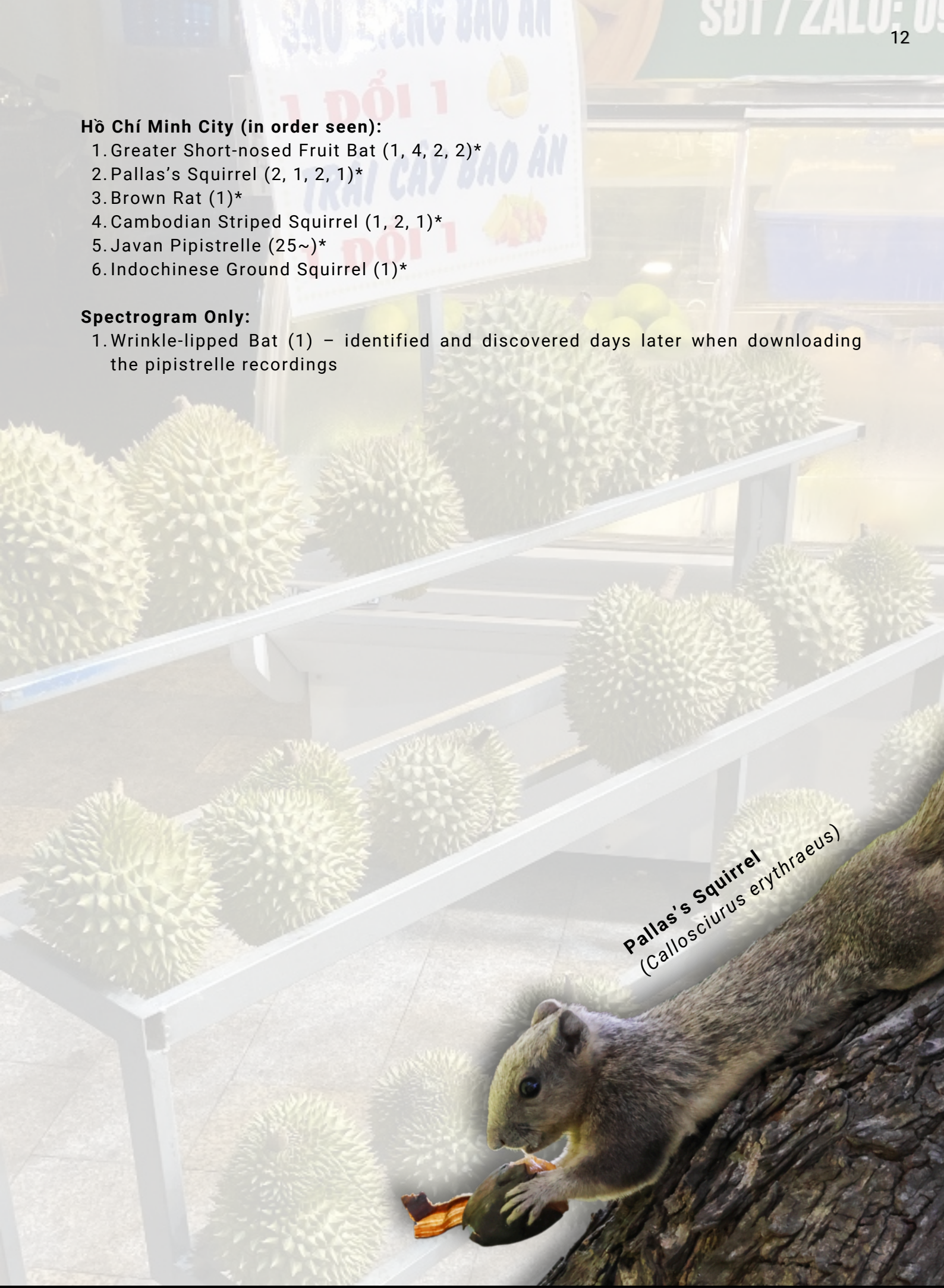
Indochinese Ground Squirrel
(Menetes berdmorei)

Hồ Chí Minh City (in order seen):

1. Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat (1, 4, 2, 2)*
2. Pallas's Squirrel (2, 1, 2, 1)*
3. Brown Rat (1)*
4. Cambodian Striped Squirrel (1, 2, 1)*
5. Javan Pipistrelle (25~)*
6. Indochinese Ground Squirrel (1)*

Spectrogram Only:

1. Wrinkle-lipped Bat (1) – identified and discovered days later when downloading the pipistrelle recordings



Pallas's Squirrel
(Callosciurus erythraeus)

Day 1:

We were up early, departing **Hồ Chí Minh City** with breakfast and coffee on the road to **Cát Tiên National Park**. The drive takes around 3.5 hours, travelling roughly 150km northeast of HCMC. We arrived around 9:30am, unpacked our luggage, collected our park tickets and crossed into the park via the ferry over the **Đồng Nai River**. The wildlife watching began immediately with a few highlight birds such as **Thick-billed Green Pigeon**, **Vernal Hanging Parrot**, **Ashy Woodswallow**, **Asian Fairy Bluebird** and a nice adult male **Cinnamon Bittern**.

Cát Tiên National Park is often referred to as Vietnam's premier national park and is by far the country's most famous wildlife watching destinations. One of the last remaining strongholds of lowland tropical forest in southern Vietnam, the park spans more than 720 square kilometres, making it one of the largest protected areas in the country. It is composed primarily of lowland semi-evergreen forest, bamboo thickets, wetlands and open grasslands, all bordered by the expansive **Đồng Nai River** to the east. This diversity of habitats supports an exceptional variety of wildlife. For mammalwatchers, **Cát Tiên** is a must-visit location, with more than 130~ recorded species to date. As such, we had a three full days and spotlighting nights planned for the park, with the aim of making a serious dent in our trip list.

After a quick check-in at our accommodation, we grabbed our gear and headed straight into the forest. It was already mid-morning and hot and sunny (far from ideal mammalwatching conditions) but the group was eager to get into some high-quality forest and see what we could turn up. Our best chances for key targets would likely be feeding primates, such as Common Long-tailed Macaque, Northern Pig-tailed Macaque or even Black-shanked Douc Langur, so we headed southwest towards a known douc area along the river to try our luck.



Heterometrus silenus

Despite the heat, the birding was excellent and over the next 2.5 hours we enjoyed an exceptional count of almost 60~ species, including **Germain's Peacock Pheasant**, **Lesser Adjutant**, **Orange-breasted Trogon**, **Blue-eared Barbet**, **Lesser Yellownape**, **Black-and-red Broadbill**, **Rufescent Prinia**, and **Ruby-cheeked Sunbird**. A few extra wildlife sightings included both **Indochinese** and **Oriental Garden Lizard**, butterflies such as **Yellow Pansy**, **Golden Birdwing** and **Black-and-white Helen** and Cát Tiên's most impressive scorpion, **Heterometrus silenus** (underneath a log whilst turning over and looking for shrews!).

On the mammal front, we had better views of both **Pallas's Squirrel** and **Cambodian Striped Squirrel** and found an old fruiting **Common Red-stem Fig (Ficus variegata)** with extensive **civet scat** beneath it (note was quickly made to revisit the tree after dark). Near some muddy banks we also found both **Sambar** and **Northern Red Muntjac** tracks.

Back at our accommodation, we checked out a large colony of **Red Dwarf Honey Bee** before settling in for lunch and a short break. As default, most afternoons on the tour we would take a nap break, so we could prepare us for the long nights of spotlighting. A few hours before dusk, we regrouped to search for a few key targets, while also checking out figs, tracks, scat and other locations in preparation for the upcoming night.

We had barely left the headquarters area when Thanh spotted movement in the trees. Around 80 metres away was our first family of **Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon (Nomascus gabriellae)**, one of the major primate targets for the trip. The group consisted of four individuals, including two adult males in striking jet-black fur, alongside a buffy-golden adult female carrying a baby tucked in her arms.



Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon — male
(Nomascus gabriellae)



Cambodian Striped Squirrel
(Tamiops rodolphii)

We spent the next 30 minutes watching them and eventually had great views of one of the males who descended surprisingly low in the canopy, unconcerned by our presence. With plenty of photos and videos taken, it was a major win, especially for the middle of the afternoon.

Next, we visited a stand of **Vanuatu Fan Palm (Licuala grandis)** that had been planted within the park. These palms have huge, broad leaves, creating ideal day-roosting sites for Short-nosed Fruit Bats (Cynopterus sp.). Sure enough, we found three individuals each tucked beneath its own palm leaf.



Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat
(*C. cf. brachyotis*)

A quick note on Cynopterus species in Vietnam: the country has two short-nosed fruit bats, the Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat (C. sphinx) and Lesser/Sunda Short-nosed Fruit Bat (C. cf. brachyotis). Greater occur throughout Vietnam, while Lesser is largely restricted to the south, extending north to around the Central Highlands and (possibly) parts of the southern Annamite Range.

Based on mist-netting projects in areas where both species occur, Greater Short-nosed is usually recorded at a much higher density, sometimes as high as 30:1~. Whilst this suggests that most short-noses in southern Vietnam are likely to be Greater, this is not a reliable ID feature on its own.



When they're seen hanging at day roosts, identification is easier, though still far from straightforward and certainly not always conclusive. A few key features worth considering: Greater are generally bulkier overall, and the ear structure is often the most useful feature.

Greater typically shows larger, more rounded ears that protrude well beyond the head and wing edge, with a thicker leading edge that often appears broad and bright creamy-white and pale-tipped. The folds or ringlets within the ears also tend to extend more evenly from side to side, whereas in Lesser these markings often fade or become less distinct. Greater also tends to show richer facial colouration, often with pale edging to the fur behind the eye. Structurally, it usually has a flatter slope from the crown to the tip of the muzzle, compared with the shorter, more compact-looking skull profile of Lesser Short-nosed.

On this occasion, we were in luck. The three Short-nosed Fruit Bats we located showed features consistent with **Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat (C. cf. brachyotis)**. Having said that, we knew this already as park ranges (alongside a university research group), had carried out a netting project in October and measured bats from this same palm group, confirming them as Lesser. By contrast, the small group that had spent several years roosting in the Tre Vàng Restaurant (well-known to many mammalwatchers) had been identified as Greater. It is interesting to know both species were living side by side, less than 100 metres apart.

We have included this level of detail on ID in the trip report because these bats generate a lot of questions from visiting photographers and wildlife watchers, and they remain a tricky but interesting identification challenge for visiting mammalwatchers.

We walked through an extensive bamboo-lined section along the **Đồng Nai River**. Our main target here was the poorly understood Thick-thumbed Myotis. In recent years we have begun finding this species with increasing regularity in **Cát Tiên**, though locating them is never easy, as there are tens of thousands of bamboo stems to search and we fully expected to spend several hours each day checking suitable roost sites before hopefully getting lucky.

Along the walk we enjoyed another nice selection of birds including **Violet Cuckoo**, **Oriental Pied Hornbill**, **Banded Kingfisher**, **Black-and-buff Woodpecker**, and **Pale-headed Woodpecker**. We also checked two patches of **Common Red-stem Fig**, though neither set was especially ripe yet. Reptiles added to the afternoon as well, with our first **Spotted Forest Skink** and **Common Sun Skink** of the trip.

On the return walk we startled a pair of **Common Long-tailed Macaque (M. f. fascicularis)** feeding amongst the bamboo. Another trip tick! Though unsurprisingly not a lifer for any of our experienced and well-travelled mammalwatchers.

Then, in the final 200 metres before reaching headquarters, Thanh suddenly called out: “Thick-thumbed Myotis!” Sure enough, tucked high within the open end of a bamboo stem were at least three **Thick-thumbed Myotis (Myotis rosseti)** peering down at us. Photos and plenty of high-fives followed as we celebrated our 10th mammal species of the trip and a major target already under the belt.



Thick-thumbed Myotis
(Myotis rosseti)



Banded Kingfisher — male
(L. p. amabilis)

We returned to headquarters with distant **Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon** singing far off through the forest, just in time for an early dinner. At the Tre Vàng Restaurant (*Yellow Bamboo*) we encountered our first **Spot-legged Tree Frog (Polypedates megacephalus)**, which had apparently made its home on the chair of one of our guests. Meanwhile, **Great Eared Nightjar** hawked over the **Đồng Nai River**, calling as we ate.

After dinner, it was time for our first night of spotlighting. Equipped with thermal scopes (we had five between the group, an incredibly effective setup!!) we headed north into the park, mainly following the river tracks. We should also mention that throughout the tour we carried Echometer Touch units to record bat spectrograms (detailed day by day throughout the report). As noted in the introduction, bats recorded solely through spectrograms were **not included** in the official trip tally, instead being listed separately as supplementary records (please see the end of the report).

We spent around three hours out tonight, though it proved to be an underwhelming first night. The forest was heavily disturbed by a massive wedding party back towards the township, with Vietnam's infamous karaoke echoing surprisingly deep into the forest. Nevertheless, we pushed on, picking up several enjoyable non-mammal sightings including **Collared Scops Owl**, **Ninh Thuan Narrow-mouthed Frog**, **Siamese Pointy-tailed Millipede**, **Dundubia nagarasingna** a large **whipscorpion** sp. and several species of **Lichen Huntsman**.

After considerable effort and little else mammal-wise, we eventually reached the Bến Cự Rapids area, which by day has a small café stop. Here we picked up a large rodent foraging around one of the rubbish bins. For the next half an hour or so, we stalked the animal, switching between red / white light in an attempt to secure photographs and better views. Although seen well several times, we were unable to obtain clear images or prolonged views, so the rat eventually went down (conservatively) as a **Leopoldamys** species.

Even with good photographs, this is a messy genus that remains under taxonomic review, with much recent work suggesting further study is still needed. Our animal was large, with a long white-tipped tail, large ears, shaggy grey fur and pale underparts. It was most likely **Edwards's Long-tailed Giant Rat (Leopoldamys edwardsi)** which is a species we've recorded a number of times in Cát Tiên, though experience has taught us to remain conservative when identifying rodents in this manner.

After a frustrating game of *spot-the-rat*, we gave up and continued deeper into the forest. By now we had more-or-less left the distant thump of karaoke and were now moving through relatively undisturbed secondary forest and bamboo.

Suddenly, we spotted a nice heat signature of a medium sized animal climbing up through the trees. It was a **Southern Pygmy Slow Loris (Xanthonycticebus pygmaeus)**, one of our major targets for the trip! The animal was quickly lit up with red light, but being around 20 metres deep within the forest it proved difficult to pick out and unfortunately soon climbed higher and out of view. Despite our best efforts, only one member of the group managed to get onto it before it disappeared completely.

We decided to keep walking and loop back around after 15 minutes in the hope that it may have shifted position, somewhere we could see more easily. On our way back, we were briefly distracted by another signature in the thermal and discovered our first **Woolly Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus luctus)** hanging perfectly exposed in the understorey, posing beautifully for photographs, our first real win of the night and a much-wanted target.

Despite searching carefully, we could not relocate the loris. We had only walked another 60 metres when Thanh located a second **Southern Pygmy Slow Loris**. This time the animal remained still, though high in the canopy, and at least a few more of the group managed views before it too climbed upward into the dense, impenetrable canopy.

Everyone loves slow lorises. They are an extraordinary group of primates (and great for photography) which made these two encounters all the more frustrating. Two close observations, yet neither provided the satisfying prolonged views we had hoped for.

On the walk back we found several trees marked with civet claw scratches, along with partially eaten fruit beneath them, though no civets themselves. Other notable sightings included **Oriental Scops Owl** (considerably rarer here than the more commonly encountered Collared Scops Owl) a pair of **Brown Boobook**, a **Pantropical Huntsman Spider** and numerous colonies of **Macrotermes carbonarius**, a fungus-growing termite species. These termites move across the forest floor in immense columns, sometimes stretching several metres in length, producing a faint audible buzzing that ripples through the colony.

By this stage everyone was pretty tired, so we finally called it a night. We were still pleased to have added several new species, though there was certainly a lingering sense of disappointment over the unsatisfactory Southern Pygmy Slow Loris encounters. Even so, the trip list now stood at **12 mammal species**, with every species seen well and photographed except for the loris, now firmly established as our redemption species.

Cát Tiên National Park (in order seen):

1. Pallas's Squirrel (8~)
2. Cambodian Striped Squirrel (12~)
3. Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon (4)*
4. Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat (3)*
5. Common Long-tailed Macaque (2)*
6. Thick-thumbed Myotis (3)*
7. Southern Pygmy Slow Loris (1, 1)*
8. Woolly Horseshoe Bat (1)*

** Indicates a new addition to the trip list*

Spectrogram Only:

1. Hardwicke's Woolly Bat (12~ recordings)
2. Woolly Horseshoe Bat (3~ recordings)
3. Hypsugo sp. (1~ recording, possibly Cadorna's Pipistrelle)



Common Red-stem Fig — Civet food!
(Ficus variegata)

Day 2:

Today was our first full day in **Cát Tiên National Park** and the second day of our tour. After a quick breakfast, we headed out to one of the park's grassland areas, departing headquarters by jeep at around 6:00am. Conditions were ideal for mammalwatching, calm, cool, and clear, with the early sun casting soft light across the open grasslands. Before we had even left headquarters, we picked up our first two mammals for the day, **Cambodian Striped Squirrel** and **Pallas's Squirrel**, both common and now seen for the third consecutive day.



Northern Pig-tailed Macaque — male
(Macaca leonina)

On the drive out, we slowed near a stand of Dipterocarpus trees, a spot that occasionally has a troop of Black-shanked Douc Langur. But before the jeep had even come to a stop, we spotted a large troop of around 20~ **Northern Pig-tailed Macaque (Macaca leonina)**. A lifer for most of the group (and #13 for the trip!), the macaques fed, climbed, and moved noisily through the towering trees in perfect early morning light, giving us excellent views and photo opportunities.

Soon after, we arrived at the grasslands. Bird activity was excellent, with highlights including **Green Peafowl**, **Chinese Francolin**, **Blue-eared Kingfisher**, **Indochinese Roller**, **Blossom-headed Parakeet**, **Vinous-breasted Myna**, and **Golden-fronted Leafbird**. As we slowly cruised the tracks, we also spotted a handsome adult **Northern Red Muntjac (Muntiacus vaginalis)** standing briefly in the open before dashing back into cover. The views were short but excellent, becoming mammal species number #14 for the trip.



(Indochinese) Green Peafowl — male
(P. m. imperator)

One of the major targets of the grasslands is the Gaur, the world's largest wild bovine and one of the park's true highlights. They are a monstrously big, hefty animal and can be quite dangerous, only last year a ranger was tragically killed here during a nighttime run-in.

We search and scan, but any nearby Gaur remained out of site. Still, we enjoyed sightings of **Red Junglefowl**, **Red Collared Dove**, **Chinese Pond Heron**, and **Eastern Cattle Egret**, the last always a good sign when searching for large mammals.

After some time searching, we moved on to another section of open habitat where walking is permitted. As we turned a corner, a magnificent male **Sambar (R. u. cambojensis)** burst across the track in front of the vehicle before disappearing back into cover, mammal species number #15 for the trip!

Passing through a forested stretch shortly afterwards, we encountered a large troop of **Common Long-tailed Macaque** moving through roadside vegetation and clambering through dense stands of **Bambusa stenostachya** that dominate this section of the park.

Back at the central grasslands area, we continued on foot. There are some old buildings we have found both Intermediate Horseshoe Bat and Greater False Vampire Bat in the past but unfortunately both buildings were empty.



Giant Crepe-Myrtle
(Lagerstroemia speciosa)



Wild Guava
(Careya arborea)

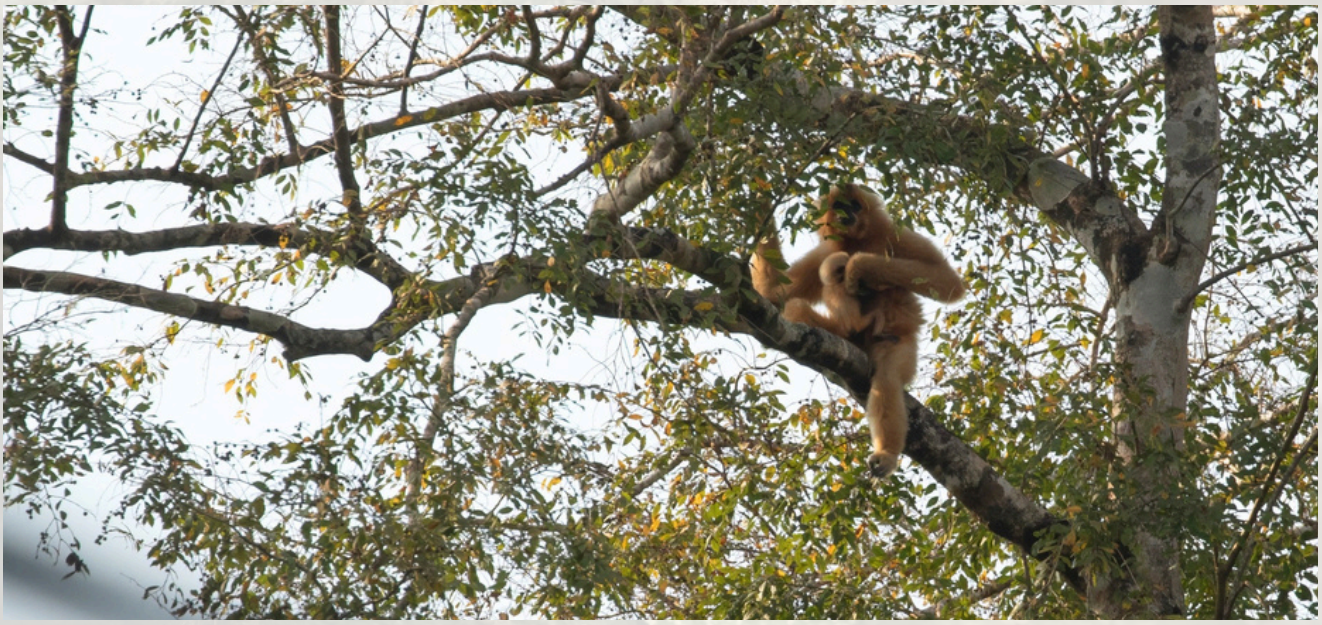
Continuing on, we were slightly spaced apart as some members stopped to admire tree full of **Blossom-headed Parakeet** and another with a handsome **Black-hooded Oriole**. Unfortunately this was the moment that a **Javan Mongoose** chose to cross in full view across one of the stretches of grassland and into the scrub, only being seen by our guide and the jeep driver. Despite our best efforts we couldn't re-locate this species and it went down to join the Southern Pygmy Slow Loris on the redemption list.

Before finishing, we visited a relatively unknown mud-wallow spot. This can be quite a reliable place to see Gaur, Wild Boar, Samba and other large mammals. Today there were no Gaur, but their footprints and scat were absolutely everywhere, so we would be back!

Back at headquarters, we revisited the roosting **Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat** and found even more than the previous day (3, 3, 2). We also added several herps to the trip list, including **Clouded Monitor**, **Flat-tailed House Gecko**, **Asian House Gecko**, and another impressive **Vietnamese Blue Crested Lizard**.

After lunch, everyone took the opportunity for a much-needed nap before the evening ahead. Around 3:00pm, the group gathered once more at the restaurant to prepare for what promised to be one of our biggest nights of spotlighting. Our plan for the evening was to venture much deeper into the forest, well away from the more frequently visited areas and into a tract of ancient primary forest rarely explored by most visitors to the park. Over the years, we have found this lack of disturbance to be a major advantage for spotlighting, for mammals, birds and herps alike.

