

Rob Jansen
photography



Bird & Mammal Trip Report
Vietnam (March-May 2024)

Introduction

About us

We are two enthusiastic nature lovers who travel the world together to search for stunning birds, fascinating mammals, and incredible nature. Our world travel started in October 2021 in South America. In January 2024 we went to Southeast Asia to continue our search for birds and mammals.

Rob Jansen is a biologist and wildlife photographer, and thus he has lots of knowledge about species and ecology. He's enthusiastic about all that's in nature, but mainly photographs birds and mammals.

Romy Jansen-Houtzager is a marketing professional. Our social media accounts, the look and feel of this report and the website are her work. In the field, she is an excellent spotter and very patient (give me some of her patience ...and hurry!).



Rob & Romy with camera, binoculars, telescope and thermal camera on the motorbike

Information and how to use this trip report

This trip report covers our trip to Vietnam. We travelled there from the 15th of March until the 8th of May 2024. For all photos of our Vietnam trip, comments, compliments, any specific questions, visit and/or contact us via our website. We would love to hear from you!