Armed with a large bag of snacks and spring rolls (the standard makeshift dinner for a mammalwatching night) we set off into the forest. Before leaving headquarters, however, we spotted a family of **Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon**, once again active in the late afternoon in a similar spot. It had already been an excellent day for primates, but things were about to get even better!



Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon — female & infant
(Nomascus gabriellae)

As we travelled deeper into the forest, we finally connected with our first **Black-shanked Douc Langur (Pygathrix nigripes)** of the trip. It was a brief encounter, but one paused long enough to give us excellent views before disappearing back into the canopy. Moments later, whilst watching **Dusky Broadbill**, a lone **Northern Pig-tailed Macaque** crossed the road nearby. Deciding this was as good a place as any to begin, we said goodbye to our driver and continued on foot into the forest.

We had roughly an hour to an hour and a half before dusk. With the douc already in the bag, our focus shifted to searching tree hollows for bats and other targets, while also checking fruiting trees that might attract targets after dark. **Civet scat** was everywhere, giving us high hopes for the evening ahead.



Paradoxurinae scat



Paradoxurinae tree scratches

Over the next hour, we examined around 30~ large and ancient trees, including towering **Tetrameles nudiflora**, **Ficus pandurata**, and **Ficus benghalensis**, many of them hollowed out with extensive cavities. After about a dozen, we found a **Woolly Horseshoe Bat** roosting roughly 20 metres up inside a hollow trunk, our second one for the trip.

As sunset approached, we settled down for a makeshift dinner of spring rolls and assorted snacks while **Bar-bellied Pitta** and **Ashy-headed Green Pigeon** called from the surrounding forest. Then darkness arrived and the mammalwatching was on!

This became one of the most rewarding nights of the trip. Less than 50 metres from where we began spotlighting, the thermal picked up a bright red hotspot which became our first **Lesser False Vampire Bat (Megaderma spasma)** for trip. The bat hung beautifully out in the open while chewing on what appeared to be a large cricket or cicada, giving everyone prolonged views and fantastic photo opportunities. An amazing animal and a lifer for the entire group, an incredible start to the evening.

There appeared to be a lot of action out tonight, for the next half hour or so, the thermal constantly picked up bursts of heat from various **rodents** dashing through the forests, though none paused long enough for shots or proper views. We also detected two larger animals off the track, but both were impossible to get on to. Based on shape and movement, our best guesses were a **civet** species and possibly a **Lesser Oriental Chevrotain**.



Woolly Horseshoe Bat
(Rhinolophus luctus)

A bonus bird was a magnificent adult **Brown Wood Owl** we found whilst scanning for Flying Squirrels. This is a very scarce owl in **Cát Tiên** and southern Vietnam generally, making it an excellent bonus for many of the not-so-closeted birders in our group.
Soon, we finally got a clear **Lesser Oriental Chevrotain (Tragulus kanchil)**, feeding quietly through the leaf litter just off the trail. The animal lingered long enough for everyone to enjoy excellent prolonged views and take a few shots. Number #18! Moments later we scored our third **Woolly Horseshoe Bat** for the trip, once again hunting from a long strangling vine.



Lesser False Vampire Bat
(Megaderma spasma)



(Mountain) Brown Wood Owl
(S. l. laotiana)

Not long afterwards, our thermals picked up another large animal close beside the track. The initial call was for Mainland Leopard Cat, but once the animal climbed into a tree it became obvious we were looking at a civet. When the spotlight went up, we were greeted by an absolutely stunning **Southern Palm Civet (Paradoxurus musanga)**. Large, healthy, and immaculate, it perched perfectly in the open and allowed some of the best mammal photographs of the entire trip. There was much celebrating!

Still buzzing from our civet, we continued along the trail and less than ten minutes later watched a huge **East Asian Porcupine (Hystrix brachyura)** crossing the road directly in front of us at less than ten metres range. Boom! For many in the group it was another lifer. By this stage we had already walked almost 3km and fatigue was beginning to set in, so we took a break at one of the forest rest areas. Thanh handed around chocolates, morale instantly improved.

Like on previous nights, we had the spectrogram running live as we walked, constantly recording the huge variety of bat calls around us. This section of forest proved especially active and we already knew the recordings would require hours of analysis after the tour. This setup proved its worth big time tonight.



Southern Palm Civet
(Rhinolophus luctus)



East Asian Porcupine
(Hystrix brachyura)

Throughout the evening we had been picking up numerous microbats on the thermal. At one point, Thanh noticed a small bat repeatedly flying the same short stretch of road ahead of us at around eye-level. On its next pass, Thanh called out to the group and as it flew directly at and over us, we lit the animal up in clear view. We could make out a small, chunky microbat with striking yellow-orange fur. Of course completely unidentifiable from this, but an impressive looking animal! Fortunately, the live spectrogram captured the call clearly. Although we were initially pessimistic about identifying the species, analysis after the tour eventually confirmed it as a **Greater Asian Yellow Bat (Scotophilus heathii)**. While perhaps not the most satisfying encounter in the field, it was still another mammal added to the trip list and a rewarding identification to confirm afterwards.

Eventually we reached a large clearing in the forest. By this stage everyone was beginning to feel it in their legs, so we stopped for another rest. That short pause proved to be one of the best decisions of the night.



Lesser Oriental Chevrotain
(Tragulus kanchil)

It was a **Ratanaworabhan's Fruit Bat (Megaerops niphanae)** species #22!, one of the Megaerops or Tailless Fruit Bats. A lifer for everyone in the group and arguably one of the luckiest and most memorable finds of the entire trip.

By now we had been out for more than six hours and exhaustion was beginning to catch up with the team. Determined to press our luck, we called the jeep and transferred to an area of extensive bamboo for another shot at the Slow Loris. On the way we picked up another large heat signature in the trees which turned out to be a sleeping **Black-shanked Douc Langur**.

As Thanh casually scanned the clearing with the thermal, he picked up something flying directly toward us. We quickly raised the spotlight and were rewarded with superb views of a nice pale greyish fruit bat passing straight overhead at roughly 15 metres height. The animal showed a striking pale silvery body, dark glossy brown wings, and a noticeably pale head as it crossed the clearing in full view.



Tokay Gecko
(Gekko gecko)

Unbelievably, we barely had time to step out of the vehicle before we spotted a **Southern Pygmy Slow Loris (Xanthonycticebus pygmaeus)** in the nearest bamboo thicket. It showed slightly better than yesterday, with two participants getting good climbing views while another briefly saw the animal's face peering out from the top of the bamboo. Unfortunately, the combination of torchlight and the jeep engine clearly unsettled it, and for the third time we ended up with another unsatisfactory encounter. While searching the bamboo, we also disturbed a roosting group of **Common Long-tailed Macaque** on the opposite side of the thicket.

Despite more tedious loris encounters, we returned to our accommodation exceptionally satisfied, with our trip list now at a serious 22 species, 20 of them photographed. Other (non-mammal) highlights from the afternoon and evening included **Tokay Gecko**, **Spot-legged Tree Frog**, **Vernal Hanging Parrot**, **Banded Broadbill**, and **Large-tailed Nightjar**.

Cát Tiên National Park (in order seen):

1. Cambodian Striped Squirrel (2, 1, 2)
2. Pallas's Squirrel (6~)
3. Northern Pig-tailed Macaque (20~, 1, 20~)*
4. Northern Red Muntjac (1, 1)*
5. Sambar (1, 1)*
6. Common Long-tailed Macaque (25~, 8~)
7. Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon (4)
8. Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat (3, 3, 2)
9. Black-shanked Douc Langur (1, 1)*
10. Woolly Horseshoe Bat (1, 1)
11. Lesser False Vampire Bat (1)*
12. Lesser Oriental Chevrotain (1)*
13. Southern Palm Civet (1)*
14. East Asian Porcupine (1)*
15. Greater Asian Yellow Bat (1)*
16. Ratanaworabhan's Fruit Bat (1)*
17. Southern Pygmy Slow Loris (1)

* Indicates a new addition to the trip list

Spectrogram Only:

1. Intermediate Roundleaf Bat (9~ recordings)
2. Cadorna's Pipistrelle (6~ recordings)
3. Painted Bat (3~ recordings)
4. Great Evening Bat (3~ recordings)
5. Woolly Horseshoe Bat (2~ recordings)
6. Greater Asian Yellow Bat (2x recordings + 1x visual)
7. Eastern Bent-winged Bat (1x recording)
8. Hypsugo sp. (1~ recording, possibly Cadorna's Pipistrelle)

Supplementary List:

1. Javan Mongoose (1x seen by guide & driver only)

Day 3:

By day 3 we were up early and after a quick breakfast, on our way to Bàu Sấu (Crocodile Lake). The mammalwatching started almost immediately, with a nice male **Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon** and a handful of **Cambodian Striped Squirrel** and **Pallas's Squirrel** seen as we departed.

With our trip list sitting at 22 species, the group was feeling good. That said, there were still a number of species that we felt we should have connected with by now, including Gaur, Common Giant Flying Squirrel, Northern Treeshrew and Northern Smooth-tailed Treeshrew. Today would be for these, plus a number of other difficult species we still needed from Cát Tiên.

On our way into the forest, we travelled relatively slowly compared to the usual power pace of the jeeps. The slower approach paid off, as we located two fantastic troops of **Black-shanked Douc Langur**, both giving us far better uninterrupted viewing and photography opportunities than yesterday afternoon. A big highlight included a mother and baby sitting high in a tree, carefully watching us from above.



Black-shanked Douc Langur — adult & infant
(Pygathrix nigripes)

For the birders, we also enjoyed **Oriental Pied Hornbill**, **Vernal Hanging Parrot**, **Dusky Broadbill**, **Black-and-red Broadbill**, **Bar-bellied Pitta**, and even a stunning male **Siamese Fireback** crossing the road. Another highlight was our first **Long-horned Orbweaver**, one of the coolest spiders of southeast Asia.

We reached the start of the track, unloaded our gear, and prepared to head into the jungle. Before setting off, we were photographing a **Heart-spotted Woodpecker** when the call suddenly went out for one of our major targets, **Annamese Langur (Trachypithecus margarita)**. This species is particularly difficult and unreliable to see in most parts of Vietnam, especially during the dry season, which we were more or less on the cusp of.

This morning there was a group of around four of them high up in a massive old-growth **Shidam Tree (Tetrameles nudiflora)**. They were distant and moving subtly through the lower sections of the canopy, but thankfully everyone (except one poor participant who had accidentally left their glasses in HCMC!!) managed to get onto them. Within about 45 seconds they had leapt out of sight. Our first tick of the morning and a fantastic (though brief) way to start the day.

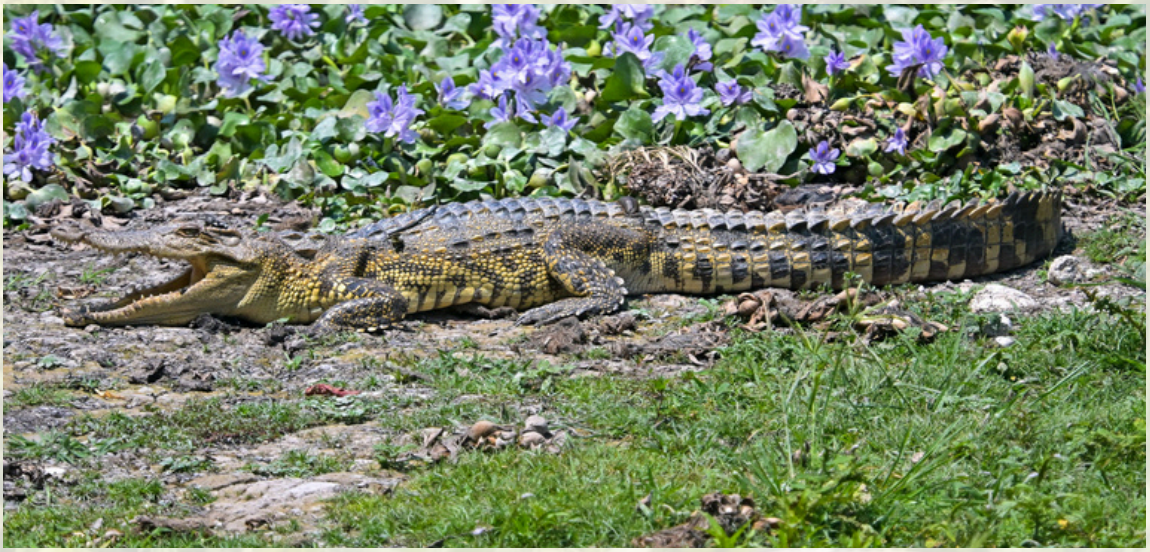
We spent the next two hours walking slowly towards Crocodile Lake (**Bàu Sấu**). The birding was exceptional and across the morning we recorded well over 80 species in this part of the park. Our focus, however remained firmly on the mammals. We checked numerous tree hollows for bats but failed with any daytime roosts, as well as missing both treeshrew species and any more Annamese Langur.

We did find two pairs of **Cambodian Striped Squirrel**, a handful of **Pallas's Squirrel**, several **Common Long-tailed Macaque**, and another few **Black-shanked Douc Langur**, alongside endless amounts of civet scat along the trail. We also had a group of **Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon** singing somewhere in the distance.



At Crocodile Lake, we settled into the restaurant and accommodation area, spending time birding and scanning the expansive wetlands. We encountered all the usual bird suspects, along with a few bonuses including **Great Hornbill**, **Changeable Hawk Eagle**, and a pair of **Asian Golden Weaver** amongst the **Matamat**.

The major highlight here, of course was the **Siamese Crocodile**, which has been successfully reintroduced into the park and was a reptile tick for everyone. This population now represents the only viable population of this critically endangered crocodilian in Vietnam.



Siamese Crocodile
(Crocodylus siamensis)



Vietnamese Blue Crested Lizard
(Calotes bachae)



Spotted Forest Skink
(Sphenomorphus maculatus)

After lunch, coffee, endless scanning, and a mid-day beer or two, we packed up and headed back into the jungle. With the heat of midday upon us, we considered our chances of finding any new mammal ticks to be fairly low, so we trudged on trying to admire the butterflies, cicadas, and ferns of this part of forest.

We were about two-thirds of the way back when Thanh suddenly called out to the group. There, high in a tree and barely visible through the foliage, was a **Black Giant Squirrel (Ratufa bicolor)** stretched out and resting in the heat of the day. A very solid pick-up and a tick for most of the group.

After the squirrel everyone's spirits lifted, and we enjoyed plenty of excellent wildlife on the walk back. Highlights included **Vietnamese Blue Crested Lizard**, **Clouded Monitor**, **Common Parasol**, a **Lichen Spider sp.**, and hundreds of different species of **forest snails**. Aside from a group of **Northern Pig-tailed Macaque**, we didn't encounter any further mammals.



Northern Treeshrew
(Tupaia belangeri)



Indochinese Ground Squirrel
(Menetes berdmorei)



Clouded Monitor
(Varanus nebulosus)

An hour or so later, we were back at our accommodation for our usual afternoon rest. We were becoming a little concerned (and surprised) by our lack of treeshrew sightings, so after some discussion we decided to visit one of the park-operated bird hides.

Like feeding blinds all over the world, the setup was excellent for attracting squirrels. After a quick chat with the hide operator, our group entered during the final hour or so of daylight. As expected, there were considerable numbers of **Indochinese Ground Squirrel**, and before too long we picked up our next tick, **Northern Treeshrew (Tupaia belangeri)**. Despite spending over an hour at the hide, we once again dipped on Northern Smooth-tailed Treeshrew.

Tonight, we planned to revisit the grassland areas that runs parallel to the **Đồng Nai River**. This area can be popular with birders and tourists in the park at dusk, so rather than setting off early, we organised a later 8:45pm start (hopefully giving us a good 90 minutes break between us and any earlier groups that may be around).

That meant we were actually able to have dinner in the restaurant and put our feet up properly for the first time. While eating, we enjoyed **Great Eared Nightjar**, **Black-crowned Night Heron**, **Laced Woodpecker**, and numerous **Tokay Gecko** around the headquarters.

At 8:45pm we all piled into the jeep and headed off into the jungle. As a bonus, Next Continent's principal guide **Hoang Quy**, had just finished leading his own tour in the park and decided to join us, providing an extra pair of eyes, spotlight and thermal for the evening. **#Teamwork**

In the interest of saving time, it's worth starting with the fact that we saw **Sambar** everywhere. With the local extinction of Tigers, there are no remaining large predators in the park, allowing the population to increase largely unchecked. Our conservative estimate for the evening was somewhere between 150–200 individuals. Naturally, we had some fantastic views, including several large stags with impressive antlers.

We also encountered many **Large-tailed Nightjar** along the roadsides, a brief **Collared Scops Owl** was heard calling, followed later by several screeches from an **Eastern Barn Owl** (again, a species rarely recorded in the park).



(Common) Large-tailed Nightjar
(C. m. bimaculatus)



(Mainland Southeast Asian) Sambar
(R. u. cambojensis)

After a long stretch dominated by **Sambar** and a noticeable (disappointing) absence of Gaur, we finally spotted our first new mammal of the night, a **(Indochinese) Small-toothed Palm Civet (A. t. leucotis)**. Unfortunately the view was brief, and only three of us managed to get onto the animal before it slipped back into a fig tree and refused to cooperate further.

As this species is widespread across much of Vietnam, we added it to the "better views desired" category alongside our Southern Pygmy Slow Loris sighting earlier in the trip.

Despite extensive searching across the grassland areas, we failed to locate any Gaur, which was certainly disappointing given it would have been a lifer for half the group. We did, however, see our second **Lesser Oriental Chevrotain** and an **East Asian Porcupine**, both nice bonuses, along with several **Common Long-tailed Macaque** roosting in bamboo thickets.

On the way back, we enjoyed our second encounter with a **Northern Red Muntjac**, standing barely five metres from the vehicle in full view before dashing off into the bamboo. A much-improved sighting compared to our brief encounter a few days earlier. At Quy's recommendation, we stopped in the forest before getting back to the accommodation and continued the rest of the way on foot. We decided to visit the trash dump area to see if we could find some rodents, maybe a Greater Bandicoot Rat or even a Flying Squirrel or two. Unfortunately, the area was completely empty besides some croaking **Striped Sticky Frog (Kalophrynus interlineatus)** and moths.

We had a final stop before the end of the night. Towards the headquarters there is a completely abandoned and partially collapsed building which has played host to a small colony of Grand Roundleaf Bat for the past few months. This species is very sensitive to disturbance, so we slowly entered the building with red lights and in little groups of 2x people. Quy had been in earlier that day to check on the animals for us, so he took the lead. As we entered, we saw a number of bats already flying around, their bright orange bodies obvious and clear in the soft light. Inside we saw around a dozen **Grand Roundleaf Bat (Hipposideros grandis)** hanging from the roof giving our group spectacular views of this wonderful little bat.

Celebrating our most satisfying new animal of the night, we came outside and started to wander back. Before too long a call went up from Thanh who had picked up a large heat signature in one of the mature **Dipterocarpus alatus** trees. There, high above in the open canopy was a spectacular adult **Common Giant Flying Squirrel (Petaurista philippensis)**, giving us all perfect views. Tick number 28 for the trip and a lifer for most of the group, a great way to finish up the night. Though our quietest day for the trip, alongside side two misses (Gaur and Northern Smooth-tailed Treeshrew), we had still managed to add six very high quality new ticks to the trip, so we went to bed tired but happy.



Grand Roundleaf Bat
(Hipposideros grandis)



Common Giant Flying Squirrel
(Petaurista philippensis)

Cát Tiên National Park (in order seen):

1. Cambodian Striped Squirrel (4~)
2. Pallas's Squirrel (15~)
3. Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon (1x seen, 3~ H/O)
4. Black-shanked Douc Langur (10-15~)
5. Annamese Langur (4)*
6. Northern Pig-tailed Macaque (25~)
7. Common Long-tailed Macaque (1, 5, 4, 2)
8. Black Giant Squirrel (1)*
9. Indochinese Ground Squirrel (15)
10. Northern Treeshrew (1)*
11. Sambar (150~)
12. Small-toothed Palm Civet (1)*
13. Lesser Oriental Chevrotain (1)
14. East Asian Porcupine (1)
15. Northern Red Muntjac (1)
16. Grand Roundleaf Bat (12~)*
17. Common Giant Flying Squirrel (1)*

* Indicates a new addition to the trip list

Spectrogram Only:

1. Eastern Bent-winged Bat (1x recording)



Black Giant Squirrel — lounging, hidden in the canopy
(Ratufa bicolor)

Day 4:

It was our final morning in **Cát Tiên National Park** and the fourth day of the tour. Over the previous few days, our group had recorded a signficant 28 species of mammal and managed to photograph all but four of them. On the first night, we had asked participants how many mammal species they hoped to see across the trip overall. Most had answered “around 30”, so with 28 already in the bag and another 10 days still to come, spirits were understandably high as we prepared to move on to Central Vietnam.

That said, we had still suffered a few frustrating misses. Most notable was Gaur, a species that another tour group had seen only a few hours earlier our second attempt, and one we had encountered endless tracks and scat from throughout our stay. We had also somehow missed Northern Smooth-tailed Treeshrew, a common forest species that had completely evaded our best efforts. Finally, there was Indochinese Horseshoe Bat, a species we would normally expect to track down within a few days in **Cát Tiên**. Other near-misses had also included Javan Mongoose and what was (most likely) an Edward’s Long-tailed Giant Rat on our first night.

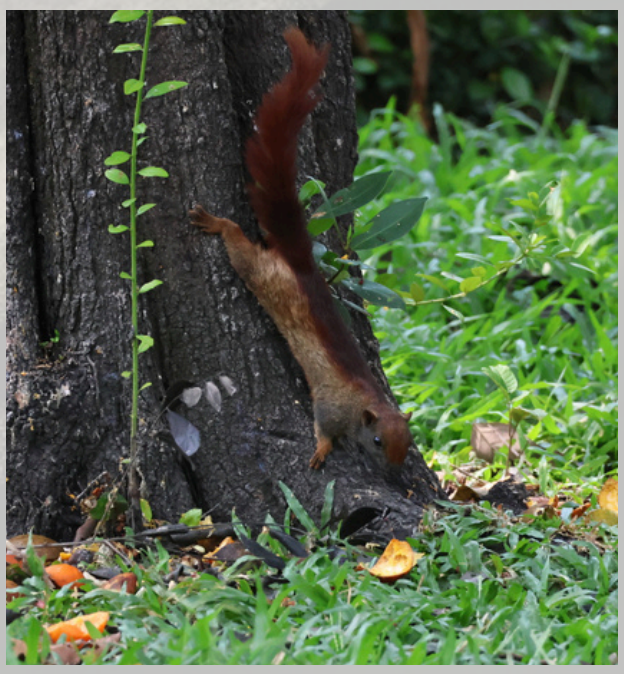
For our final morning, the hardcore few headed into the forest with Thanh to give Northern Smooth-tailed Treeshrew one last attempt. Unfortunately, they returned empty-handed, though they did enjoy their best encounter yet with **Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon** and came back with memory cards full of portfolio-worthy photographs. After breakfast, it was time to wrap up our stay in the park, cross the river, and return to **Hồ Chí Minh City** in preparation for our flight to **Đà Nẵng**.

Rather than heading straight to the airport, we left early in the hope of tracking down a few additional species that would be difficult to see once we arrived in Central Vietnam. Our first stop was a museum in **Hồ Chí Minh City**, where a small colony of **Black-bearded Tomb Bat (Taphozous melanopogon)** roosts beneath the roof of a war-damaged building dating back to the American War. We arrived, admired these spectacular animals as they twittered just a few metres above our heads and then quickly escaped the crowds.



Black-bearded Tomb Bat
(Taphozous melanopogon)

With time for one final stop, we visited one of the city's local parks. This area represents the extreme edge of the range for Finlayson's Squirrel, a species far more common in Cambodia and Thailand. After quite a bit of searching, we eventually found an erratic **Pallas's Squirrel** actively chasing a **Finlayson's Squirrel (Callosciurus finlaysonii)** around one of the garden trees. Tick number 30! We also got our best shots of the trip for **Cambodian Striped Squirrel** here.



Finlayson's Squirrel
(Callosciurus finlaysonii)



Cambodian Striped Squirrel
(Tamiops rodolphii)

The remainder of the day was largely devoted to travel: airport transfers, luggage drops, check-ins and flights. Still, we suspect everyone appreciated a few hours to simply sit down, eat, check in with family and friends back home, and begin sorting through that growing mountain of photographs.

We arrived in **Đà Nẵng** at around 4:30 pm, piled into our next vehicle, and met Thinh, who would be our constant companion and driver for the remainder of the tour. Before long, it was already time to leave behind what many consider Vietnam's most beautiful city and continue south. The rest of the evening was relatively uneventful. We travelled to **Tam Kỳ** in preparation for the following day, with the only notable wildlife sighting being a **Savanna Nightjar** flying at dusk around the **Võ Chí Công Dunes** area. After checking in, we enjoyed dinner and a few beers, marvelled at the local karaoke scene, and turned in early for the night.

Cát Tiên National Park / Hồ Chí Minh City (in order seen):

1. Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon (6)
2. Common Long-tailed Macaque (1)
3. Pallas's Squirrel (1, 5)
4. Black-bearded Tomb Bat (25~)*
5. Finlayson's Squirrel (1)*
6. Cambodian Striped Squirrel (2)

* Indicates a new addition to the trip list

Day 5:

Today we were up around an hour before dawn. This was one of the most important target days of the tour, as we were searching for the Grey-shanked Douc Langur, the rarest member of the genus Pygathrix and one of the rarest (and range restricted) primates in the world, with fewer than an estimated 500-700 individuals remaining in the wild.

For a bit of context, the **Grey-shanked Douc Langur** is endemic to Vietnam and is largely restricted to the Central Highlands region of the country. Around a decade ago, a small and isolated population was discovered by the conservation group **GreenViet**. Since then, the organisation has carried out invaluable work alongside local farmers and villagers, helping to protect these animals while encouraging long-term conservation and ecotourism initiatives designed to ensure this fragile population can persist and hopefully thrive into the future.

Next Continent is thrilled to maintain an official partnership with GreenViet and the local conservation team, **Tiên Phong**, who work tirelessly to protect this species. Coincidentally, members of our management team were travelling to **Tam Kỳ** the very same day we were in the field in order to attend a **Primate Conservation Conference** being held in Central Vietnam.



Mai & Giang from the Next Continent office team meeting ASEAN Biodiversity Hero Đặng Huy Huỳnh

It was a pleasure to be involved in an event bringing together more than 50 delegates from across Vietnam to continue working towards the protection of this highly vulnerable primate. We were proud to represent sustainable and responsible ecotourism at the conference.

We arrived at around 5:30 am and met up with the **Tiên Phong** group. From there, we were transported by motorbike to the first observation point, travelling a few at a time. While we waited, several of us saw our first **Asian Common Toad** of the trip, while a **Savanna Nightjar** drifted overhead on its way to roost for the day.



After the motorbike ride came a walk through an incredibly depressing and seemingly endless landscape of **Big-leaved Acacia (Acacia mangium)** plantations before we finally reached a tiny pocket of remnant forest. This fragment had survived because it surrounded a steep cliff that local farmers had considered unsuitable for planting. Access here is difficult, so the best strategy is simply to sit quietly and wait for the local troop to emerge, climbing over the cliffs and moving through the large fig trees scattered across the slope, a technique that has worked well for us at this site over the years.

Unfortunately, to cut a long story short, we spent nearly five hours there without success. Our only mammal for the morning was a **Pallas's Squirrel**, though the birding was enjoyable and included **Chestnut-winged Cuckoo**, **Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo**, **Silver-backed Needletail**, **Shikra**, **Chestnut-headed Bee-eater**, **Long-tailed Broadbill**, and **Eastern Red-rumped Swallow**. Some of our trackers from the Tiên Phong found a group of **Northern Pig-tailed Macaque**, but otherwise, no other primates.



Giant Golden Orbweaver
(Nephila pilipes)

A bit before midday, we decided to take a break for lunch and returned to **Tam Kỳ**. By mid-afternoon, we were back in the field once again, this time heading to a different section of the site (our “never-miss” location!). While the morning spot can sometimes provide better photographic opportunities, this second site has historically been the more reliable area for actually finding the langurs.

Once again, we piled onto motorbikes and set off through the rugged terrain, following a creek line deep into the hills. For the “draggers” in the group, there were some excellent species along the way, including **Euphaea masoni**, **Green Metalwing**, and **Brown-backed Red Marsh Hawk**. One member of the team also spotted a **small black rodent** darting through the Spikemoss and undergrowth, though unfortunately it disappeared before anyone could get a proper look at it.



Happy Mammalwatchers
(Homo mammalwatcherus)



Grey-shanked Douc Langur
(Pygathrix cinerea)

We hiked up to a vantage point overlooking a vast expanse of cleared and degraded land, a sobering reminder of the impacts of the Acacia trade. Beyond the plantations, stood a sizeable block of evergreen forest. From this elevated position, we had an excellent view across the canopy, making it an ideal place to search for our target.

At around 3:00 pm, one of our group suddenly let out a shout. They had just seen a long white shape moving through the trees. A langur tail!

After a few frantic minutes getting everyone lined up on the correct patch of forest, we finally locked onto it. There, sitting very distantly in the canopy, was a **Grey-shanked Douc Langur (Pygathrix cinerea)**. Soon more individuals began to appear and celebrations quickly followed. Although the views were exciting, the animals remained fairly distant, so after discussing options with the Tiên Phong team, we decided to try one final location further down the track.

Along the creek on the way to the next spot, a few of us found our first **Round-tongued Floating Frog** of the trip, while several **Dark-sided Chorus Frog** called from deeper in the vegetation.

Our final viewpoint was perched high on a hilltop amongst the **Big-leaved Acacia** plantations, overlooking another remnant strip of forest. Below us, a second group of **Grey-shanked Douc Langur** fed quietly through the trees. Although they were still over 100 metres away, the views here were far clearer, allowing us to observe them properly without disturbing or encroaching upon these highly vulnerable primates. It was a fantastic way to end the afternoon, with one of the major targets of the trip finally under the belt.

To cap off the day, as we sat watching the langurs, one member of the group suddenly spotted a large bird of prey soaring up through the forest before landing in an enormous **Chinese Banyan (Ficus macrocarpa)**.

Unbelievably, it was a **Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl**, a very difficult bird to see in Vietnam! And this individual had flown up and perched in full view for us. Quite literally, we had Grey-shanked Douc Langur and a Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl in the same line of sight. That cannot happen very often!



Other excellent birds during the afternoon included a very cooperative **Grey-faced Buzzard**, **Cream-bellied Sunbird (C. o. rhizophorae)**, and a **Streaked Spiderhunter** feeding amongst the banana trees.

We wrapped up the day with plenty of photographs, high-fives, and hugs shared with our friends from **Tiên Phong** and **GreenViet**, thanking and applauding them for their incredible work protecting and educating people about the Grey-shanks.

Back in the bus, we transferred back to **Đà Nẵng** checked into our hotel, and finally enjoyed a well-earned night's rest. Although we had added only a single new mammal species to the trip list that day, it was a very significant one, one of Vietnam's great endemic mammals and a major target for serious visiting mammalwatchers. Better still, the Grey-shanked Douc Langur became our 31st mammal species of the trip, which felt like a very fitting milestone indeed.

Tam Mỹ Tây (in order seen):

1. Pallas's Squirrel (1, 1, 1)
2. Grey-shanked Douc Langur (2, 1, 2)*

* Indicates a new addition to the trip list

Day 6:

We were up and on the road by 6am, the morning air still cool as we made our way towards the **Sơn Trà Peninsula**. Today was (again) dedicated to one of our major targets, the **Red-shanked Douc Langur**. Our first stop was the lowland fringes, always worth a careful scan, as the langurs occasionally descend to these lower elevations in the early morning to feed. After around half an hour of searching, we decided to push higher before the heat of the day set in.

The Red-shanked Douc Langur is one of the world's most visually spectacular primates, a true kaleidoscope of deep red, grey, white, orange and black that seems almost too vivid to be real. This is one of the reasons they have so deservedly earned the name **"Queen of the Primates"**. **Sơn Trà** remains as one of the most accessible places in the world to observe this species, though specialist access is required to get to the good, non-tourist spots!

We began hiking into the area known locally as the Monkey Pass, a stretch of trail that has historically offered some of the best chances of encountering the doucs at close range. We hadn't even been walking for twenty minutes when we picked up our first group of **Red-shanked Douc Langur (Pygathrix nemaeus)**: a large alpha male accompanied by two immatures, the rest of the family tucked somewhere deeper in the canopy. The views were really satisfying, though less photogenic, as they were tucked up in the trees partially obscured. At the same moment, one of our team spotted a second group further ahead, a promising sign that the doucs were nice and active in the area.



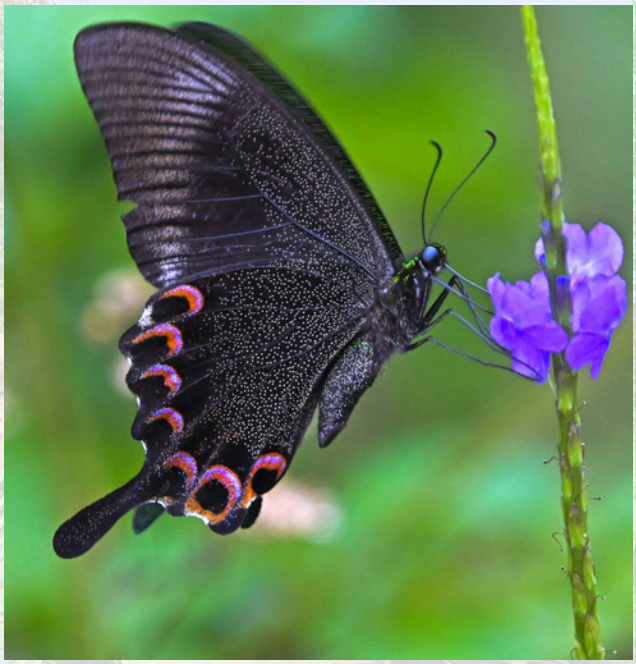
Red-shanked Douc Langur
(Pygathrix nemaeus)

Encouraged, we pressed on enjoying a nice variety of biodiversity, including butterflies, birds and our first troop of **Rhesus Macaque (Macaca mulatta),** tick number 33 for the trip!). Always dedicated, our driver Thinh meanwhile had been scanning independently from a different vantage point, helping us cover as much ground as possible.

His hard work paid off, as he found our next **Douc Langur** sitting nicely out on an open branch (we've said it before, but our driving team absolutely rock!). We moved back quickly to take advantage of the opportunity but unfortunately a passing group of hikers bothering the langurs as they passed. We decided to settled in and wait, giving the animals time to relax and re-emerge.

Patience was rewarded as shortly after, one of the langurs reappeared at eye-level, so close that we needed to move very carefully and quietly not to disturb it. As we eased into position, it became clear that the rest of the family had been nearby all along. One by one they materialised, eventually we counted around eight individuals, a typical family group size for this mountain.

What followed was one of those textbook perfect mornings on **Sơn Trà**. Our Douc Langur family appeared entirely at ease, quite happy to sit and eat figs, whilst we snapped away at perfect angles in perfect golden hour light. (As usual), a **Pallas's Squirrel** threaded through the branches nearby, our first for the day. We stayed with the langurs for around forty minutes until, on their own terms, they moved off into the forest and out of view. It was time for an early lunch.



Paris Peacock Swallowtail
(Papilio paris)



(Indochinese) Rhesus Macaque
(Macaca mulatta)

We arrived at the base of **Bạch Mã National Park** around 1:00 pm. Hardly the ideal time for mammalwatching (or birding), but still we tried our luck searching for Maritime Striped Squirrel. Instead, we found several very hot-looking **Pallas's Squirrel** sprawled out in palm trees, sheltering from the heat.

Determined to escape the heat as soon as possible, we continued higher into the mountains, enjoying the noticeable drop in temperature as we gained elevation. Along the way we picked up several nice birds, including **Black Eagle**, **Indochinese Yuhina**, and **Orange-bellied Leafbird**.

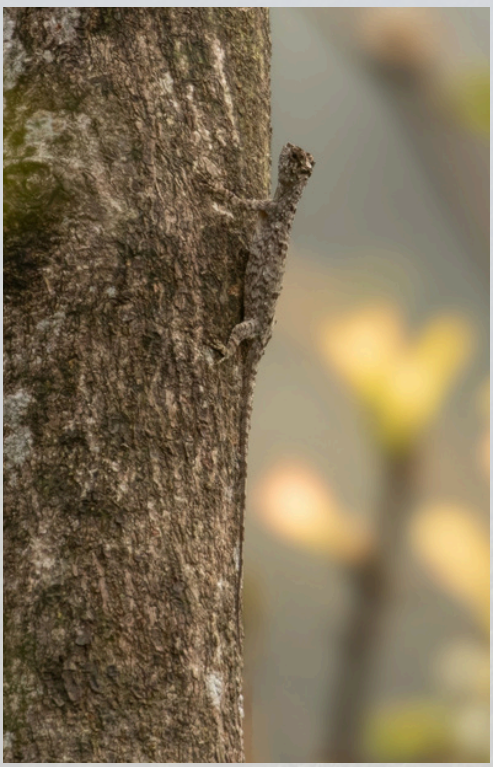
Last October, **Bạch Mã** suffered a significant landslide a few kilometres south of the summit and accommodation area. Thanks to the efforts of park rangers, local partners, and several friends of ours, a narrow bypass track was constructed around the damaged section of road, allowing continued access into the park. Although the landslide has added an extra logistical challenge, it is still possible to cross the affected area, continue by motorbike to the summit, and stay at the extraordinary old French villa. For now, the accommodation remains without power or hot water, but that is all part of mammalwatching life, and the rewards (we know!) are always worth it. Current estimates suggest repairs and the return of power may still be at least 12 months away. After a long morning and the climb into **Bạch Mã**, everyone was ready for a break. We checked into our rooms, closed our eyes for a short rest, and promptly slept through until dinner.

Bạch Mã, in every way and shape, is utterly spectacular. Situated along the central Annamite Mountains of Vietnam, the park protects a remarkable transition zone between northern and southern Indochinese ecosystems, resulting in exceptionally high biodiversity and a rich mix of species from both regions. Its extensive evergreen forests harbour an impressive suite of Annamite endemics and near-endemics, making it one of Vietnam's premier destinations for natural history and wildlife watching. For mammalwatchers, this is a key location for mega rarities such as Annamite Muntjac, Northern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon, Sunda Pangolin and Owston's Civet (to name a few), as well as many other species that are more-or-less impossible elsewhere in Vietnam. The cool montane climate, rugged terrain, and relatively intact forest systems create ideal conditions for serious wildlife watching, and recent years of strong patrol and crackdown on illegal wildlife poaching has helped to make wildlife watching more accessible than ever and allowed the forest to recover and thrive.

After our nap and an absolutely enormous dinner feast, it was time to grab our thermals, spotlights, cameras, and binoculars and head out into the forest.

One notable event from the afternoon came from our second group, which was also in Bạch Mã at the same time with our guide **Huy Chu**. While we were all asleep, they managed to find a troop of **Stump-tailed Macaque** right near the accommodation, a much-wanted target for several people in our group. A reminder that sometimes resting is overrated!

Conditions for spotlighting that night were excellent, though we'll intentionally keep the exact route and locations vague. In total, we spent around five hours in the forest, covering just under 3.5 kilometres there and back.



Orange-winged Flying Lizard
(Draco maculatus)



Sunset in Bạch Mã National Park

Our first sighting of the night was a troop of **Red-shanked Douc Langur** fast asleep in the canopy. There were approximately 5~ individuals, but we did not linger for long, preferring not to disturb these vulnerable primates while they rested. Besides, it would have been difficult to top the spectacular views we had enjoyed earlier that day.

As we left the langurs, Thanh found a **small rodent** in the trees. It was small and very fast and no photos were taken of the animal. Our collective notes described the animal as:

- Small, grey on top
- A uniform silver grey all over
- Large black eyes
- Large round ears that were held or pointed back (maybe when running?)
- Tail appeared pale, naked
- White feet, obviously different to the fur colour

If anyone wants to give identification a go, it would be most welcomed!

Our next mammal of the night was a **microbat sp.** that proved very difficult to observe. It repeatedly landed in the same tree, only to fly off again before we could properly get a light on it. Thankfully, we were able to record its calls on the spectrogram, which confirmed the bat as a **Northern Woolly Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus perniger)**, a species we encounter regularly at **Bạch Mã**. Unfortunately, all of our records came via spectrogram and thermal detection only, with no proper visual observations. This became one of the more frustrating “dips” of the trip, especially as we continued to record the species acoustically at several locations from **Bạch Mã** onwards.

We then had a relatively quiet stretch where we heard a **Mountain Scops Owl** and found roosting **Ferruginous Flycatcher** and **Blue Whistling Thrush**, but no mammals. Soon we entered a gully and experienced what turned out to be one of the most memorable moments of the trip. Down through a fern-covered gully lined with bamboo, fishtail palms, and a dark, moonless sky, were hundreds (if not thousands!) of fireflies. Our group literally walked among the stars, as though we were giants stepping through a galaxy of gently twinkling light. It was one of the most beautiful things most of us had ever witnessed and even managed to draw our attention away from an otherwise mammal-less stretch of road. Species-wise, we believe these were **Stenocladius bicoloripes**, the only firefly species we have recorded at Bạch Mã so far.

Then it was time for one of the big mega's of the trip. Around a corner, one of our team picked up a large mammal grazing in a clearing. We were onto it quickly, and it was clear this was a muntjac. There are only two species here, the Annamite and the Large-antlered, and both are true megas and endemic to this part of the world. We got everyone ready and on went the lights.

Boom! There, in clear, full and stunning view, was an **Annamite Muntjac (Muntiacus truongsonensis)**, a lifer for all participants! These are spectacular animals and ours was just there, less than 30 metres away grazing contentedly at the edge of the forest! After a few minutes, it lazily wandered off and we high-fived, hugged and celebrated as only mammalwatchers can.



Annamite Muntjac
(Muntiacus truongsonensis)

The next stretch of forest had us on smaller species, with a few nice encounters with endemic frogs such as **Rhacophorus annamensis**, **Nanohyla marmorata**, **Hylarana attigua**, **Limnonectes poilani** and several more. A brief sighting of a **Tai-yong Keelback** moving through the grass reminded us to keep an eye on where we stepped.

After a short break, we headed back up through the same section of gully, with things going from awesome to epic. First up, we came around the corner to find a **Masked Palm Civet (Paguma larvata)**, rooting around in the scrub less than 2 metres away. Most of us got nice views as the animal noticed us and fled into the forest. But a tick is a tick, and it was a new one for the trip list (number 35)!

Pumped up by our civet, we returned to the same clearing from earlier. Unbelievably, the **Annamite Muntjac** was still there, having moved even further out into the open. Ecstatic, we watched it feed, taking a few distant shots before Thanh practically dragged us up around a small hill to the centre of the clearing, where we looked right down at the animal. Here we had extraordinary, crippling-good views of it feeding in full view at perfect eye level. As we watched, we turned to suddenly catch a SECOND **Annamite Muntjac** darting off through the bracken. Two in the same spot! In all our tours, we had never had anything even close to this. We were an unbelievably happy group.

Thinking luck was on our side, we made our way back up through the gully, listening to the occasional **Impressed Tortoise** gurgling bark sound or **Tiny Bubble-nest Frog**, call out from a rocky gully area.

Along the way, the night had one final reward. There in the bamboo, we finally got onto a **Southern Pygmy Slow Loris** that everyone in the group could see. It took some time, as the animal was in very dense foliage, but eventually we even managed a few nice shots. Redemption! And though not a new tick, it felt every bit as good as one….almost!



Annamite Muntjac
(Muntiacus truongsonensis)



Southern Pygmy Slow Loris
(Xanthonycticebus pygmaeus)

On the way back, we picked up the heat signatures of our sleeping doucs, along with some fine non-mammals including a **Southern Giant Hornet** (which gave off as much heat as a rodent!), **Japanese Long-legged Centipede**, a bright orange **Stonefly sp.**, a **Whipscorpion**, and of course our beautiful, glittering cosmos of **fireflies**.

Day 6 brought our mammal tour total to 35 species, with 32 photographed. Suffice to say, we all went to bed very happy. A few guests even reported hearing what sounded like large mammals running across their roofs at 3:00am. Is falling asleep to civets on your roof better than rain? We think so.

Sơn Trà Nature Reserve / Bạch Mã National Park (in order seen):

1. Red-shanked Douc Langur (10, 2, 5)*
2. Rhesus Macaque (25-35)*
3. Pallas's Squirrel (1, 1, 1)
4. Annamite Muntjac (2)*
5. Masked Palm Civet (1)*
6. Southern Pygmy Slow Loris (1)

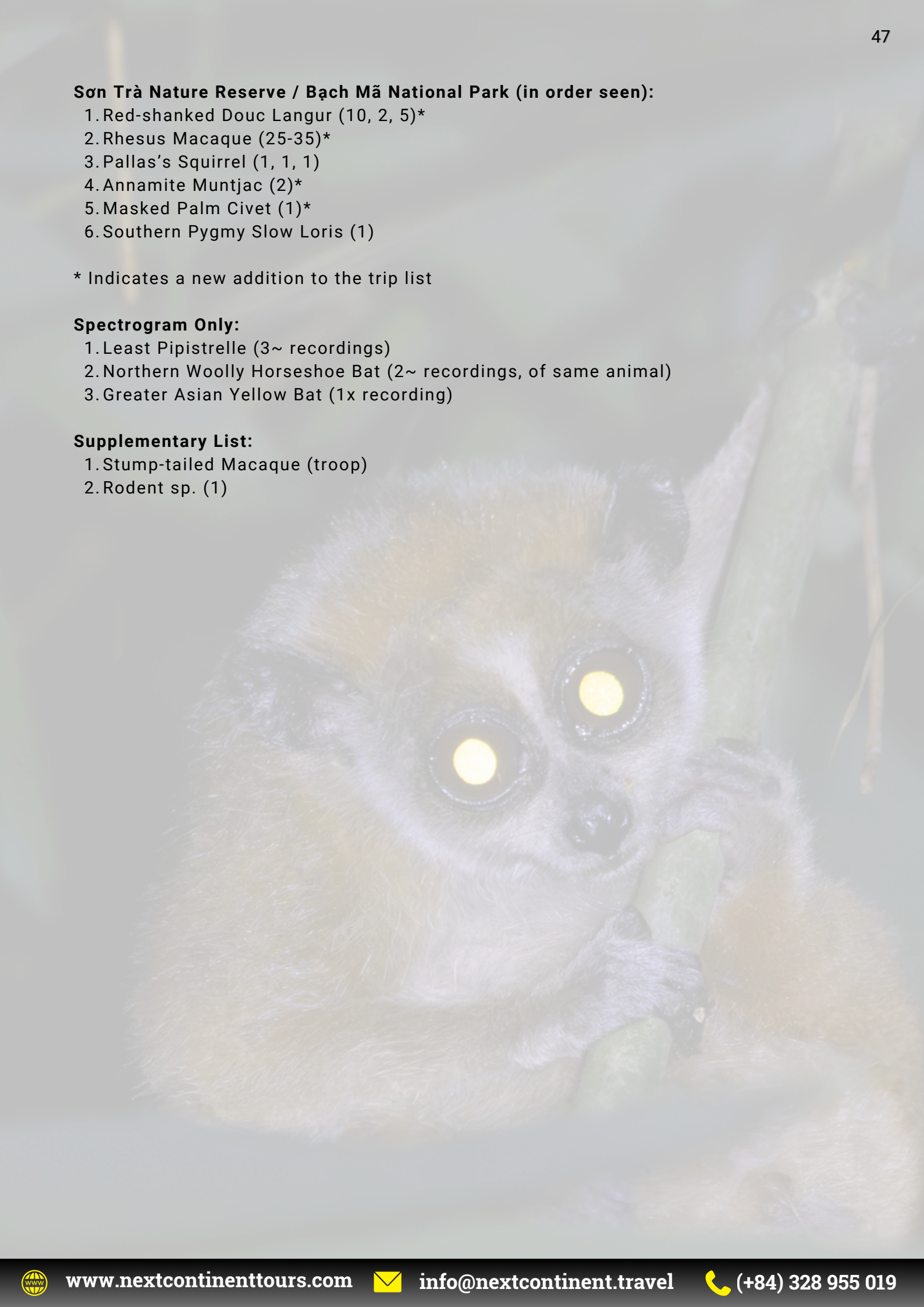
* Indicates a new addition to the trip list

Spectrogram Only:

1. Least Pipistrelle (3~ recordings)
2. Northern Woolly Horseshoe Bat (2~ recordings, of same animal)
3. Greater Asian Yellow Bat (1x recording)

Supplementary List:

1. Stump-tailed Macaque (troop)
2. Rodent sp. (1)



Day 7:

It was Sunday and our group was up early at around 6:30am, ready for breakfast at 7:00am. Today our main goal was to visit the mines constructed during the American War, excavated around 1973 and used for storage and defensive positions for food, weapons and troops. They are largely ignored by the casual day-hikers who visit Bạch Mã, who pass their entrances completely unaware as the jungle has largely reclaimed them. Now their only occupants are bats. To date we have recorded around half a dozen species in these caves, as well as the occasional Small-toothed Ferret Badger, who seem to use the mines as daytime refuges, so we were keen to check them out.

Some of our group (the birders among them) had risen very early and while exploring the forest around the accommodation spotted a number of **Maritime Striped Squirrel (Tamiops maritimus)**, our first for the trip. Unfortunately these weren't seen by all group members, so remained a species we still needed to target for everyone. But a nice easy win to start the day!

After breakfast we hit the trails. Along the way we had some great birds including **Rufous-throated Partridge**, **Large Hawk Cuckoo**, **Silver-backed Needletail**, **Austen's Brown Hornbill**, **Necklaced Barbet**, **Collared Owlet**, **Blyth's White-browed Shrikebabbler**, **Ratchet-tailed Treepie**, **Claudia's Leaf Warbler**, **Golden Babbler**, **Silver-eared Mesia**, **Black-throated Laughingthrush** and **Narcissus Flycatcher**, to name a few. A brilliantly coloured **Gia Lai Pricklenape** also gave us a spectacular showing in the middle of the road. Mammals, however, were noticeably absent, and our efforts to track down some of the diurnal squirrels (Asian Red-cheeked, Inornate and Maritime) all came to nothing. Our only mammal encounter was a handful of **Pallas's Squirrel**. To add a touch of disappointment, we also learned that a large troop of approximately 40~ **Stump-tailed Macaque** had (once again) crossed through the accommodation area less than 10 minutes after we left!



Gia Lai Pricklenape
(*Acanthosaura nataliae*)

Soon we were up at the mines. Fitted with masks and red lights, and after a quick safety briefing, it was time to venture in. As is typical, there were good numbers of **Intermediate Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus affinis)** throughout. Boom! Our first tick of the day. Many were hanging close and in full view for excellent viewing. We also picked out a handful of the less common **Pearson's Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus pearsonii)** for our second tick of the day. Two bright orange bats were also spotted flying through a handful of times. We have recorded Ha Long Roundleaf Bat (H. alongensis) here before, but given the number of possible orange-coloured Hipposideros and other genera, these unfortunately got away from us unidentified.



Intermediate Horseshoe Bat
(Rhinolophus affinis)



Pearson's Horseshoe Bat
(Rhinolophus pearsonii)

After a big morning up at the summit, we returned with two new bat species but had notably dipped on squirrels, ferret badger, new primates, or even the outside chance of a Yellow-throated Marten. No matter, we returned, had lunch, and most of us went straight to sleeping through the heat of the afternoon. We had now been on the road for exactly a week, longer still for those who had flown in from the other side of the world or organised a pre-tour extension, so fatigue was setting in.

Around 4:00pm, those keen to try for Maritime Striped Squirrel met near the restaurant and we searched around the area until dinner. Despite careful looking we came up empty on squirrels, though a few of us enjoyed further views of **Red-shanked Douc Langur**. As we waited for dinner, the highlights were a lovely adult **Silver Pheasant**, **Scaly-breasted Partridge** (calling only), **Grey-cheeked Warbler** and a handful of **Common Cuckoo** passing through on migration.

A nice bonus was a collection of butterflies and other insects congregating around several flowering trees near the accommodation. A surprising highlight was a species of Hummingbird Moth, **Macroglossum prometheus**, which we believe represents the first record for Vietnam, though it has surely been overlooked rather than being genuinely absent.

At dinner we listened to **Spot-bellied Eagle Owl** and **Mountain Scops Owl** while enjoying the usual generous feast and several lukewarm cans of soft drink. Then it was time for spotlighting.



Macroglossum prometheus

Tonight unfortunately proved to be our most disappointing night in the field, where we effectively drew a blank. Our first animal was a large **Niviventer** species moving around on the ground among the Dicranopteris ferns. We had poor views, noting the clear orange-red fur, pink ears with dark tips, a clean demarcation to white underparts and a long, pale tail. Though far from conclusive, this was most likely Indomalayan Niviventer (N. fulvescens), though Indochinese Mountain Niviventer (N. tenaster) and other species (even the Maxomys genus) are possible here.

Almost immediately after, a small rodent that was almost certainly an **Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mouse** darted in full view along a branch, disappearing within seconds before any photography or extended viewing was possible.

Two misses quickly became three when we spotted a hanging bat in a tree on the thermal. Given its shape most likely a **False Vampire** (Megaderma sp.), but before we could so much as reach for the torches it was gone. We decided to wait it out, and in that time a whole family of **Spot-bellied Eagle Owl** arrived (calling up the hill), with chicks begging for food. At that point we knew the night was over for small mammals.

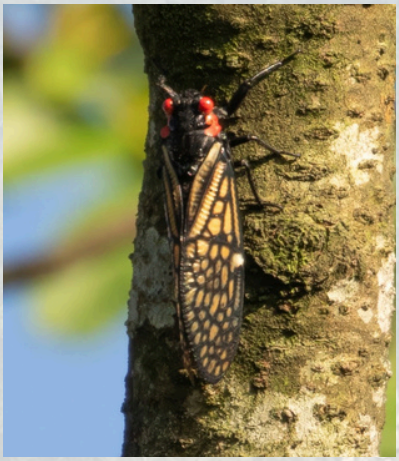
On the way back down, Thanh continued to pick up sleeping birds and a few likely **flying squirrels**, but nothing was cooperating on this particular frustrating night.

Back at the accommodation, we grabbed some deck chairs and set up near a fruiting **Giant Fishtail Palm (Caryota obtusa)**. The night before, our guide **Huy** (on a seperate Next Continent tour) had found a **Northern Palm Civet** visiting the tree to feed, so we decided to stage our own stakeout. After around an hour Thanh picked up a civet, but the animal seemed to sense our presence and crept back into the forest before venturing into the open.

It was an early night (around 10:15pm) when we called it quits. We had an early start ahead, and everyone was a little burned out and ready to crash. Eight-plus days in the field can do this to even the most seasoned mammalwatcher, and it's hard to find a second wind after one of those lacklustre nights. Still, the day hadn't been in vain. We'd enjoyed plenty of great birds, butterflies and herps, and more importantly added two more bat species to bring our total trip list to a considerable 38 species.



Bamboo Orchid
(Arundina graminifolia)



Talainga binghami



Coeliccia chromothorax

Bạch Mã National Park (in order seen):

1. Maritime Striped Squirrel (3~)*
2. Pallas's Squirrel (2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 1, 2)
3. Intermediate Horseshoe Bat (35~)*
4. Pearson's Horseshoe Bat (2)*
5. Red-shanked Douc Langur (3)

* Indicates a new addition to the trip list

Spectrogram Only:

1. Chinese Water Myotis (5~ recordings)
2. Chinese Pipistrelle (5~ recordings)
3. Western Bent-winged Bat (2~ recordings)
4. Greater Asian Yellow Bat (2~ recordings)
5. Myotis phanluongi (1x recording)

Supplementary List:

1. Stump-tailed Macaque (40~)
2. "Orange" Bat sp. (2)
3. Niviventer sp. (1) – likely Indomalayan Niviventer
4. Rodent sp. (1)
5. Megadermatidae sp. (1)
6. Civet sp. (1) – likely Northern Palm Civet

Day 8:

Today was once again one of our earliest starts. We were all up at around 5:00am, packing up and jumping on motorbikes to transfer down the mountain. Our first major target was the incredibly tough Northern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon. This species was once quite reliable around **Bạch Mã**, but since the landslide we had been encountering them at an increasingly unreliable rate, probably fewer than 15% of our tours. There is only one family that appears to come close enough to areas where we can set up a scope for viewing, and this of course is very luck-dependent.

Once packed up, we headed down to the landslide area by motorbike, driven by the park rangers. On the way down, some of us spotted a few **Red-shanked Douc Langur** waking up for the day, and one lucky participant picked up our only **Asian Red-cheeked Squirrel (Dremomys rufigenis)** of the trip crossing the road. A great find!

For those who arrived at the landslide first, great excitement rippled through the group as we heard the spectacular, iconic song of **Northern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon (Nomascus annamensis)**. They were around, now it was just time to find them.

We spent the next two and a half hours searching without luck. These incredibly tricky primates stayed out of sight for the rest of the morning, falling silent shortly after the first few participants arrived on the scene (and joining our supplementary only list). Incredibly disappointing. As we waited, we picked up our first **Bay Woodpecker** of the trip along with a **Fork-tailed Sunbird**, and enjoyed some fine insects including **Collared Carpenter Bee**, **Three-coloured Kaiser**, **Mogannia indigotea**, **Plain Banded Awl** and many more.



Northern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon....habitat

On our way out of **Bạch Mã**, we stopped in a lowland section of forest to search once again for some of our diurnal squirrels. This time we were in luck, and after around 5 minutes, we found a pair of **Maritime Striped Squirrel (Tamiops maritimus)** performing well, low in the canopy. It was great for the photographers and for those who had missed the ones from yesterday morning.

It was time to leave **Bạch Mã** and Central Vietnam and begin travelling north. We stopped for an early lunch at around 10:30am near **Huế**. This is (probably) Vietnam's most beautiful city and the original seat of the Nguyen Dynasty emperors, serving as the national capital from 1802 to 1945. Here we unexpectedly added a mammal to the trip list when one participant, heading back to the vehicle, spotted a mouse run along a stone wall near the bus. This was almost certainly an **Asian House Mouse**, very common around cities and urban areas. Though seen by only a single participant and not 100% confirmed, this one goes on the supplementary list.

After lunch, we travelled northward to **Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park**, one of the most spectacular wilderness areas in Vietnam and a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Covering around 885 square kilometres of near-pristine tropical evergreen jungle, more than 90% of which is primary forest, the park is one of Southeast Asia's great biodiversity hotspots, with over 100~ mammal species recorded, including 10 primates, as well as more than 300 bird species and 80 reptile and amphibian species.

The park, however, is perhaps best known for its extraordinary cave systems, often referred to as Vietnam's "Kingdom of Caves", with over 400 caves surveyed and mapped, totalling some 220 kilometres of passages. The big one is **Son Doong**, the largest cave in the world by volume. Discovered by a local forager in 1990 and only properly surveyed in 2009, Son Doong's largest passage is so vast it can accommodate a Boeing 747 in flight. Access is strictly capped at just 1,000 visitors per year for multi-day expeditions, which are typically fully booked eight to twelve months in advance.



Maritime Striped Squirrel
(Tamiops maritimus)

For us, however, we were here for rare mammals and new ticks…and caves only if they had bats!

We checked into our accommodation and again took some time to rest. Almost all Next Continent tours stay at this wonderful villa a little outside of the township. Its perks include a restaurant, a great selection of local craft beers, a pool and modern comfortable rooms. But more relevantly for us, it is surrounded by paddy fields and wetlands, making for excellent wildlife watching!

Around 4:00pm we headed into the park for some light exploration. Everyone was completely exhausted after the big push at **Bạch Mã**, so spotlighting was off the table. With an extremely early start the following morning for Southern White-cheeked Gibbon, an early night was very much what the doctor ordered. In the few hours we were in the park we mainly observed birds, reptiles and insects, with no mammals to speak of. Our main targets had been Stump-tailed Macaque and Assam Macaque, both of which occur in good numbers in the park and are most often seen crossing roads or perched high up on the karst. Tonight, however, the best we managed were several **Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo**, **Blue-rumped Pitta**, **Austen's Brown Hornbill** and several groups of **Cook's Swift** (a major target for the birders in the group). We did a brief sweep with the spectrogram for bats (3x species) and then left the park.

Back at the accommodation we had dinner and turned in early. There was brief talk of heading out to spotlight the paddy fields for Ricefield Rat (a very reliable spot for the species) but no one could muster the energy. End of day 8, trip list at 39 species.

Bạch Mã National Park (in order seen):

1. Red-shanked Douc Langur (1, 1)
2. Asian Red-cheeked Squirrel (1)*
3. Pallas's Squirrel (1, 1, 1)
4. Maritime Striped Squirrel (2, 1)

* Indicates a new addition to the trip list

Spectrogram Only:

1. Wrinkle-lipped Bat (2~ recordings)
2. Intermediate Roundleaf Bat (1~ recording)
3. Woolly Horseshoe Bat 2~ recordings)

Supplementary List:

1. Northern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon (H/O)
2. Asian House Mouse (probably)



Collared Carpenter Bee
(Xylocopa dejeanii)

Day 9:

We departed our villa long before dawn to the sound of both **Common Cuckoo** and **Plaintive Cuckoo** calling in the pitch black. One of our team members had risen even earlier (around 3:30am) and went to explore the adjacent paddy fields, picking up a very nice **Ricefield Rat (Rattus argentiventer)** before the rest of us were even awake (what mammalwatcher can sleep easy, knowing a lifer is nearby?)

Today, we were after the Southern White-cheeked Gibbon, an incredibly rare species that sits more or less off the target list for most visiting mammalwatchers in Vietnam due to its largely restricted range and very limited numbers. For the last decade or so, the species had become next to impossible to connect with, making it high on the “wants” list.

Last year, Thanh and Huy (the guide we caught up with in **Bạch Mã**) undertook a dedicated research trip, surveying a vast area of the park. And through extraordinary effort, eventually located several family groups, getting some excellent views in the process. Since then, we've been finding this near-impossible species on a semi-regular basis. Today (our first serious group mammal tour of 2026) would be a real test of that hardwork.

We arrived at our spot a little after first light, and within five minutes could hear two separate families of **Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (Nomascus siki)** singing from the surrounding valleys. Over the next 45 minutes we covered the area, scanning treelines and staking out key spots where we had seen this species several times in recent months. Then, we heard their spectacular song erupt from just down the hill. We split the group (half at the top, and the rest further down) watching and waiting. Eventually, Thanh caught a quick flash of a jet-black adult male swinging through the upper canopy. Ask any guide, there is nothing worse than seeing your target species and having your guests miss it.



Gibbon Habitat
Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park

And despite our best efforts, nothing more was seen (or heard) over the following two hours. A massive disappointment, though we resolved to return even earlier the next morning to try again.

While on our gibbon quest we enjoyed a solid supporting cast of birds with **Pin-tailed Green Pigeon**, **Crested Serpent Eagle**, **Eastern Buzzard**, **Oriental Hobby**, **Sultan Tit**, **Large Scimitar Babbler** and the range-restricted **Spot-necked Babbler**, enough to keep the birders in our group at least partially mollified.

Gibbons are notorious for disappearing entirely during the day, only really trackable in those first few hours of morning or occasionally late afternoon. So we turned our attention to the park's other primates. **Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng NP** is a stronghold for Red-shanked Douc Langur, but more importantly for us it holds Hatinh Langur, Assam Macaque, Stump-tailed Macaque and the taxonomically debatable Indochinese Black Langur.

Frustratingly, the rest of the morning proved rather mammal-less beyond the occasional **Pallas's Squirrel** and a handful of feral **Domestic Dog** that are wild in the park. All in all, a tough morning. That said, with the gibbons located and calling very close to where we had been, the following day's early start already felt full of promise.

We returned to the accommodation for lunch and an afternoon rest. Most of us relaxed, though a few edited photos while others explored the local birds in the surrounding fields, with **Red Collared Dove**, **Zitting Cisticola** and a **(Japanese) Brown Shrike (L. c. superciliosus)**, a welcome migrant pick-up.



Spiny Tree Fern
(Alsophila spinulosa)

For the next two hours we slowly worked the road in both directions, but it was once again a day of dipping on macaques. This stretch is normally a productive mammal area, as we've had Yellow-throated Marten and Javan Mongoose here in the past. As had been the theme of the day, the walk delivered more for the birders, a pair of singing **Scaly-breasted (Tonkin) Partridge**, **Yellow-vented Green Pigeon**, **Mountain Imperial Pigeon**, **Red-headed Trogon**, **Red-vented Barbet**, **Long-tailed Broadbill**, and four **Red-collared Woodpecker**, one of the standout target species in Vietnam and a very nice lifer for the birders in our group.



Mountain Imperial Pigeon
(Ducula badia)

As the light faded, we had just remarked on how these feral banana thickets can be excellent for **Inornate Squirrel (Callosciurus inornatus)** when, as if on cue, one shot out of a tree, sprinted across the road in full view, and disappeared back into the bananas on the other side. Fantastic! A much-wanted target delivered right on queue! Our walking had not been in vain!

Soon after dark we transferred our way out of the park to another area known for its concentration of bat caves, including one holding a very large colony (likely a few thousand) of **Leschenault's Rousette**. As the light faded, bats of all shapes and sizes streamed overhead and passed close by us in near-constant movement. For around twenty minutes the spectacle was extraordinary, accompanied by the characteristic soft “clicking” calls of Rousettus around us.

The rousettes stood out clearly against the many smaller microbats moving through the area. In good views they are a relatively straightforward genus to identify: noticeably smaller and differently proportioned than Pteropus flying-foxes, yet bulkier and more direct-flying than the smaller Cynopterus fruit bats, which were also present in small numbers. Particularly distinctive was the broad, somewhat boxy, dog-like head profile, typically held projecting straight forward in flight.



Almost all of the larger cave-emerging fruit bats we observed were called as **Leschenault's Rousette (Rousettus leschenaultii)**, a new species for the trip and a lifer for most participants. The only realistic confusion species in the region is Geoffroy's Rousette, which can be extremely difficult to separate in field conditions and is generally considered reliably identifiable only in the hand or under exceptional views. However, despite targeted survey work and formal trapping within the park, Geoffroy’s Rousette has apparently not yet been documented there, making Leschenault’s by far the most likely identification for the bats we watched emerging from the caves.

As **Tokay Gecko**, **Grey Nightjar**, **Mountain Scops Owl**, **Collared Owlet** and **Brown Boobook** called from the darkness around us, we searched patches of low, scrubby forest bordering the karst hills, though mammals proved frustratingly difficult to find. Our only success was a medium-sized **Rattus sp.** (greyish above with a contrasting white belly) seen briefly as it climbed rapidly along a branch before disappearing into dense cover.

As with several of the rodents encountered during the trip, the views were unfortunately too brief for a confident identification, and we were unable to obtain photographs. However, our team has recorded **White-footed Indochinese Rat** in almost exactly the same area on two previous occasions, making that species a (possible) candidate for this individual, albeit far from certain.

With little else forthcoming, we returned to our accommodation for another early night, late dinner and a few more of those excellent craft beers. By the end of the day our trip list had climbed to 43 mammal species, with the standout additions being Inornate Squirrel and Leschenault's Rousette. Despite the success, everyone was well aware that the following morning would begin exceptionally early (around 3:30am) as we prepared for another attempt at the elusive Southern White-cheeked Gibbon. After coming so close previously, it felt very much like a chance for redemption.

Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng (in order seen):

1. Ricefield Rat (1x PAX only, early spotlighting)*
2. Pallas's Squirrel (1, 1, 1, 2)
3. Domestic Dog (2)*
4. Inornate Squirrel (1)*
5. Leschenault's Rousette (5~)*

* Indicates a new addition to the trip list

Spectrogram Only:

1. *Eastern Bent-winged Bat (5~ recordings)*
2. *Wrinkle-lipped Bat (5~ recordings)*
3. *Western Bent-winged Bat (3~ recordings)*
4. *Intermediate Horseshoe Bat (2~ recordings)*
5. *Woolly Horseshoe Bat (2~ recordings)*
6. *Intermediate Roundleaf Bat (2~ recordings)*
7. *Chinese Pipistrelle (1x recording – probable)*
8. *Horsfield's Bat (1x recording)*
9. *Lesser Asian Yellow Bat (1x recording)*
10. *Great Roundleaf Bat (1x recording)*
11. *Pomona Roundleaf Bat (1x recording)*
12. *Ashy Roundleaf Bat (4~ recordings)*

Supplementary List:

1. Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (2-3 families H/O, 1x male seen by guide)
2. Cynopterus sp. (15~)
3. Rattus sp. (1)

Day 10:

At 3:45am our alarms sounded and by 4:00am we were back in the van (fruit and boiled eggs breakfast in hand) ready to give the Southern White-cheeked Gibbon another attempt. Despite the brutally early start, there was a sense of anticipation in the group. Everyone was alert, energised, and eager to return to the park. Conditions also felt promising; cool, still, and completely calm, with no wind moving through the forest.

As if to validate the mood, our early morning drive quickly produced an unexpected reward. As we drove, a large mammal suddenly crossed the road ahead of us before pausing briefly at the roadside, perfectly illuminated in the headlights only a few metres from the vehicle. It was a **Northern Palm Civet (Paradoxurus hermaphroditus)**, a new species for the trip. The views were superb, although only two people managed photographs through the windscreen before it slipped silently back into the scrub. Regardless, it was an excellent way to begin the morning and immediately raised hopes for what might follow.



Northern Palm Civet
(Paradoxurus hermaphroditus)

Not long afterwards we arrived back at our gibbon site. Around thirty minutes of darkness remained, although the first faint glow of dawn was beginning to build low in the eastern sky. Pulling out our thermal gear and grabbing torches, we spent the remaining pre-dawn period quietly scanning the karst edge and surrounding forest. Mammals proved elusive, but the area was alive with nocturnal sounds and movement. **Grey Nightjar**, **Mountain Scops Owl** and **Collared Owlet** called repeatedly and occasionally flew around us, while several **Tokay Gecko** vocalised from the limestone. We also picked up another clear silhouette of a **Leschenault's Rousette** circling near the mouth of a cave above the road.

As dawn grew we were briefly distracted by another appearance from an **Inornate Squirrel**, which dashed through a clump of **Yunnan Banana (Musa itinerans)** before climbing into a nearby tree, allowing a few of us to finally secure photographs after our quick view yesterday afternoon.

Then almost on cue, the forest broke with the first distant, haunting phrases of a **Southern White-cheeked Gibbon** song. This time the calls were coming from further up the road (perhaps 100 metres away) roughly the same area where we had heard a group the previous morning, although much earlier in the day. Wasting no time, we hurried up the road towards the sound.

Within minutes we were almost directly alongside the gibbons, their song cascading around us and echoing off the karst forest in waves of rich, rolling music. It filled the valley completely, reverberating through the forest canopy and making it almost impossible to judge exactly where the animals were positioned. We scanned frantically through the trees, straining to pick up any movement.

Then, suddenly directly ahead of us (perhaps less than 50 metres away) came a flash of motion. An adult female **Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (Nomascus siki)** suddenly emerged into view, her striking golden-blonde fur glowing softly in the early morning light as she climbed up a large tree rising almost level with the road we were watching from. For a few chaotic moments everyone scrambled to get onto the animal, but before long the whole group had locked in views. Boom! Southern White-cheeked Gibbon!!

Moments later another flash revealed the adult male, jet black against the pale morning sky. As we watched, emotion overcoming us all, we suddenly realised that the female was cradling a tiny baby in her arms. We had found a family!

For the next twenty minutes we watched these Critically Endangered primates as they sang, called, climbed and displayed in full view, seemingly oblivious to our presence. At times it genuinely felt as though we were their private audience, the only ones in the world fortunate enough to witness their performance. Cameras clicked, while celebrations quietly broke out among the group in the form of broad smiles, handshakes, hugs and high-fives. After two attempts, Southern White-cheeked Gibbon was finally in the bag — mammal species number #45 for the trip.



Southern White-cheeked Gibbon — female
(Nomascus siki)



Southern White-cheeked Gibbon — male
(Nomascus siki)

Eventually the gibbons descended out of view and disappeared back into the forested valley below. We slowly made our way back toward the van, still buzzing from the experience, picking up several **Pallas's Squirrel** and at least one more **Inornate Squirrel** along the roadside. Bird activity had also had picked up too, including sightings of **Indochinese Cuckooshrike**, **Sultan Tit**, **Spot-necked Babbler** and **Streaked Spiderhunter**.

After a quick bit of breakfast, we pushed on determined to make the most of the cool morning conditions before the heat inevitably slowed the primate activity. Reaching our next stop, we had barely stepped out of the vehicle when our next target appeared almost immediately: a lone **Hatinh Langur (Trachypithecus hatinhensis)** sitting high atop a limestone karst tower. Although distant, the sighting perfectly captured the essence of this species and its remarkable habitat. Perched prominently against the rugged limestone skyline, the langur sat surveying the valley below like a sentry. Given its isolated position, it may well have been acting as a lookout for a nearby group.

As we admired the animal, Thanh suddenly picked up movement further down the karst face. Slowly climbing across the limestone was a family of **Red-shanked Douc Langur**. Within moments we found ourselves watching two of the world's most iconic and threatened primates simultaneously! Both Critically Endangered near-endemics occupying the same stretch of limestone. At one point, both species were visible in the same frame through binoculars and camera lenses, an extraordinary scene none of us are likely to forget anytime soon.



Red-shanked Douc Langur
(Pygathrix nemaeus)

Hatinh Langur
(Trachypithecus hatinhensis)

Then, as if the morning needed one final flourish, the distant calls of yet more **Southern White-cheeked Gibbon** drifted across the valley while we photographed the langurs and doucs. It was, without question, a morning built for spectacular world-class primate viewing!

We spent the remainder of the morning moving between several of our favourite sites within the park, picking up a rewarding selection of birds along the way. At one point, while travelling along the winding road leading east toward the Laos border, a large all-dark langur suddenly bounded across the road directly in front of the vehicle before disappearing into the forest. The animal was initially called as another Hatinh Langur and only a few of us managed views before it vanished. However, this particular stretch of forest also supports Indochinese Black Langur, raising the tantalising possibility that we may have briefly encountered one of the region's rarest primates. Unfortunately the sighting was far too brief for certainty, and it will likely remain one of the enduring "*what if*" moments of the trip. Intriguingly, while finalising this report we later learned from local rangers that a semi-reliable group of Indochinese Black Langur had recently been seen only a few hundred metres further along the same road.



Red-shanked Douc Langur
(Pygathrix nemaeus)

Our final stop in the park was a productive-looking valley known to sometimes produce Assam Macaque and Hatinh Langur, although on this occasion both species eluded us. Instead we enjoyed excellent views of **White-crested Laughingthrush**, **Crimson Sunbird** and several **Gunther's Frog** around pools near a local temple.

Back at our accommodation we settled in for a late breakfast-turned-early lunch, packed our belongings, and hit the road once more. The atmosphere in the group was electric. People compared photographs, replayed song recordings of the gibbons, and relived the morning's encounters. This is what great mammalwatching trips are all about, that shared excitement, exhaustion, relief and celebration. You just can't beat it!



Crimson Sunbird
(Aethopyga siparaja)

Our next stop, around 90 minutes further north, brought us to a small township in **Tuyên Hóa District**, a place that has become one of Vietnam's most inspiring conservation success stories. This place is home to a growing population of the critically endangered **Hatinh Langur**, which is one of Vietnam's many primates on the brink of extinction. Its known range extends only along the Vietnam-Laos border, through a handful of isolated populations in the provinces of **Quảng Bình** and **Quảng Trị**. It is listed as endangered on both the **IUCN Red List** and **Vietnam's own Red Book**.

In 2012, residents of **Thạch Hóa Commune** discovered a group of around ten langurs descending from the **Thiết Sơn** limestone mountains to drink water near the village. Some individuals initially attempted to trap and capture the animals, but upon realising how rare and endangered the species was, the community reversed course entirely, and have since worked to protect them.

That transformation is the work of a remarkable local cooperative: **HTX Bảo Tồn Voọc Gáy Trắng**, pioneered by the indefatigable Mr. Tú. Under Mr. Tú's leadership, the langurs (which once fled at the sight of humans) have become so accustomed to the presence of people that they now allow visitors to approach and photograph them without distress.



The results of their work have been genuinely remarkable. From a single group of just 11 individuals, the population has grown to 11 groups comprising around 150 individuals, distributed across 6 limestone mountain clusters within a protected area of approximately 509 hectares.

The group's work goes well beyond simply watching over the animals. Community members have been encouraged to plant trees for the langurs and participate actively in forest protection activities. A crowning achievement has been the community's successful effort to prevent development of the limestone mountains and forests the langurs depend on, a hard-won victory of local solidarity over short-term economic pressure.

The Tuyên Hóa model has attracted attention as an advanced and strategic approach to conservation, one in which local community participation is central not just to protecting the species, but to building lasting conservation awareness and ensuring that communities benefit directly from their efforts.

Next Continent has had the privilege of visiting and donating to **Mr. Tú** and the **HTX Bảo Tồn Voọc Gáy Trắng** since we started operating our specialist mammal and primate tours. This partnership is such a privilege for us and we are proud to be able to connect our guests with a conservation story driven entirely by the people who call this place home.

On arrival we first made a brief stop in a protected patch of limestone forest. One of the great privileges of visiting this area is the opportunity to access a bat cave located on private land, where carefully managed visits are occasionally permitted. Our main target here was Great Roundleaf Bat, although several other cave-roosting species have also been recorded at the site over the years.

Access to the cave is difficult and requires considerable care due to the steep and slippery terrain (something we are actively working to improve in a safe and low-impact manner). Fortunately, it did not take long to locate a small colony of approximately 30~ **Great Roundleaf Bat (Hipposideros armiger)** roosting in excellent view, providing another welcome addition to the trip list.

The cave itself was spectacular. Despite the challenging footing, the interior chambers contain extensive calcite formations and flowstone, with broad crystalline surfaces that glittered and reflected torchlight throughout the chamber. After a brief but rewarding visit, we carefully exited the cave and continued on to meet Mr. Tú.



Great Roundleaf Bat
(Hipposideros armiger)

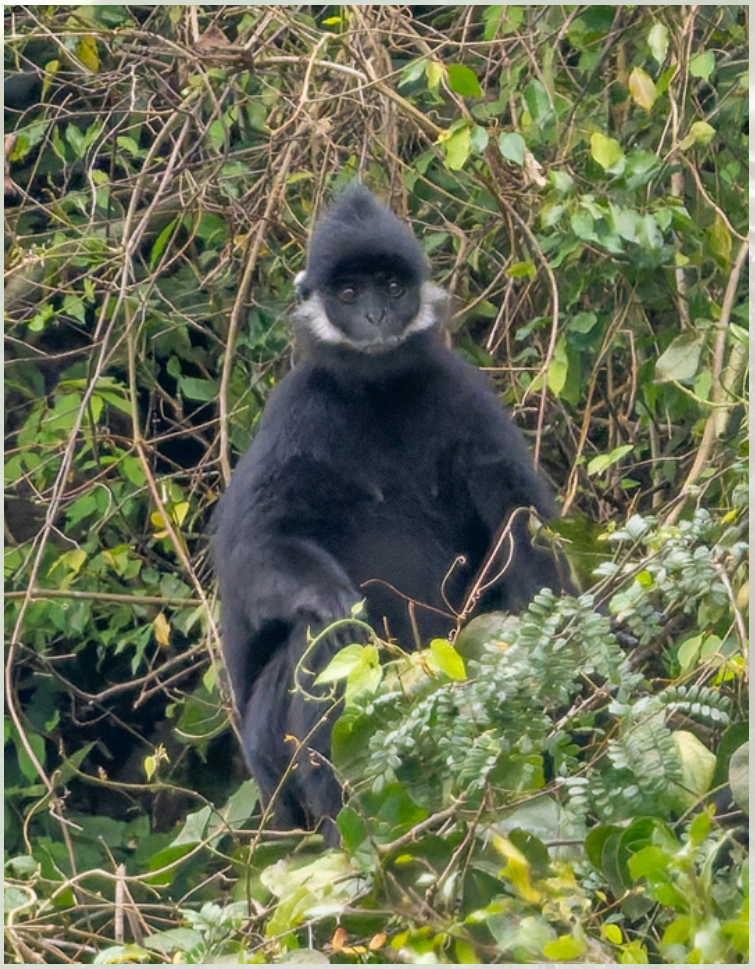
The next couple of hours were spent with Mr. Tú listening to stories, learning about his conservation work, and discussing the history and achievements of **HTX Bảo Tồn Voọc Gáy Trắng**, particularly its efforts to protect the region's remaining **Hatinh Langur** populations. Given it was the middle of the day and typically slower wildlife activity, there was no need to rush. However, conditions were unusually pleasant (mild and overcast rather than oppressively hot) so by mid-afternoon we climbed back into the bus, transferred onto motorbikes, and headed out in search of langurs.



Calcite formations and flowstone

Although we had already seen this target earlier in the day (or at least a distant individual) nothing quite prepares you for the experience of observing Hatinh Langur up close in such a calm and natural setting. Sharing the moment with the very people fighting to protect them added an entirely different level of meaning to the encounter.

Over the next hour we accompanied Mr. Tú through the limestone landscape, witnessing firsthand what genuine grassroots conservation, persistence, and local passion can achieve in Vietnam. In total we observed approximately fourteen **Hatinh Langur** across several small parties (1, 5, 7, 1), enjoying prolonged and often exceptional views as they fed, rested, and moved effortlessly across the karst slopes. The combination of the species itself, the setting, and the conservation story behind the population made the experience deeply moving for many in the group. A nice bonus animal was a **Forest Garden Lizard**, now our fourth species of Calotes for the trip.





Hatinh Langur
(Trachypithecus hatinhensis)

By the end of the afternoon there were heartfelt thanks, hugs, and words of encouragement shared with Mr. Tú, along with more than a few emotional moments as the significance of his work truly sank in. Encounters like this stay with you for life, and we feel incredibly proud and privileged to work alongside Mr. Tú and everyone involved with HTX Bảo Tồn Voọc Gáy Trắng.

We said our goodbyes and continued north toward **Vinh**, where we would spend the night before pushing onward to **Cúc Phương National Park** and northern Vietnam the following morning. It had been an extraordinary day and unquestionably one of the major highlights of the trip; combining world-class mammals, exceptional diversity, inspiring conservation stories, and unforgettable encounters. By this stage the trip list had reached 47 mammal species, with 41 photographed, and the mood within the group was at an all-time high.



Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng / Tuyên Hóa (in order seen):

1. Northern Palm Civet (1)*
2. Leschenault's Rosette (1)
3. Inornate Squirrel (1, 1)
4. Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (3, H/O groups)*
5. Pallas's Squirrel (1, 1)
6. Red-shanked Douc Langur (3, 8)
7. Hatinh Langur (1, 5, 7, 1)*
8. Great Roundleaf Bat (30~)*

* Indicates a new addition to the trip list



Day 11:

Now on Day 11 of the tour, we enjoyed the rare luxury of a "*sleep-in*" and a far more relaxed morning routine, with breakfast at 7:00am and check-out at 7:45am. A little after 8:00am we waved goodbye to **Nghệ An** and the city of **Vinh** as we began the final stretch of the trip: northern Vietnam, where a whole new suite of remarkable species (hopefully) awaited us. Having already surpassed our original target of around 30 mammal species, we were now eager to see just how much further we could push the trip total.

We arrived at **Cúc Phương National Park** around lunchtime, finding our only **Wang's Garden Lizard** of the trip along the way (our fifth Calotes for the trip), before grabbing something to eat in the township and checking into our accommodation inside the park. Despite the excitement, the heat and constant travel were beginning to catch up with us, so most of the group took a few hours to rest, shower, unpack, and prepare for the afternoon and evening spotlighting ahead.



White Dragontail Butterfly
(Lamproptera curius)

By late afternoon we gathered up our gear and equipment and transferred deeper into the forest. The plan was to spend a few hours searching before dusk, followed by an early dinner and an extended night of spotlighting.

Our main daytime target was Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel, a reasonably common species in the park. We also revisited an area where we had previously recorded Stripe-backed Weasel and several other good diurnal mammals. Despite plenty of searching, however, the only species we managed during the afternoon were numerous **Pallas's Squirrel** and a single **Maritime Striped Squirrel**, our first two mammals of the day.

The incidental birding on the other hand was excellent, with quality species such as **Red-vented Barbet**, **Dollarbird**, **Asian Barred Owlet**, and **Grey-throated Babbler**. Everywhere we walked we flushed clouds of **Little Mapwing** from the trails.

A couple of particularly memorable non-animal highlights included the spectacular **Black Bat Flower (Tacca chantrieri)** and **Aloe-leaved Cymbidium (Cymbidium aloifolium)**, a particularly striking species of boat orchid.





While we waited for an early dinner (cold beers and soft drinks in hand) two members of the group wandered down the road and returned with views of our first **Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel (Dremomys pernyi)** of the trip. We also found a gorgeous **Broad-bordered Hummingbird Hawkmoth**, our fourth species of hummingbird hawkmoth for the journey so far.

As the sun set, the forest came alive. We finished dinner, photographed a few **Asian House Gecko**, **Asian Flat-tailed Gecko** and **Tokay Gecko**, then grabbed our torches and thermals and prepared for the night ahead.

Before we had even left the area, we picked up a medium-sized rat darting across the ground and disappearing into a large pile of rocks. As we watched more carefully, it became clear there were 5~ or so animals moving in and out of what appeared to be a rat nest located beneath the rubble. Like so many rodents, they proved frustratingly difficult to observe well or photograph, repeatedly slipping in and out to the safety of the cracks and crevices. Fortunately, they were somewhat predictable, continuing to reappearing from the same openings whenever we switched off the lights.

For the next twenty minutes or so we experimented with every technique we could think of (red light, white light, flash, no flash) gradually piecing together around a dozen usable images to aid with identification.

In the field, we suspected that we had encountered a species of **Berylmys**. The only species we were reasonably familiar with was the **Small White-toothed Rat (Berylmys bermorei)**, though our animal did not appear to fit it particularly well. We also considered Bower's Rat, another member of the genus, but again the characteristics did not quite align.

The animal was a medium-to-large rat with greyish-brown upperparts and slightly paler grey underparts, though without any strong demarcation or obvious brightening below. The ears were large, rounded, and relatively nondescript dark grey in colour. It had large, dark, rounded eyes, a slightly paler (pinkish) nose, and a paler mouth and chin. The head appeared rounded and somewhat blocky, with only a short, subtly pointed snout rather than a long or sharply tapered one. The whiskers were dark black.

There were no obvious spines present; instead, the fur appeared relatively smooth, though slightly shaggy in texture. Despite obtaining good views and several photographs, the identity of this species remains unresolved at the time of writing. The few people who have weighed in, all lean towards our initial ID of **Small White-toothed Rat (Berylmys berdmorei)**, however we would still very much welcome input from experts.





While we continued photographing our little family of rats, a call suddenly went out for another, larger rodent that had been spotted moving around the shrubs at a drainage area before climbing into a nearby tree. This individual proved far less cooperative, but after a bit of back-and-forth and plenty of searching through branches and foliage, a few of us finally managed to pick it out high in the centre of the tree. A handful of quick photographs followed before the animal suddenly bolted down the trunk, vanished into the grass, and disappeared back into the jungle. Thankfully, this time we had managed much clearer views and photographs, and after twelve days in the field the **Lang Bian White-bellied Rat (Chiromyscus langbianis)** finally made it onto the trip list. Number #50! Boom!

Moving on from our rodents, we began down the road. We had barely gone 50 metres when a large civet crossed the road ahead of us. We lit the animal up, but the reach was poor and we didn't get a great view before it disappeared. Very disappointing! It had either been a **Large Indian Civet** / **Large-spotted Civet**, with Thanh leaning much more towards Large Indian, as there had been no obvious spotting even in the poor light. Either way, it was the one that got away that night.

We continued on, tracking down a bat feeding in the trees which turned out to be a **Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat**, a species we had seen right back at the start on day 0, but the first we had actually observed at night while feeding.

Before we went too much further, we picked up an area in the canopy giving off a tight ball of heat through the thermal monoculars. We initially thought this may have been our main target, the Northern Pygmy Slow Loris. However, after much poking around amongst thick ferns, we discovered a pair of **Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel (Belomys pearsonii)**, one of our major targets for **Cúc Phương**! It appeared they may have been using, or perhaps even building within, the roots of a **Bird's Nest Fern (Asplenium nidus)**. A lifer for everyone!

It was turning into one of those perfect nights for rodents and it seemed that every twenty metres or so we picked up some kind of rat, mouse or flying squirrel on thermal. As is typical with rodent watching, more than half disappeared without us managing so much as a glimpse in the spotlight, which was the case for much of the next stretch of forest. Along the way, we picked up a third **Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel**, this time a solitary animal in full view and close to eye level.



Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel
(Belomys pearsonii)

As we continued, we found an area thick with **Sweet Wild Banana (Musa balbisiana)**, many with perfectly curled leaves ideal for roosting birds and bats. We were in luck when Thanh found a glowing red dot in the thermal, almost exactly at eye level beside the track. In the past, we had found many **Round-eared Tube-nosed Bat** using banana leaves like this in **Cúc Phương**, so excitement was high. We tried our best to find an angle to peek inside, but the leaf was curled in such a way that it was almost impossible. Eventually, we resorted to lying on the ground and gently lifting the leaf to about a 30-degree angle, but the moment we did, a tiny fuzzy bat (appearing tawny brownish in colour) shot out of the leaf and disappeared into the forest. Unfortunately, we'll never know what it was.

Further along, we missed another two large rodents, but then suddenly we found a momentarily cooperative large rat that turned out to be a Leopoldamys, specifically a **Edward's Giant Long-tailed Rat (Leopoldamys edwardsi)**. It was an impressive animal: charcoal-grey with dark eyes, large pinkish ears, a pale white belly and a long scaly tail extending well beyond the body length. A very nice and welcome tick!

Before we had a chance to celebrate, we picked up a tiny rodent and the smallest heat signature we had seen all night. We quietly approached a huge broad-trunked **Jhalna (Terminalia myriocarpa)**, easily more than 200 years old. There, right at eye level, was a bright little red dot darting around on the trunk. We gathered everyone together, got into position and switched on the spotlights. Boom! There was a gorgeous **Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mouse (Chiropodomys gliroides)**, a species we had dipped on in Cát Tiên and probably glimpsed briefly in Bạch Mã. Even better, we obtained exceptional views and it was a lifer for everyone.



Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mouse
(Chiropodomys gliroides)

By now we had been out for more than three hours and had amassed quite the collection of animals, particularly an impressive diversity of rodents added to the trip list. Along the next stretch, we encountered yet another **Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel**, as well as several interesting non-mammals including **Distantalna splendida**, two species of hawkmoth (**Convolvulus Hawkmoth** and **Common Hunter Hawkmoth**) and a large **Rimmed Window Firefly (Pyrocoelia analis)** wandering around on the road.

Again, more **rodents** darted through the undergrowth and several microbats shot past overhead, though all remained unidentified. For those playing at home, it was also a good night for owls, with **Collared Scops Owl**, **Asian Barred Owlet** and **Brown Boobook** all heard in the distance, and appropriately ignored in favour of the mammals.



Rimmed Window Firefly
(Pyrocoelia analis)

As we approached midnight, we met up with Thinh and decided to go for a slow road cruise, hoping to pick up some of the park's true megas such as Owston's Civet or Sunda (or even Chinese) Pangolin. Despite our best efforts, the only mammal we managed was a very nice view of a **Masked Palm Civet**, our second of the trip. It dashed across the road before climbing onto a large old tree arching over a small gully, where it paused long enough to reward us with excellent exposed views.

Back at the accommodation, we went for one final walk in search of Northern Pygmy Slow Loris, targeting a spot where another of our tour groups had seen one exceptionally well less than a week earlier. Unfortunately, this time we missed out.

Still, everyone headed to bed immensely happy and thoroughly satisfied with the night's efforts. Our mammal list now stood at the momentous tally of 53 species, far beyond anyone's expectations, and we still had three days remaining! The obvious question on everyone's mind was: just how much further could our luck stretch?

Cúc Phương National Park (in order seen):

1. Pallas's Squirrel (20~)
2. Maritime Striped Squirrel (1)
3. Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel (1)*
4. Small White-toothed Rat (5~, current ID)*
5. Lang Bian White-bellied Rat (1)*
6. Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat (1)
7. Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel (2, 1, 1)*
8. Edward's Giant Long-tailed Rat (1)*
9. Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mouse (1)*
10. Masked Palm Civet (1)

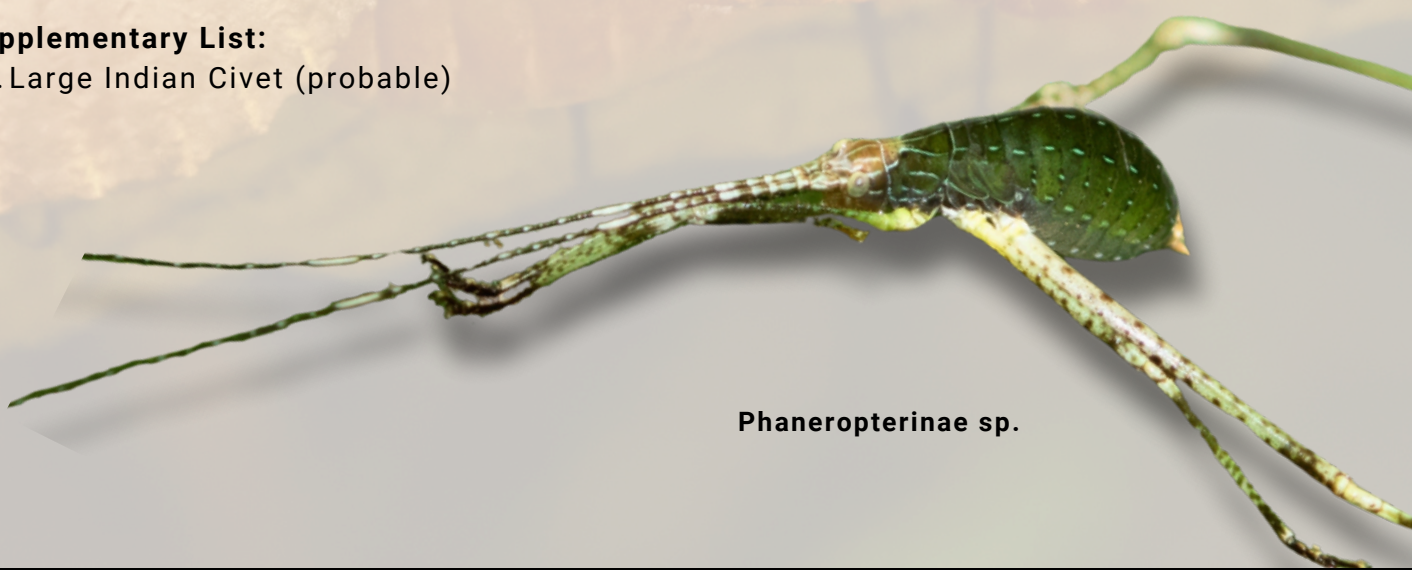
* Indicates a new addition to the trip list

Spectrogram Only:

1. Indomalayan Lesser Bamboo Bat (4~ recordings)
2. Eastern Bent-winged Bat (2~ recordings)
3. Greater Asian Yellow Bat (2~ recordings)
4. Great Evening Bat (1 probable recording)

Supplementary List:

1. Large Indian Civet (probable)



Phaneropterinae sp.

Day 12:

This morning we woke early, transferred deep into the forest, and split into two groups. The focus of the morning was bats and **Cúc Phương National Park** offers some of the best batwatching opportunities in Vietnam, largely thanks to the extensive limestone cave systems scattered throughout the park. To date, around 40~ species of bat have been recorded here, making it a prize spot for those serious about Chiroptera.

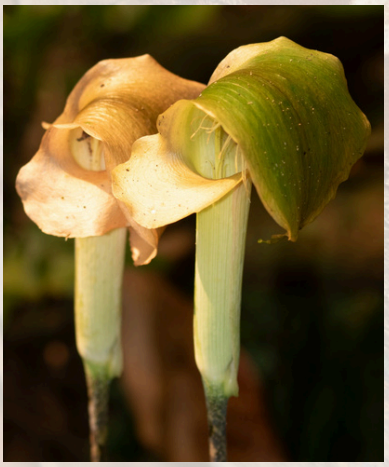
From a group perspective, there are two major cave systems that hold several species and are relatively easy to access. There are, of course, many other caves throughout the park, but these are far less accessible and require serious trekking and pseudo-spelunking skills, not exactly something featured on our "*What To Expect*" list when advertising the tour.

Those interested in exploring the caves set off after breakfast (passing a few **Maritime Striped Squirrel** on the way), trekking through some of the finest habitat the park has to offer. We didn't stop often but still picked up some excellent birds along the trail, including **Silver Pheasant**, **Thick-billed Green Pigeon**, **Grey-throated Babbler**, **Hainan Blue Flycatcher**, and a lovely male **Fork-tailed Sunbird**. Our only mammals along the way were a handful of **Pallas's Squirrel**.

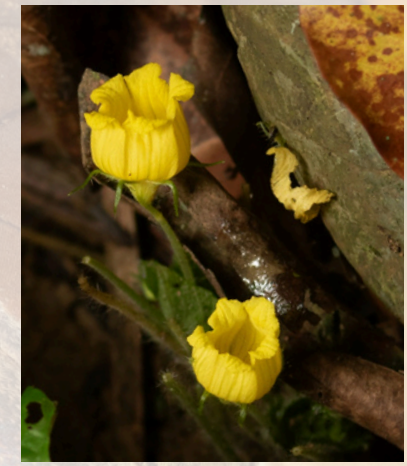
With several plant enthusiasts in the group, we also paused to admire some of the park's most impressive botanical highlights, including **Impatiens bonii**, **Arisaema balansae**, **Thladiantha angustisepala**, and the endemic **Aspidistra tonkinensis**.



Impatiens bonii



Arisaema balansae



Thladiantha angustisepala

Eventually, we reached the main cave. After a quick water break, we put on our masks, prepared our torches, and made our way inside.

After working our way through the first few chambers, we encountered our first bats of the morning. A small group of **Hipposideros bats** gave us a few brief photo opportunities, although identifications are still pending. Unfortunately, they were quickly spooked by our presence and disappeared deeper into the cave before we could properly assess them all – though, we are still optimistic we'll clinch their ID at a later date.

A little further along, we found a pair of solitary Hipposideros, which turned out to be **Intermediate Roundleaf Bat (Hipposideros larvatus)**, a new species for the trip list and a lifer for everyone exploring the cave. A very nice start!

We continued clambering deeper into the cave system and almost constantly, bats zipped overhead through the darkness. Very few stopped long enough for a proper look, which only added to our frustration, but at least there were plenty of animals around! Now, we just needed them to cooperate!

After we climbed up into the main chamber (quite an effort and not for the weak!), our next major highlight came in the form of a stunning **Flower Snake (Elaphe moellendorffi)**, a limestone cave specialist that can grow up to 1.7 metres in length. We were fortunate to find a particularly beautiful individual and spent some time watching it move effortlessly through the cave. Undoubtedly, it was here for the same reason as us, bats!



Flower Snake
(Elaphe moellendorffi)

Next, we moved into another large adjoining chamber where around 30~ small bats were hanging from the ceiling. Like the others we had encountered, these animals were highly sensitive to torchlight, so we did our best to photograph them from a distance using a mix of red light and dim white beams. Eventually, we managed some clear views and snapped a few useful images. There was no doubt about their identity — these were **Stoliczka's Trident Bat (Aselliscus stoliczkanus)**, instantly recognisable by their unique three-pointed, trident-shaped noseleaf. A wonderful find, it was a lifer species (and even a lifer genus) for everyone in the group, and more importantly, species number #55 for the trip list!



Stoliczka's Trident Bat
(Aselliscus stoliczkanus)

Eventually, we reached the section of the cave that usually marks the "we've-had-enough" point and began making our way back towards the entrance. Along the way, we occasionally caught sight of a large, dark bat powering through the cave with strong, purposeful flight. We have recorded Great Evening Bat (Ia io) in this cave on previous visits, and that seemed the most likely candidate here, but unfortunately the animal never landed or offered better views. Another (possible) one that got away.

On our way out, we encountered our beautiful **Flower Snake** once again and stopped to admire it a second time. It really is a spectacular animal.

We emerged from the cave around 45 minutes after entering, this time with two new species added to the list, both of them notoriously difficult bats to see well. Unsurprisingly, there were high-fives all round!

On our way back through the forest, we had barely left the cave entrance when we spotted our second spectacular snake of the day, a **Chinese Green Tree Viper (Trimeresurus stejnegeri)**. Though not a mammal, it was impossible to ignore such a stunning animal, perched conveniently at eye level just off the path. Some of our guests practically had to hang off the railing to get their super-telephoto lenses far enough back to photograph it properly!



Chinese Green Tree Viper
(Trimeresurus stejnegeri)

Not long afterwards, we reunited with the rest of the group. They had spent the morning searching for Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel and several other diurnal targets, but unfortunately without success. As many in the group were still eager to see this species of squirrel, we spoke with the park rangers about visiting one of their bird hides later that afternoon specifically to look for the squirrel. With everything arranged and agreed upon, we transferred back to our accommodation for lunch and an afternoon rest.

Around 4:00 pm, we were once again deep in the forest, making our way to one of the private bird hides. We spent around an hour there and enjoyed some excellent sightings. From a mammal perspective, we eventually scored around half a dozen **Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel (Dremomys pernyi)**, although they took some time to appear at the site. We also encountered our old friend, the **Northern Treeshrew**, which was a nice bonus.For the birders, the hide produced excellent views of **Scaly-breasted (Tonkin) Partridge**, **Rufous-throated Fulvetta**, and **White-rumped Shama**, among several other species.



Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel
(Dremomys pernyi)



Northern Treeshrew
(Tupaia belangeri)

With Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel now seen by everyone in the group, we headed off for an early dinner. While we waited for the food, Thanh managed to track down one of our top non-bird targets of the trip, the **Vietnamese Mossy Frog**. This extraordinary species is one of Vietnam's true wildlife highlights and is usually considered a major target on our most of our northern Vietnam herping tours. Naturally, there were plenty of photos and high-fives before we settled in for another feast of delicious Vietnamese food.



Vietnamese Mossy Frog
(Theloderma corticale)

Then, it was time for our final big night of spotlighting!

Over dinner, we had discussed how bird hides (with their often copious and somewhat questionable amounts of feeding) must be extremely attractive to rodents and other small mammals, particularly after dark. We already knew how effective they were during the day for bringing in squirrels and treeshrews, but what might they produce at night?

After a chat with our ranger contact, we managed to arrange special after-dark access. Around 20 minutes after nightfall, we quietly made our way back through the forest, scanning with thermal imagers as we walked. Along the trail, we picked up our first Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel of the evening, a very nice start.

As we arrived at the hide, we awkwardly arranged our stools in the darkness, set up the thermal scopes, and settled in to wait. For around 25 minutes, very little happened. Then, suddenly, a tiny heat signature darted into view over the logs at the back of the clearing. It moved rapidly and erratically, zipping back and forth through the debris. The animal appeared compact and rounded, with a clear, very long-pointed face.

We briefly flicked on the torch several times, but each time the animal either vanished immediately or proved too small and fast-moving for proper views. Eventually, we had to give up. At the time, we suspected it may have been some kind of shrew, but after further consideration, we now think it was more likely a gymnure, possibly a **Short-tailed Gymnure**, a species we have recorded in the park several times previously. No tail was visible through the thermal scopes, and the behaviour also seemed a better fit. Unfortunately, it was yet another “one that got away”.

After about 30 minutes, we decided to move on and head back into the forest. We still had several major targets to track down and wanted to make sure each received the attention and effort it deserved. We continued on through a new section of forest, with Thanh leading the group, thermal scope in hand. Then it happened. Our conga line suddenly came to a halt, he had found something. Quietly, he gathered us together and swept a red light across the bushes directly ahead.



Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel
(Belomys pearsonii)

There, sitting completely out in the open at eye level only five metres away, was one of the major targets of the entire tour: a **Northern Pygmy Slow Loris (Xanthonycticebus intermedius)**. Unbelievable! Trip tick #56!

We spent the next five minutes or so with the animal, careful not to overstay or disturb it. In that time, we positioned ourselves quietly and simply admired the loris as it gazed back at us with those enormous eyes, occasionally stretching out to pluck and nibble at leaves nearby. The Northern Pygmy Slow Loris is one of the great prizes of mammal watching in Vietnam and remains a relatively poorly understood species. Although it was first described by Vietnamese primatologist **Đào Văn Tiến** in the 1960s, research was later discontinued. In the early 2000s, researchers were able to obtain DNA from the original type specimen, resume investigations, and confirm it as a distinct species. Genetic evidence suggests that the two pygmy slow loris lineages diverged more than one million years ago.

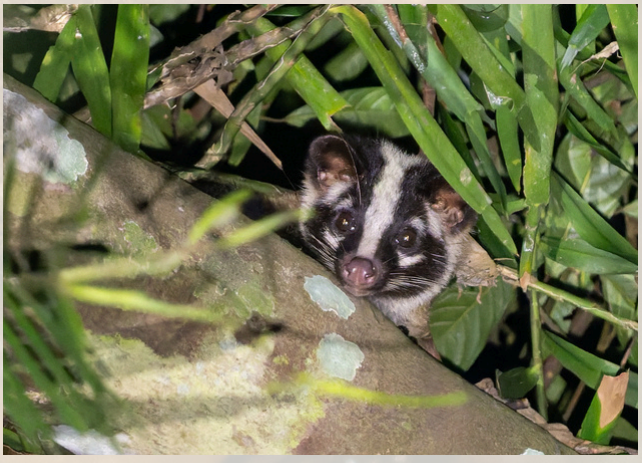


Northern Pygmy Slow Loris
(Xanthonycticebus intermedius)

With photos, videos, and cripplingly good views secured, we slowly moved past the animal, the overwhelming excitement obvious on everyone's faces. We had done it — **Northern Pygmy Slow Loris** in the bag, species number #56 for the trip and our 11th primate species overall.

As we continued through the forest towards the next clearing, our celebrations were briefly interrupted when we spotted a **Masked Palm Civet** sitting quietly in a large Ficus tree. It was our third encounter with the species, but by far our best views, and the first time members of the group had been able to properly photograph it.

When we finally emerged from the forest, the group erupted with excitement. Much like our encounters with Southern White-cheeked Gibbon and Annamite Muntjac earlier in the trip, everyone was bubbling with adrenaline and disbelief after such an extraordinary experience. After the high-fives, handshakes, hugs, and photo-sharing finally settled down, we regrouped and refocused — it was time to get back to work. We still had mammals to find!



Masked Palm Civet
(Paguma larvata)

We piled back into the vehicle and transferred to a completely different section of the park. Our plan was to undertake a long walk through some of the most pristine and undisturbed habitat in the park, an area that has traditionally produced excellent mammal sightings. More importantly, this was the same area where we had seen Owston's Civet the previous year, so expectations were running very high.

On the way, our driver Thinh suddenly slammed on the brakes. Pausing right in the middle of the road was a **Large Indian Civet (Viverra zibetha)**! The animal didn't linger for long, pausing only briefly before darting across the road and disappearing into the forest. Still, it was more than enough for us, Large Indian Civet was now on the trip list. The night was really starting to heat up!

On we went, with everyone now firmly focused on the road ahead. As we drove, our more powerful torches swept out from the windows, scanning the roadside vegetation and verges. Around 15 minutes later, Thinh suddenly slammed on the brakes once again. A huge, lumbering animal had just burst out from the forest and was now scampering along the road.

Excited shouts erupted as we watched the animal run up ahead of us for the next 10 seconds, giving us surprisingly good views. Initial guesses ranged from Ferret Badger sp. to several other possibilities, but it quickly became clear that this was in fact a **Greater Hog Badger (Arctonyx collaris)**. The white tail, boldly striped face, and unmistakable pig-like snout gave it away.



Greater Hog Badger
Arctonyx collaris)

This was an absolutely massive sighting, a lifer for everyone in the group and one of the mammalian highlights of the entire trip. More importantly, Greater Hog Badger remains an exceptionally poorly known species in Vietnam. Although historically recorded in the country, recent data is sparse, with many of the last significant records dating back decades. To say we were excited would be a serious understatement. And for those keeping count at home, this became species number #58 for the trip list.

We managed a few photographs, although as always, capturing quality images of fast-moving nocturnal mammals illuminated only by vehicle headlights through a windscreen is far from easy. Thinh then reminded us that he had a dash-mounted camera continuously recording everything in front of the vehicle, raising hopes that we might have video footage of the sighting.



Pseudophylliti sp.

A few weeks after the tour, we reviewed the footage, but unfortunately the camera setup (designed primarily for wide-angle daytime road coverage) was unable to properly capture the encounter in the dark forest conditions. Still, the experience highlighted the enormous potential for dedicated high-quality video systems specifically designed for mammal cruising, and we are already exploring options to equip our vehicles with improved recording setups for the 2027 season. Watch this space!

We continued on for another 5 minutes before eventually reaching our next spot. Piling out of the van, we waved goodbye to Thinh and continued on foot. The area we had arrived in consisted of extensive lowland evergreen primary forest interwoven with towering limestone karst, caves, and rugged rocky outcrops, exactly the sort of habitat where anything could appear.



Harvestmen sp.

We had barely rounded the first corner when we picked up the distinct reddish glow of a hanging, twitching bat suspended from a branch above the road. Quietly, we gathered everyone together and switched on the lights. Hanging before us was a Rhinolophus sp., and after a quick look at the distinctive noseleaf, we confirmed it as a **Northern Woolly Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus perniger)**, a species that had previously teased us back in **Bạch Mã National Park**. We managed a few rapid photographs before it vanished back into the darkness. There is nothing better than microbat redemption!

As we continued deeper into the forest, the owls began putting on a show. Over the course of the night, we recorded **Mountain Scops Owl**, **Collared Scops Owl**, **Asian Barred Owlet**, **Brown Wood Owl**, and **Brown Boobook**, an excellent collection!

Soon afterwards, we spotted a rodent moving cautiously through an area of scrubby limestone understory. We waited patiently for it to come closer before trying to lighting it up.

Amazingly, the rat froze in place long enough for everyone to fire away with cameras, allowing us to capture several clear images of what turned out to be our first **Mekong White-bellied Rat (Niviventer mekongis)** of the trip. More importantly (though we did not realise it at the time) this became our sixtieth mammal species for the trip, an extraordinary total that far exceeded our expectations at the outset.

Like the previous evening, the forest was exceptionally dark (conditions that are often perfect for mammalwatching, particularly for rodents/small mammals) and once again the night was proving just how productive those conditions could be. Over the next kilometre or so, we had a few frustrating near-misses, including a larger, medium-sized mammal that we only managed to detect briefly in the thermal scope as it moved through the forest. As with many such encounters, possibilities ranged widely (civets, ferret badgers, pangolins, leopard cats, and more) but ultimately it remained unidentified, leaving us with that all-too-well-known sense of missed-mammal frustration.



Mekong White-bellied Rat
(Niviventer mekongis)



Side / belly / feet view



Tail

We also recorded around 5~ additional rodents during this stretch, most appeared to be large rat genera such as **Niviventer** and **Leopoldamys** types. Unfortunately, none offered clear enough views or photographic opportunities to allow for more confident identification.



Greater Long-tongued Fruit Bat
(Macroglossus sobrinus)

Around the next bend, we picked up a medium-sized bat flying directly up the road towards us. We quickly flicked on the torch and caught a glimpse of a Pteropodidae-type banking towards us before veering down into the forest. Switching lights off again, we crept ahead, scanning with the thermal scope, and to our surprise picked up a strong heat signature perched in the shrubs exactly where the bat had disappeared.

As we illuminated the spot, we were absolutely delighted to find a **Greater Long-tongued Fruit Bat (Macroglossus sobrinus)** hanging upside down from a branch, staring back at us. It was a beautiful animal, its throat heavily dusted with pollen, clearly from a productive night of feeding. A lifer for most of the group, it allowed for excellent views and photography.

Continuing on, we encountered another handful of rodents (so much activity tonight!), all of which unfortunately remained unidentified. We briefly managed photographs of one individual that was almost certainly **Edward's Giant Long-tailed Rat**, although this was not a priority species for us, having already recorded it well the previous evening. As we walked on, one of the group suddenly called out, they had picked up a mammal just off the road. Those with thermal scopes quickly locked onto it. At close range (less than 10 metres), the animal's identity was immediately apparent. It was a long, large-bodied carnivore moving in a distinctive, almost lolloping gait through the forest, its sleek motion and elongated form unmistakable. A long bushy tail, a triangular head, and rounded ears confirmed it, **Yellow-throated Marten (Martes flavigula)**.

Despite our efforts, this typically elusive hunter refused to cooperate, slipping back into the forest almost immediately after we had all seen it. It was a moment of particular pain for the team member who had found it (after more than a decade of visits across Southeast Asia), Yellow-throated Marten had been a true bogey species, and here it had appeared within easy range, only to vanish before any proper views could be obtained. Mammalwatching at its most brutal. The species was therefore added only to our supplementary list, not the official trip total.



Northern Pygmy Slow Loris
(Xanthonycticebus intermedius)

By now it was approaching midnight, so we decided that six new species was the perfect place to call it a night. The team was exhausted, and we still had two days remaining on the tour. We transferred back to the accommodation, reliving the Northern Pygmy Slow Loris, Greater Hog Badger, and Greater Long-tongued Fruit Bat sightings once more, before finally settling down (still buzzing) and calling it a night.

Cúc Phương National Park (in order seen):

1. Maritime Striped Squirrel (2, 2, 1, 1)
2. Pallas's Squirrel (1, 1, 1, 1,
3. Intermediate Roundleaf Bat (1)*
4. Stoliczka's Trident Bat (30~)*
5. Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel (6~)
6. Northern Treeshrew (3~)
7. Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel (1)
8. Northern Pygmy Slow Loris (1)*
9. Masked Palm Civet (1)
10. Large Indian Civet (1)*
11. Greater Hog Badger (1)*
12. Northern Woolly Horseshoe Bat (1)*
13. Mekong White-bellied Rat (1)*
14. Greater Long-tongued Fruit Bat (1)*
15. Edward's Giant Long-tailed Rat (1)

* Indicates a new addition to the trip list

Spectrogram Only:

1. Intermediate Roundleaf Bat (3~ recordings, 1x seen in cave)
2. Chinese Water Myotis (4~ recordings)
3. Whiskered Myotis (2~ recordings, probable)
4. Pearson's Horseshoe Bat (2~ recordings)
5. Kachin Woolly Bat (2~ recordings)
6. Great Evening Bat (1x recording)
7. Chinese Pipistrelle (1x recording)
8. Intermediate Horseshoe Bat (1x recording)

Supplementary List:

1. Yellow-throated Marten
2. (Short-tailed Gymnure??)



Day 13:

For our final morning in **Cúc Phương National Park**, we divided the group. Some chose to have a lie-in, others went for a bird walk, while the rest of us packed up our gear, torches, and cameras and set out early for a final cave session, determined to track down a few more bats.



Allen's Leaf-nosed Bat
(Hipposideros poutensis)

After a steep climb through ancient limestone forest, we reached our first cave. As with the previous day, the Cúc Phương cave systems stretched deep into the karst, with long corridors and seemingly endless chambers. Our plan was to work through as many sections as possible within an hour and see what we could track down.

We passed through a few chambers with only brief, unidentifiable bat flashes, but soon entered a low-hanging section where we encountered our first species, a small group of **Lesser False Vampire Bat**. We had already photographed this species in **Cát Tiên**, but it was still good to see them again. This group appears to be reliably present in this chamber, it's nice to have "a spot" for this target.



Exotic Roundleaf Bat
(Hipposideros gentilis)

In the same section, however, we also found a much larger cluster of Hipposideros bats, which, after careful inspection, we identified as **Exotic Roundleaf Bat (Hipposideros gentilis)**, another new species for the trip. We spent some time photographing and observing these awesome species, admiring their comically large ears and distinctive facial structures. Moving into the next chamber, we briefly encountered a small group of bats with paler, orangey fur tones, but they vanished before we could obtain a proper look. In previous visits, this cave has also held Shield-faced Leaf-nosed Bat and Ha Long Leaf-nosed Bat, but for today, we'll never know! In the following chamber on, we struck gold again! Here, hung a small group of around a dozen **Allen's Leaf-nosed Bat (Hipposideros poutensis)**. Our second Hipposideros of the morning, another lifer, and yet another trip tick. It was shaping up to be an exceptional day!



Động Người Xưa / Prehistoric Man Cave
Cúc Phương National Park

An hour or so later, we had exited the cave and made our way back through the forest. The morning was coming alive, and we encountered a variety of fascinating invertebrates, including **Orange Rosary Millipede**, **Macrobrochis gigas**, **Drury's Jewel**, **Gold Dust Weevil**, and still countless species of **butterfly**. Unfortunately, by this stage the park was also beginning to fill with weekend day-trippers and tourists, a clear signal that it was time for us to hit the road and say goodbye to **Cúc Phương National Park.**

A few hours later, we arrived at **Vân Long Wetland Nature Reserve**, a protected landscape of limestone karst, wetland scrub, and flooded valleys. **Vân Long** is best known as the last stronghold of the Critically Endangered Delacour's Langur (Trachypithecus delacouri), one of the rarest and most striking primates in the world, found only in a handful of locations in northern Vietnam. It was our final major target of the tour (and the perfect way to bring the trip to a close!).

We arrived around lunchtime, enjoyed a long and well-earned meal, and then took a few hours to rest. Although we had the entire following morning set aside to focus on these enigmatic primates, we still had a few other targets in mind (with Assam Macaque also being a possibly) and more importantly, as the saying goes, a langur in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Around 3:00 pm, we collected our gear and headed out into **Vân Long**. There are several family groups of Delacour's Langur scattered throughout this extensive landscape, some of which are highly reliable. Thanks to our regular day trips from **Hà Nội**, we maintain close knowledge of these groups and their movements. Conveniently, we had already had two of our tour teams in **Vân Long** that very morning with our guides **Khai** and **Trang**, who provided valuable updates on where animals had been seen, both during the dawn boat cruise, and later that afternoon as they explored the wider area.

Taking full advantage of this information, we headed straight for the suggested locations. Reaching the road, we jumped out of the vehicle and continued on foot, scanning the limestone cliffs as we went. There was already plenty of activity, and we enjoyed excellent views of the usual wetland and edge species, including **Green-billed Malkoha**, **Asian Palm Swift**, **Eurasian Moorhen**, **Asian Openbill**, **Black-crowned Night Heron**, **Chinese Pond Heron** (many in breeding plumage), **Crested Goshawk**, **Light-vented Bulbul**, and **Blue Rock Thrush**.

As we moved along, one of the team suddenly called out, "Owl!" We looked up just in time to see a large fish owl soaring through the limestone cliffs, its massive wings outstretched and striking golden-yellow facial disc and prominent ear tufts clearly visible. It was a **Brown Fish Owl**, a seldom-seen species in the region and our first record of this species on any Next Continent tour in **Ninh Bình province**.



Brown Fish Owl
(Ketupa zeylonensis)

It was a spectacular sight, and an excellent record for the birders in the group, sparking immediate much celebration. Although this had been primarily a mammalwatching-focused tour, our owl tour list had been exceptional, a total of 10 species, certainly nothing to be sniffed at! Of course, it helps when you are out at night so frequently, searching for flying squirrels!

We scored our next "*plastic*" mammal for the trip, **Domestic Goat (Capra hircus)**. There is a very large self-sustaining population (estimated over 2 million) across **Ninh Bình**, which also conveniently contributes to the local đặc sản (regional speciality dish) of **Ninh Bình** — *goat meat*. We were all so excited by this new trip tick that we completely forgot to photograph them.

As we continued along, Thanh called out to a younger man passing on a motorbike and asked whether he had seen any langurs along the road. To our surprise, he replied that he had and gestured a few hundred metres back. That was all we needed, it was go time!

We quickly made our way up the road and found, stretched out across exposed limestone, an entire family group of **Delacour's Langur (Trachypithecus delacouri)**. Boom! They were on private land, so we initially stayed at the roadside, just taking in the sight of them against the karst backdrop. Fortunately, the local farmers noticed us and kindly waved us onto their property, inviting us right up to the base of the limestone for exceptional views (with appropriate generous tips shown in return).

We then spent around 45 minutes with these remarkable primates, watching them feed, play, and move with ease across the sheer rock faces. Delacour's Langur remains one of the most threatened primates in Vietnam, with numbers estimated at well under 200 individuals. While there are ongoing conservation and reintroduction efforts, the long-term challenge here is less about captive breeding and more about securing and protecting suitable habitat in the face of development pressure and hunting risk.



Delacour's Langur
(Trachypithecus delacouri)

This encounter also reflected one of the more practical aspects of our approach in **Vân Long Wetland Nature Reserve**, working closely with local communities, and ensuring that wildlife viewing delivers clear value to the people who share the landscape with these animals. In this case, that collaboration made for an unforgettable afternoon with one of Vietnam's most endangered primates.

For the last hour of the day, we poked around several other limestone areas, still trying to track down Assam Macaque or even a Yellow-throated Marten, but unfortunately came up empty-handed. We did, however, enjoy a **Common Kingfisher** entering a nesting tunnel, a handsome **Green Sandpiper**, and a flock of **Mallard**, which were clearly on return migration, an actually surprisingly scarce waterbird and something close to a pseudo-vagrant in northern Vietnam.

Back at the accommodation, we settled in for dinner and took stock of the day, celebrating our 65th mammal for the trip. We also worked our way back through the entire tour, reviewing photos, reliving sightings, and generally being merry. It had been an excellent trip, and our most successful group mammalwatching tour to date.

There was brief discussion about heading out again around the accommodation to try for Oriental House Rat or Japanese Pipistrelle, but in the end we opted for an early night, ready for one final morning among the limestone.

Cúc Phương National Park / Vân Long Nature Reserve (in order seen):

1. Pallas's Squirrel (1, 2, 1)
2. Lesser False Vampire bat (6~)
3. Exotic Roundleaf Bat (24~)*
4. Allen's Leaf-nosed Bat (12~)*
5. Cambodian Striped Squirrel (1)
6. Domestic Goat (2, 4, 4, 9, 1, 3, 1)*
7. Delacour's Langur (7, 1)*

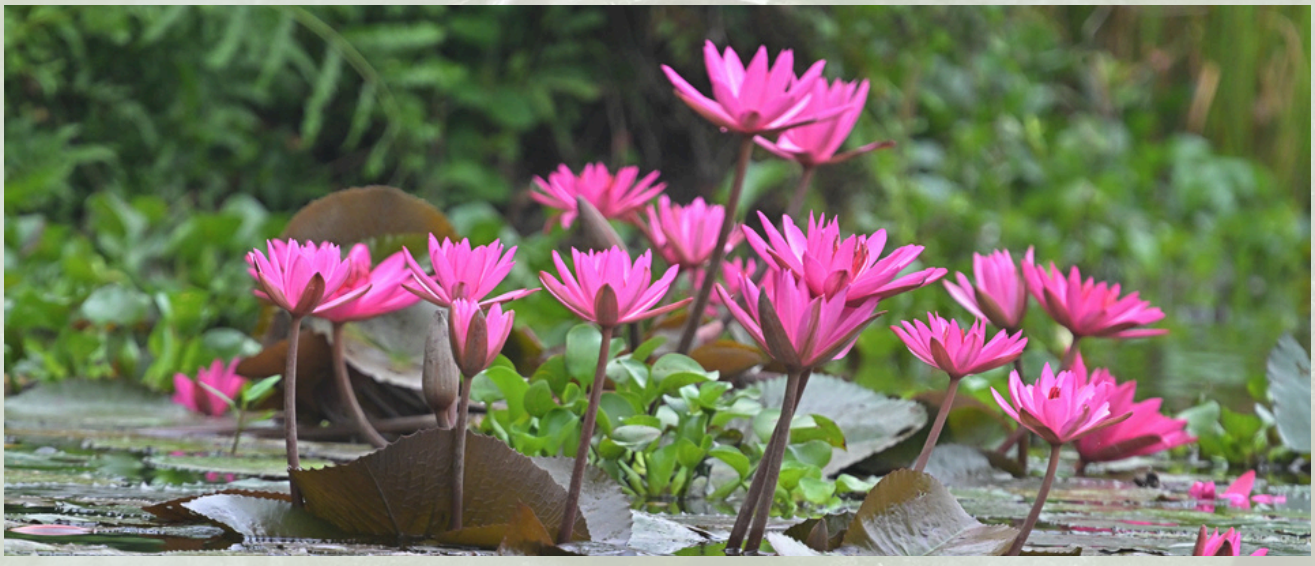
* Indicates a new addition to the trip list



Day 14:

It was our final morning of the mammalwatching expedition and the focus today was less about targets and more about simply enjoying high-quality Vietnamese wildlife watching. As per the itinerary, we set out at dawn on a boat cruise through **Vân Long Wetland Nature Reserve**, with the primary goal of re-encountering Delacour's Langur, an animal we had already seen exceptionally well the previous afternoon. There was still a chance of Assam Macaque and a few other species, but for most of the group, the main priority was simply to see the langurs once more before heading back to Ha Noi and concluding the tour.

After a large buffet breakfast, we boarded the boats and headed out onto the wetlands, deliberately timing our departure to be among the first on the water. The Delacour's Langur are typically most active at dawn, feeding in the early light before retreating to the limestone caves and cliffs during the hotter parts of the day. It is also one of the best times to experience the wetlands more broadly, with flocks of **Common Picturewing** and a strong supporting cast of birdlife making full use of the calm morning conditions.



Red Water Lily
(Nymphaea rubra)

As we waited, we bumped into all the usual bird suspects, including **Asian Openbill**, **Asian Tit**, **Yellow-bellied Prinia**, **Crimson Sunbird**, and a pair of **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** (H/O). Eventually we set off, drifting out in our small boats through the misty wetlands. Along the way, we continued to pick up excellent species such as **Cinnamon Bittern**, **Common Kingfisher**, and **Blue Rock Thrush**.

Taking a slightly different route today (following advice from our guide **Trang** who had been leading tours in the area all week) we soon encountered a large family group of **Delacour's Langur** high in a tree on the limestone cliffs. There were 12~ individuals in total, roughly 5% of the global population, a sobering reminder of just how few of these animals remain. We watched them quietly for a while before continuing on through a series of narrower channels.

Not long afterwards, the call went up again, **Delacour's Langur**! This was our second group of the morning, including a juvenile (around a year old) and a newborn, still faintly orange in colour. For the next hour, we spent most of our time with this group as they put on an exceptional display; feeding, leaping, running along the limestone, and offering a constant stream of excellent viewing and photographic opportunities. A very happy group indeed.

After we had had our fill of langurs, we took a different return route, picking up **Annam Limestone Babbler** (a serious tick for the birders in the group), along with **Crested Serpent Eagle**, **Amur Falcon**, **White-browed Crake**, and **Hainan Blue Flycatcher** along the way.





Delacour's Langur
(Trachypithecus delacouri)

Around mid-morning, we returned to our accommodation, packed up our belongings, and loaded into the bus. Before leaving **Vân Long**, we made one final attempt to track down Assam Macaque. We headed to the section of karst where the species is most reliably encountered, set up the scopes, and began scanning the limestone slopes. Despite our best efforts, the macaques once again remained elusive, a reminder that even on the most successful trips, a few targets inevitably slip through the net.

While we searched, we still managed to pick up a few supporting species, including **Common Hoopoe**, **Light-vented Bulbul**, and **White Wagtail**.

It was time for lunch and then the return journey to **Hà Nội**. Our group was tired, but in the best possible way — a satisfied kind of exhaustion that only comes after sustained time in the field and a run of genuinely exceptional wildlife encounters.



A whole troop of Happy Mammalwatchers — alpha leader (Thanh) in the front with the Next Continent hat. *(Homo mammalwatcherus)*

As we drove back into the city, the conversation naturally drifted through the highlights of the trip: the standout moments, the unexpected encounters, and the species that none of us will forget in a hurry. There was also plenty of discussion about future plans and upcoming expeditions, with contacts exchanged and the familiar “see you on the next one” beginning to take shape.

Back in **Hà Nội**, we arrived at the hotel, grabbed our stuff, and began to part ways. Some of us were headed straight to the airport for flights back to Europe, while others were already preparing for onward travel or their next field adventure. Handshakes, farewells, and shared smiles marked the close of the formal itinerary.
A huge thank you goes out to all of our six exceptional guests (Marc, Peggy, Michael, Daniel, Alma & Pierre) for their enthusiasm, patience, good humour, and relentless energy in the field (it is always the group that makes a tour like this what it is!).

Special recognition must go to Thanh, whose leadership in the field was absolutely central to the success of the expedition. His ability to read habitat, respond to changing conditions, and consistently put us in the right place at the right time made a tangible difference throughout the tour. We are also deeply grateful to our wider network of Next Continent guides (such as Quy, Huy, Trang and Khai who made appearance in this report), drivers, and field collaborators who supported us along the way, often sharing real-time information on sightings and helping us maximise every opportunity.

Behind the scenes, thanks are also due to the office and logistics team who kept everything moving smoothly, and to the national parks and reserves we visited for their continued support of responsible access and wildlife tourism. We also acknowledge the ongoing efforts of conservation organisations working across Vietnam to protect many of the species we were fortunate enough to encounter.

Over the course of two weeks, we travelled more than 2,000 km from the south to the north of Vietnam, working across an extraordinary range of habitats and elevations, from lowland wetlands and limestone karst to montane evergreen forest and complex cave systems. In total, we explored close to 20~ habitat types across 10x national parks, nature reserves, and conservation areas.

At the time of writing, the final tally stood at 65 mammal species observed (including 56 of these photographed), with a notable total of 13 primates photographed, 19 bats seen (with a further 25 species identified from spectrogram recordings only), and 6~ civets and other predators. A further handful of supplementary records, including thermal-only sightings and brief or guide-confirmed encounters, added additional depth to an already considerable list (fully detailed at the end of the report).

Among the many highlights were Grey-shanked Douc Langur, Southern White-cheeked Gibbon, both Northern and Southern Pygmy Slow Loris, Annamite Muntjac, Large Indian Civet, Greater Hog Badger, Delacour's Langur, and numerous other standout encounters that defined the trip.

Taken together, the expedition reflects both the exceptional biodiversity of Vietnam and the importance of careful, low-impact wildlife watching that works alongside local knowledge and conservation-focused partnerships.

It was a highly rewarding trip for our team, marked not just by the numbers, but by the quality and consistency of encounters in the field. As this year's expedition comes to a close, we are pleased to announce that we will be running this trip again in both 2026 and 2027, with dates and destinations already available (details below). We hope you have enjoyed this report and will consider joining the Next Continent team in the future.



SPECIES TOUR LIST SUMMARY

Mammal Trip List (in taxonomic order): 65 Species

PRIMATES

Hylobatidae — Gibbons
- Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon
- Southern White-cheeked Gibbon

Cercopithecidae — Old World Monkeys
- Common Long-tailed Macaque
- Northern Pig-tailed Macaque
- Rhesus Macaque
- Black-shanked Douc Langur
- Grey-shanked Douc Langur
- Red-shanked Douc Langur
- Annamese Langur*
- Hatinh Langur
- Delacour's Langur

Lorisidae — Lorises
- Northern Pygmy Slow Loris
- Southern Pygmy Slow Loris

SCANDENTIA

Tupaiidae — Treeshrews
- Northern Treeshrew

CHIROPTERA

Pteropodidae — Fruit Bats
- Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat
- Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat
- Greater Long-tongued Fruit Bat
- Greater Asian Yellow Bat*
- Ratanaworabhan's Fruit Bat*
- Leschenault's Rousette*

Megadermatidae — False Vampire Bats
- Lesser False Vampire Bat

Rhinolophidae — Horseshoe Bats
- Woolly Horseshoe Bat
- Northern Woolly Horseshoe Bat
- Intermediate Horseshoe Bat
- Pearson's Horseshoe Bat

Hipposideridae — Roundleaf Bats
- Grand Roundleaf Bat
- Great Roundleaf Bat
- Intermediate Roundleaf Bat
- Exotic Roundleaf Bat

Emballonuridae — Tomb Bats
- Black-bearded Tomb Bat

Vespertilionidae — Evening Bats
- Javan Pipistrelle
- Thick-thumbed Myotis

RODENTIA

Sciuridae — Squirrels
- Pallas's Squirrel
- Cambodian Striped Squirrel
- Indochinese Ground Squirrel
- Black Giant Squirrel
- Common Giant Flying Squirrel
- Finlayson's Squirrel
- Maritime Striped Squirrel
- Asian Red-cheeked Squirrel*
- Inornate Squirrel
- Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel
- Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel

Hystricidae — Porcupines
- East Asian Porcupine

Muridae — Rats & Mice
- Brown Rat
- Ricefield Rat*
- Small White-toothed Rat
- Lang Bian White-bellied Rat
- Edward's Giant Long-tailed Rat
- Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mouse
- Mekong White-bellied Rat

CARNIVORA

Viverridae — Civets
- Southern Palm Civet
- Small-toothed Palm Civet*
- Masked Palm Civet
- Northern Palm Civet
- Large Indian Civet*

Mustelidae — Mustelids
- Greater Hog Badger

Canidae — Dogs
- Domestic Dog

ARTIODACTYLA

Tragulidae — Chevrotains
- Lesser Oriental Chevrotain

Cervidae — Deer
- Northern Red Muntjac
- Annamite Muntjac
- Sambar

Bovidae — Bovids
- Domestic Goat

Supplementary Mammal List:

- **Javan Mongoose** (Cát Tiên, only seen by guide)
- **Stump-tailed Macaque** (Bạch Mã, 2x recorded by a simultaneous Next Continent tour
- **Northern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon** (Heard only)
- **Asian House Mouse** (likely species, seen by 1x PAX. ID not confirmed)
- **Yellow-throated Marten** (observed clearly, by thermal scope view only)
- **Japanese Pipistrelle** (seen well in Ha Noi by participant post tour at hotel)
- **Oriental House Rat** (seen well in Ha Noi by guide post tour at hotel)

Misses

The following are species we typically consider likely or that we connect with more than 40% of the time on itineraries like this, or similar.

- Gaur
- Northern Smooth-tailed Treeshrew
- Assam Macaque
- Stump-tailed Macaque
- Small Indian Civet
- Mainland Leopard Cat
- Small-toothed Ferret Badger

Bats: Spectrogram Recordings

The following are bats that were identified through their spectrogram recordings throughout the tour. Thank you to the numerous people who reviewed this with our staff. All species marked with * were ALSO recorded visually during the tour

1. Pearson's Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus pearsonii)*
2. Intermediate Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus affinis)*
3. Woolly Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus luctus)*
4. Northern Woolly Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus perniger)*
5. Ashy Roundleaf Bat (Hipposideros cineraceus)
6. Pomona Roundleaf Bat (Hipposideros pomona)
7. Intermediate Roundleaf Bat (Hipposideros larvatus)*
8. Indomalayan Lesser Bamboo Bat (Tylonycteris fulvida)
9. Hardwicke's Woolly Bat (Kerivoula hardwickii)
10. Kachin Woolly Bat (Kerivoula kachinensis)
11. Painted Bat (Kerivoula picta)
12. Great Evening Bat (Ia io)
13. Great Evening Bat (Ia io)
14. Chinese Pipistrelle (Hypsugo pulveratus)
15. Cadorna's Pipistrelle (Hypsugo cadornae)
16. Javan Pipistrelle (Pipistrellus javanicus)*
17. Least Pipistrelle (Pipistrellus tenuis)
18. Greater Asian Yellow Bat (Scotophilus heathii)*
19. Lesser Asian Yellow Bat (Scotophilus kuhlii)
20. Chinese Water Myotis (Myotis laniger)
21. Horsfield's Bat (Myotis horsfieldii)
22. Whiskered Myotis (Myotis muricola)
23. Phan Luong's Myotis (Myotis phanluongi)
24. Eastern Bent-winged Bat (Miniopterus fuliginosus)
25. Western Bent-winged Bat (Miniopterus magnater)
26. Wrinkle-lipped Bat (Mops plicatus)

Mammal Trip List (in seen order):

1. Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat *(C. s. angulatus)*
2. Pallas's Squirrel *(Callosciurus erythraeus)*
3. Cambodian Striped Squirrel *(Tamiops rodolphii)*
4. Javan Pipistrelle *(Pipistrellus javanicus)*
5. Brown Rat *(Rattus norvegicus)*
6. Indochinese Ground Squirrel *(Menetes berdmorei)*
7. Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon *(Nomascus gabriellae)*
8. Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat *(C. cf. brachyotis)*
9. Common Long-tailed Macaque *(M. f. fascicularis)*
10. Thick-thumbed Myotis (Myotis rosseti)
11. Southern Pygmy Slow Loris (Xanthonycticebus pygmaeus)
12. Woolly Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus luctus)
13. Northern Pig-tailed Macaque (Macaca leonina)
14. Northern Red Muntjac (Muntiacus vaginalis)
15. Sambar (R. u. unicolor)
16. Black-shanked Douc Langur (Pygathrix nigripes)
17. Lesser False Vampire Bat (Megaderma spasma)
18. Lesser Oriental Chevrotain (Tragulus kanchil)
19. Southern Palm Civet (Paradoxurus musanga)
20. East Asian Porcupine (H. b. subcristata)
21. Greater Asian Yellow Bat (Scotophilus heathii)
22. Ratanaworabhan's Fruit Bat (Megaerops niphanae)
23. Annamese Langur (Trachypithecus margarita)
24. Black Giant Squirrel (R. b. gigantea)
25. Northern Treeshrew (Tupaia belangeri)
26. Small-toothed Palm Civet (A. t. leucotis)
27. Grand Roundleaf Bat (Hipposideros grandis)
28. Common Giant Flying Squirrel (P. p. philippensis)
29. Black-bearded Tomb Bat (Taphozous melanopogon)
30. Finlayson's Squirrel (Callosciurus finlaysonii)
31. Grey-shanked Douc Langur (Pygathrix cinerea)
32. Red-shanked Douc Langur (Pygathrix nemaeus)
33. Rhesus Macaque (Macaca mulatta)
34. Annamite Muntjac (Muntiacus truongsonensis)
35. Masked Palm Civet (P. l. intrudens)
36. Maritime Striped Squirrel (Tamiops maritimus)
37. Intermediate Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus affinis)
38. Pearson's Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus pearsonii)
39. Asian Red-cheeked Squirrel (Dremomys rufigenis)
40. Ricefield Rat (Rattus argentiventer
41. Domestic Dog (C. f. familiaris)
42. Inornate Squirrel (Callosciurus inornatus)
43. Leschenault's Rousette (Rousettus leschenaultia)
44. Northern Palm Civet (P. h. minor)
45. Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (Nomascus siki)
46. Hatinh Langur (Trachypithecus hatinhensis)
47. Great Roundleaf Bat (Hipposideros armiger)
48. Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel (D. p. owstoni)
49. Small White-toothed Rat (Berylmys berdmorei)
50. Lang Bian White-bellied Rat (Chiromyscus langbianis)
51. Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel (Belomys pearsonii)
52. Edward's Giant Long-tailed Rat (Leopoldamys edwardsi)
53. Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mouse (Chiropodomys gliroides)
54. Intermediate Roundleaf Bat (Hipposideros larvatus)
55. Stoliczka's Trident Bat (Aselliscus stoliczkanus)
56. Northern Pygmy Slow Loris (Xanthonycticebus intermedius)
57. Large Indian Civet (V. z. picta)
58. Greater Hog Badger (Arctonyx collaris)
59. Northern Woolly Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus perniger)
60. Mekong White-bellied Rat (Niviventer mekongis)
61. Greater Long-tongued Fruit Bat (Macroglossus sobrinus)
62. Exotic Roundleaf Bat (Hipposideros gentilis)
63. Allen's Leaf-nosed Bat (Hipposideros poutensis)
64. Domestic Goat (C. h. hircus)
65. Delacour's Langur (Trachypithecus delacouri)

Bird Trip List: 267 Species

The following is a comprehensive list of bird species recorded during our mammalwatching expedition. As the tour was primarily focused on mammals rather than dedicated birding, many species were encountered opportunistically during general field activities, spotlighting sessions, transfers, and mammal searches. A number of records were heard only (H/O), particularly for nocturnal and forest species, though approximately 70% of the birds listed were seen well and photographed incidentally by our participants throughout the tour.

1. Garganey
2. Indian Spot-billed Duck
3. Mallard
4. Rufous-throated Partridge
5. Orange-necked Partridge
6. Silver Pheasant
7. Siamese Fireback
8. Green Peafowl
9. Scaly-breasted Partridge
10. Germain's Peacock-Pheasant
11. Red Junglefowl
12. Chinese Francolin
13. Rock Pigeon
14. Red Collared-Dove
15. Spotted Dove
16. Asian Emerald Dove
17. Zebra Dove
18. Ashy-headed Green-Pigeon
19. Thick-billed Green-Pigeon
20. Yellow-vented Green-Pigeon
21. Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon
22. Mountain Imperial-Pigeon
23. Greater Coucal
24. Lesser Coucal
25. Green-billed Malkoha
26. Chestnut-winged Cuckoo
27. Asian Koel
28. Violet Cuckoo
29. Banded Bay Cuckoo
30. Plaintive Cuckoo
31. Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo
32. Large Hawk-Cuckoo
33. Indian Cuckoo
34. Common Cuckoo
35. Great Eared-Nightjar
36. Gray Nightjar
37. Large-tailed Nightjar
38. Savanna Nightjar
39. Silver-backed Needletail
40. Brown-backed Needletail
41. White-nest Swiftlet
42. Pacific Swift
43. Cook's Swift
44. House Swift
45. Asian Palm Swift
46. Slaty-breasted Rail
47. Eurasian Moorhen
48. Gray-headed Swamphen
49. White-browed Crake
50. White-breasted Waterhen
51. Red-wattled Lapwing
52. Bronze-winged Jacana
53. Common Snipe
54. Green Sandpiper
55. Barred Buttonquail
56. Little Grebe
57. Asian Openbill
58. Asian Woolly-necked Stork
59. Lesser Adjutant
60. Oriental Darter
61. Little Cormorant
62. Cinnamon Bittern
63. Yellow Bittern
64. Black-crowned Night Heron
65. Little Egret
66. Little Heron
67. Chinese Pond-Heron
68. Eastern Cattle-Egret
69. Great Egret
70. Medium Egret
71. Gray Heron
72. Purple Heron
73. Oriental Honey-buzzard
74. Crested Serpent-Eagle
75. Changeable Hawk-Eagle
76. Black Eagle
77. Crested Goshawk
78. Japanese Sparrowhawk
79. Shikra
80. Black Kite
81. Gray-headed Fish-Eagle
82. Rufous-winged Buzzard
83. Gray-faced Buzzard
84. Eastern Buzzard
85. Eastern Barn Owl
86. Mountain Scops-Owl
87. Collared Scops-Owl
88. Oriental Scops-Owl

89. Brown Fish-Owl
90. Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl
91. Asian Barred Owlet
92. Collared Owlet
93. Brown Wood-Owl
94. Brown Boobook
95. Orange-breasted Trogon
96. Red-headed Trogon
97. Common Hoopoe
98. Great Hornbill
99. Brown Hornbill
100. Oriental Pied-Hornbill
101. Blue-bearded Bee-eater
102. Asian Green Bee-eater
103. Blue-tailed Bee-eater
104. Chestnut-headed Bee-eater
105. Common Kingfisher
106. Blue-eared Kingfisher
107. Banded Kingfisher
108. Stork-billed Kingfisher
109. White-throated Kingfisher
110. Collared Kingfisher
111. Indochinese Roller
112. Dollarbird
113. Coppersmith Barbet
114. Blue-eared Barbet
115. Red-vented Barbet
116. Green-eared Barbet
117. Lineated Barbet
118. Necklaced Barbet
119. Heart-spotted Woodpecker
120. Bay Woodpecker
121. Greater Flameback
122. Rufous Woodpecker
123. Black-and-buff Woodpecker
124. Pale-headed Woodpecker
125. Common Flameback
126. Lesser Yellownape
127. Red-collared Woodpecker
128. Laced Woodpecker
129. Gray-headed Woodpecker
130. Amur Falcon
131. Oriental Hobby
132. Blossom-headed Parakeet
133. Red-breasted Parakeet
134. Vernal Hanging-Parrot
135. Long-tailed Broadbill
136. Dusky Broadbill
137. Silver-breasted Broadbill
138. Black-and-red Broadbill
139. Banded Broadbill
140. Blue-rumped Pitta
141. Bar-bellied Pitta
142. Golden-bellied Gerygone
143. Scarlet Minivet
144. Brown-rumped Minivet
145. Oriental Cuckooshrike
146. Indochinese Cuckooshrike
147. White-browed Shrike-Babbler
148. White-bellied Erpornis
149. Black-naped Oriole
150. Black-hooded Oriole
151. Ashy Woodswallow
152. Large Woodshrike
153. Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike
154. Common Iora
155. Great Iora
156. White-throated Fantail
157. Black Drongo
158. Ashy Drongo
159. Bronzed Drongo
160. Hair-crested Drongo
161. Greater Racket-tailed Drongo
162. Black-naped Monarch
163. Brown Shrike
164. Burmese Shrike
165. White-winged Magpie
166. Racket-tailed Treepie
167. Ratchet-tailed Treepie
168. Large-billed Crow
169. Sultan Tit
170. Asian Tit
171. Common Tailorbird
172. Dark-necked Tailorbird
173. Rufescent Prinia
174. Yellow-bellied Prinia
175. Plain Prinia
176. Zitting Cisticola
177. Black-browed Reed Warbler
178. Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler
179. Barn Swallow
180. Eastern Red-rumped Swallow
181. Ochraceous Bulbul
182. Puff-throated Bulbul
183. Gray-eyed Bulbul
184. Black-headed Bulbul
185. Black-crested Bulbul
186. Streak-eared Bulbul
187. Stripe-throated Bulbul
188. Light-vented Bulbul
189. Red-whiskered Bulbul
190. Yellow-vented Bulbul
191. Sooty-headed Bulbul
192. Yellow-browed Warbler
193. Dusky Warbler
194. Gray-cheeked Warbler
195. Two-barred Warbler
196. Pale-legged Leaf Warbler

197.Claudia's Leaf Warbler
198.Kloss's Leaf Warbler
199.Black-throated Tit
200.Indochinese Yuhina
201.Swinhoe's White-eye
202.Chestnut-capped Babbler
203.Gray-faced Tit-Babbler
204.Pin-striped Tit-Babbler
205.Golden Babbler
206.Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler
207.Large Scimitar-Babbler
208.Gray-throated Babbler
209.Spot-necked Babbler
210.Rufous-throated Fulvetta
211.Puff-throated Babbler
212.Buff-breasted Babbler
213.Abbott's Babbler
214.Streaked Wren-Babbler
215.Annam Limestone Babbler
216.Black-browed Fulvetta
217.Mountain Fulvetta
218.Silver-eared Mesia
219.Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush
220.White-crested Laughingthrush
221.Black-throated Laughingthrush
222.Black-collared Starling
223.White-shouldered Starling
224.Common Myna
225.Vinous-breasted Myna
226.Great Myna
227.Siberian Thrush
228.Eyebrowed Thrush
229.Ferruginous Flycatcher
230.Asian Brown Flycatcher
231.Oriental Magpie-Robin
232.White-rumped Shama
233.Hainan Blue Flycatcher
234.Indochinese Blue Flycatcher
235.Siberian Blue Robin
236.Blue Whistling-Thrush
237.Narcissus Flycatcher
238.Mugimaki Flycatcher
239.White-throated Rock-Thrush
240.Blue Rock-Thrush
241.Amur Stonechat
242.Pied Bushchat
243.Yellow-vented Flowerpecker
244.Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker
245.Ruby-cheeked Sunbird
246.Brown-throated Sunbird
247.Ornate Sunbird
248.Crimson Sunbird
249.Fork-tailed Sunbird
250.Purple-naped Spiderhunter
251.Little Spiderhunter
252.Streaked Spiderhunter
253.Asian Fairy-bluebird
254.Blue-winged Leafbird
255.Golden-fronted Leafbird
256.Orange-bellied Leafbird
257.Asian Golden Weaver
258.Scaly-breasted Munia
259.White-rumped Munia
260.House Sparrow
261.Eurasian Tree Sparrow
262.Gray Wagtail
263.White Wagtail
264.Richard's Pipit
265.Paddyfield Pipit
266.Olive-backed Pipit





Reptile Trip List: 25 Species

1. Impressed Tortoise — Manouria impressa
2. Siamese Crocodile — Crocodylus siamensis
3. Ba Na Slender Gecko — Hemiphyllodactylus banaensis
4. Common Four-clawed Gecko — Gehyra mutilata
5. Flat-tailed House Gecko — Hemidactylus platyurus
6. Asian House Gecko — Hemidactylus frenatus
7. Tokay Gecko — Gekko gecko
8. Vietnamese Blue Crested Lizard — Calotes bachae
9. Wang's Garden Lizard — Calotes wangi
10. Oriental Forest Lizard — Calotes emma
11. Ayeyarwady Forest Lizard — Calotes irawadi
12. Gia Lai Pricklenape — Acanthosaura nataliae
13. Scale-bellied Tree Lizard — Acanthosaura lepidogaster
14. Orange-winged Flying Lizard — Draco maculatus
15. Oriental Long-tailed Grass Lizard — Takydromus sexlineatus
16. Spotted Forest Skink — Sphenomorphus maculatus
17. Bronze Grass Skink — Eutropis macularia
18. Longtail Mabuya — Eutropis longicaudata
19. Common Sun Skink — Eutropis multifasciata
20. Lipinia microcerca
21. Clouded Monitor — Varanus nebulosus
22. Tai-yong Keelback — Hebius boulengeri
23. Black Cross-barred Kukri Snake — Oligodon cinereus
24. Flower Snake — Elaphe moellendorffi
25. Chinese Green Tree Viper — Trimeresurus stejnegeri

Myriapoda Trip List: 3 species

1. Japanese Long-legged Centipede
2. Orange Rosary Millipede
3. Siamese Pointy-tailed Millipede

Amphibian Trip List: 17 Species

1. Asian Common Toad (Duttaphrynus melanostictus)
2. Round-tongued Floating Frog (Occidozyga martensii)
3. Limnonectes poilani
4. East Asian Bullfrog (Hoplobatrachus rugulosus)
5. Striped Sticky Frog (Kalophrynus interlineatus)
6. Dark-sided Chorus Frog (Microhyla heymonsi)
7. Mukhlesur's Narrow-mouthed Frog (Microhyla mukhlesuri)
8. Ninh Thuan Narrow-mouthed Frog (Microhyla ninhthuanensis)
9. Mada Paddy Frog (Micryletta erythropoda)
10. Nanohyla marmorata
11. Guenther's Frog (Sylvirana guentheri)
12. Similar Frog (Papurana attigua)
13. Spot-legged Tree Frog (Polypedates megacephalus)
14. Common Southeast Asian Tree Frog (Polypedates leucomystax)
15. Rhacophorus annamensis
16. Vietnamese Mossy Frog (Theloderma corticale)
17. Tiny Bubble-nest Frog (Gracixalus supercornutus)

Arachnids Trip List: 8 species

1. Asian Forest Scorpion (Heterometrus silenus)
2. Pantropical Huntsman Spider (Heteropoda venatoria)
3. Dolomedes mizhoanus (Dolomedes mizhoanus)
4. Versicolor Long-jawed Orbweaver (Tetragnatha versicolor)
5. Long-horned Orbweaver (Macracantha arcuata)
6. Spiny Orb-Weaver Spider (Gasteracantha kuhli)
7. Giant Golden Orbweaver (Trichonephila pilipes)
8. Common Garbage-Line Web Spider (Cyclosa insulana)



Lepidoptera Trip List: 74 species

1. Golden Birdwing (Troides aeacus)
2. White Dragontail Butterfly (Lamproptera curius)
3. Common Jay (Graphium doson)
4. Common Mormon Swallowtail (Papilio polytes)
5. Great Mormon (Papilio memnon)
6. Knight (Lebadea martha)
7. Paris Peacock Swallowtail (Papilio paris)
8. Red Helen Swallowtail (Papilio helenus)
9. Redbreast Swallowtail (Papilio alcmenor)
10. Common Rose Swallowtail (Pachliopta aristolochiae)
11. Black-and-white Helen (Papilio nephelus)
12. Common Gull (Cepora nerissa)
13. Lesser Gull (Cepora nadina)
14. Orange Gull (Cepora iudith)
15. Indian Cabbage White (Pieris canidia)
16. Small White (Pieris rapae)
17. White Albatross (Appias albina)
18. Yellow Orange Tip (Ixias pyrene)
19. Common Hedge Blue (Acytolepis puspa)
20. Common Pierrot (Castalius rosimon)
21. Pied Flat (Celaenorrhinus leucocera)
22. Plain Banded Awl (Hasora vitta)
23. Common Tiger Butterfly (Danaus genutia)
24. Glassy Tiger (Parantica aglea)
25. Striped Blue Crow (Euploea mulciber)
26. Burmese Bushbrown (Mycalesis perseus)
27. Common Five-Ring (Ypthima baldus)
28. Large Faun (Faunis eumeus)
29. Siam Jungleking (Thauria lathyi)
30. South China Bushbrown (Mycalesis gotama)
31. Banded Marquis (Bassarona teuta)
32. Common Sailer (Neptis hylas)
33. Malayan Assyrian (Terinos terpander)
34. Redtail Marquis (Bassarona dunya)
35. Common Jester (Symbrenthia lilaea)
36. Punchinello (Zemeros flegyas)
37. Red Lacewing Butterfly (Cethosia biblis)
38. Common Archduke (Lexias pardalis)
39. Grey Count (Tanaecia lepidea)
40. Popinjay (Stibochiona nicea)
41. Powdered Baron (Euthalia monina)
42. Redspot Duke (Dophla evelina)
43. Chocolate Pansy (Junonia iphita)
44. Grey Pansy (Junonia atlites)
45. Yellow Pansy (Junonia hierta)
46. Clipper (Parthenos sylvia)
47. Jungle Glory (Thaumantis diores)
48. Little Mapwing (Cyrestis cocles)
49. Marbled Map (Cyrestis thyodamas)
50. Shan Nawab (Polyura schreiber)
51. Spotted Sawtooth (Prioneris thestylis)
52. Amata sperbius (Amata sperbius)
53. Common Red Harlequin (Aloa lactinea)
54. Macrobrochis gigas (Macrobrochis gigas)
55. Macrobrochis staudingeri (Macrobrochis staudingeri)
56. Erebus caprimulgus (Erebus caprimulgus)
57. Phyllodes eyndhovii (Phyllodes eyndhovii)
58. Arna bipunctapex (Arna bipunctapex)
59. Nygmia plana (Nygmia plana)
60. Zhejiang Tussock Moth (Orgyia zhejiangensis)
61. Catoria sublavaria (Catoria sublavaria)
62. Cleora alienaria (Cleora alienaria)
63. Hypomecis transcissa (Hypomecis transcissa)
64. Hyposidra aquilaria (Hyposidra aquilaria)
65. Scopula fibulata (Scopula fibulata)
66. Rustic (Cupha erymanthis)
67. Sober Tabby (Ericeia inangulata)
68. Broad-bordered Hummingbird Hawkmoth (Macroglossum divergens)
69. Common Hunter Hawkmoth (Theretra nessus)
70. Convolvulus Hawkmoth (Agrius convolvuli)
71. Macroglossum prometheus (Macroglossum prometheus)
72. Heortia vitessoides (Heortia vitessoides)
73. Drury's Jewel (Erasmia pulchella)
74. Ailanthus Defoliator (Eligma narcissus)



Insects & Related Trip List: 39 species

1. Red Dwarf Honey Bee
2. Asian Honey Bee
3. Collared Carpenter Bee
4. White Combed-Sweat Bee
5. Yellow-sided Carpenter
6. Asian Weaver Ant
7. Arboreal Bicolored Slender Ant
8. Leptogenys kitteli
9. Delta pyriforme
10. Southern Giant Hornet
11. Asian Ant Mantis
12. Bindweed Seedeating Bug
13. Cosmoscarta abdominalis
14. Distantalna splendida
15. Dundubia nagarasingna
16. Lychee Stink Bug
17. Macrocheraia grandis
18. Mogannia indigotea
19. Orange Sharpshooter
20. Talainga binghami
21. Thoradonta nodulosa
22. Dascillus superbus
23. Epicauta hirticornis
24. Gold Dust Weevil
25. Iridescent Tiger Beetle
26. Platycorynus peregrinus
27. Stenocladius bicoloripes
28. Rufous-legged Grasshopper
29. Short-winged Rice Grasshopper
30. Spotted Meadow Katydid
31. Teleogryllus derelictus
32. Bathroom Moth Fly
33. Macrotermes carbonarius
34. Aquarius paludum paludum
35. Becquartina electa
36. Eparchus insignis
37. Flexitibia orientalis
38. Phraortes stomphax
39. Rimmed Window Firefly (Pyrocoelia analis)

Ray-finned Fishes Trip List: 1 species

1. Chinese Rice Fish (Oryzias sinensis)

Dragonfly (Odonata) Trip List: 20 species

1. Euphaea masoni
2. Green Metalwing (Neurobasis chinensis)
3. Plain Flashwing (Vestalis gracilis)
4. Peacock Jewel (Rhinocypha fenestrella)
5. Golden Gem (Libellago lineata)
6. Indocnemis orang
7. Coeliccia chromothorax
8. Coeliccia scutellum
9. Grey Sprite (Pseudagrion pruinosum)
10. Lesser Nighthawker (Heliaeschna uninervulata)
11. Macromia pyramidalis
12. Russet Percher (Neurothemis fulvia)
13. Common Parasol (Neurothemis fluctuans)
14. Pied Paddy Skimmer (Neurothemis tullia)
15. Common Picturewing (Rhyothemis variegata)
16. Scarlet Basker (Urothemis signata)
17. Brown-backed Red Marsh Hawk (Orthetrum chrysis)
18. Crimson-tailed Marsh Hawk (Orthetrum pruinosum)
19. Slender Skimmer (Orthetrum sabina)
20. Chalky Percher (Diplacodes trivialis)

Gastropoda Trip List: 7 species

1. African Giant Snail — Lissachatina fulica
2. Plaited Door-Snail — Euphaedusa aculus
3. Arboreal Snail — Camaena chuongi
4. Sarika resplendens
5. Bradybaena similaris
6. Euphaedusa aculus
7. Camaena chuongi





Upcoming Dates:
› 21 March – 4 April 2027
› 19 March – 2 April 2028

CLICK HERE

If you enjoyed this trip report, you may be interested in joining this trip yourself by signing up for one of our group departures. Dates for both 2027 and 2028 are now available. Our flagship mammal-focused expedition is a comprehensive 16-day / 15-night journey through Vietnam, travelling from south to north in search of the country's rarest, most iconic, and most elusive wildlife. Designed specifically for dedicated mammal watchers, the tour targets an exceptional diversity of species, including endangered and endemic primates, large mammals, squirrels, civets, pangolins, bats, and much more. Led by expert wildlife guides, the expedition combines extensive spotlighting, thermal imaging, ultrasonic bat detectors, and access to remote forests, protected areas, and major bat cave systems. The result is the most comprehensive mammal and primate tour currently available in Vietnam.

As part of our commitment to continually refining and improving our itineraries, the current version of the tour has been expanded beyond the trip report you have just read. The expedition now includes additional time in Cần Giờ, targeting mangrove specialists, flying foxes, and other coastal wildlife, as well as a visit to Núi Dinh, our most reliable location for Southern Pygmy Slow Loris. These additions further increase both the diversity of habitats covered and the number of mammal species encountered throughout the journey.

If you would like to learn more, **please visit our website** for the full itinerary, target species list, tour pricing, accommodation details, and other practical information. That said, the most accurate representation of what this expedition is really like is the trip report you have just read. While itineraries and species lists provide a useful overview, nothing illustrates the pace, challenges, successes, and diversity of wildlife encounters better than a genuine field report from a completed tour.

We recommend reviewing the tour information on our website and then reaching out to our team with any questions. We are always happy to discuss targets, logistics, expectations, and suitability for your interests and experience level. Group sizes are deliberately kept small to maximise wildlife encounters and guide-to-guest ratios. As a result, spaces are limited and early enquiries are both recommended and welcomed.

Direct Link here: https://nextcontinenttours.com/wild-vietnam-rare-primate-mammal-tour/

Tour Summary at a glance:

- 16-Day / 15-Night Expedition (All-Inclusive)
- Small Group Tour: 3–6 Participants
- Led by Professional Mammal & Wildlife Guides
- Targets 15+ Primates & 60+ Other Mammals
- Extensive Spotlighting & Thermal Scope Sessions
- Access to Private Sites, 5+ Bat Caves and Conservation Areas in collaboration Park Authorities
- Annual Departure with Limited Availability
- Pre & Post Tour Extensions Available



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Next Continent would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of the partners, conservation organisations, protected area management boards and national parks that have supported this tour, and indeed all of our tours, including Vườn Quốc gia Cát Tiên, Vườn Quốc gia Bạch Mã, GreenViet, Tiên Phong, the Sơn Trà Peninsula Management Board, Vườn Quốc gia Cúc Phương, the Vân Long Nature Reserve Management Board, HTX Bảo Tồn Voọc Gáy Trắng, and many others. All photographs featured in this report have been generously contributed by our guests, particularly Peggy & Marc Faucher, Daniel Dahan and Pierre van der Wielen. Additional images have been provided by our Tour Leader Thanh Phan and other members of the Next Continent team and wider N.C. community.

Finally, we would like to express our special appreciation to our dedicated office team, whose tireless behind-the-scenes efforts make expeditions such as this possible. From coordinating flights, accommodation, drivers, park access, permits, insurance and schedules, to managing the countless logistical details that underpin a successful tour, their work is fundamental to everything we do.



Thành Phan – Tour Leader

Thành Phan is a passionate wildlife guide with over seven years of experience leading nature & wildlife tours across Vietnam. With a Bachelor's degree in Tourism and a lifelong love for birds of Vietnam, wildlife, and biodiversity, Thanh brings both professional expertise and contagious enthusiasm to every wildlife tour he leads.

Since joining the Next Continent team, Thành has become a trusted and friendly presence on a wide range of wildlife adventures and birding tours. His deep knowledge of the wildlife in Vietnam, especially its birds and mammals, makes him a versatile and well-rounded field guide, equally comfortable on an early morning trek through the Annamite Ranges or late night spotlight for frogmouths and slow lorises.

Known for his warm personality, easygoing nature, and fine attention to detail, he's adept at helping guests make the most of their time with us and forge a genuine connection with Vietnam's remarkable biodiversity.

CONSERVATION THROUGH COLLABORATION

At Next Continent, we are unwavering in our commitment to the principles of conservation of wild animals, re-wilding, and education. Our planet and its fragile and complex ecosystems need our help, support, and understanding more than ever. The urgency of the current biodiversity challenges that face Vietnam wildlifeand Indochina's wildlife in particular calls for immediate and collective action. We believe it is the responsibility of eco tour providers to be part of the solution, not just in words or marketing, but through meaningful action and collaboration with legitimate conservation partners.

Below, you'll find a selection of our conservation groups we have donated and supported, as well as some of our partners in education, local travel initiatives and more. We encourage you to explore their work, whether by joining one of our wildlife tours that directly supports them, or by contributing to their efforts through donations or volunteering. Every action helps build a future where nature and communities thrive together.

INCLUDE:

Saola Foundation

Free the Bears

The Civet Project

Cat Ba Langur Conservation Project

Education for Nature – Vietnam (ENV)

Endangered Asian Species Trust



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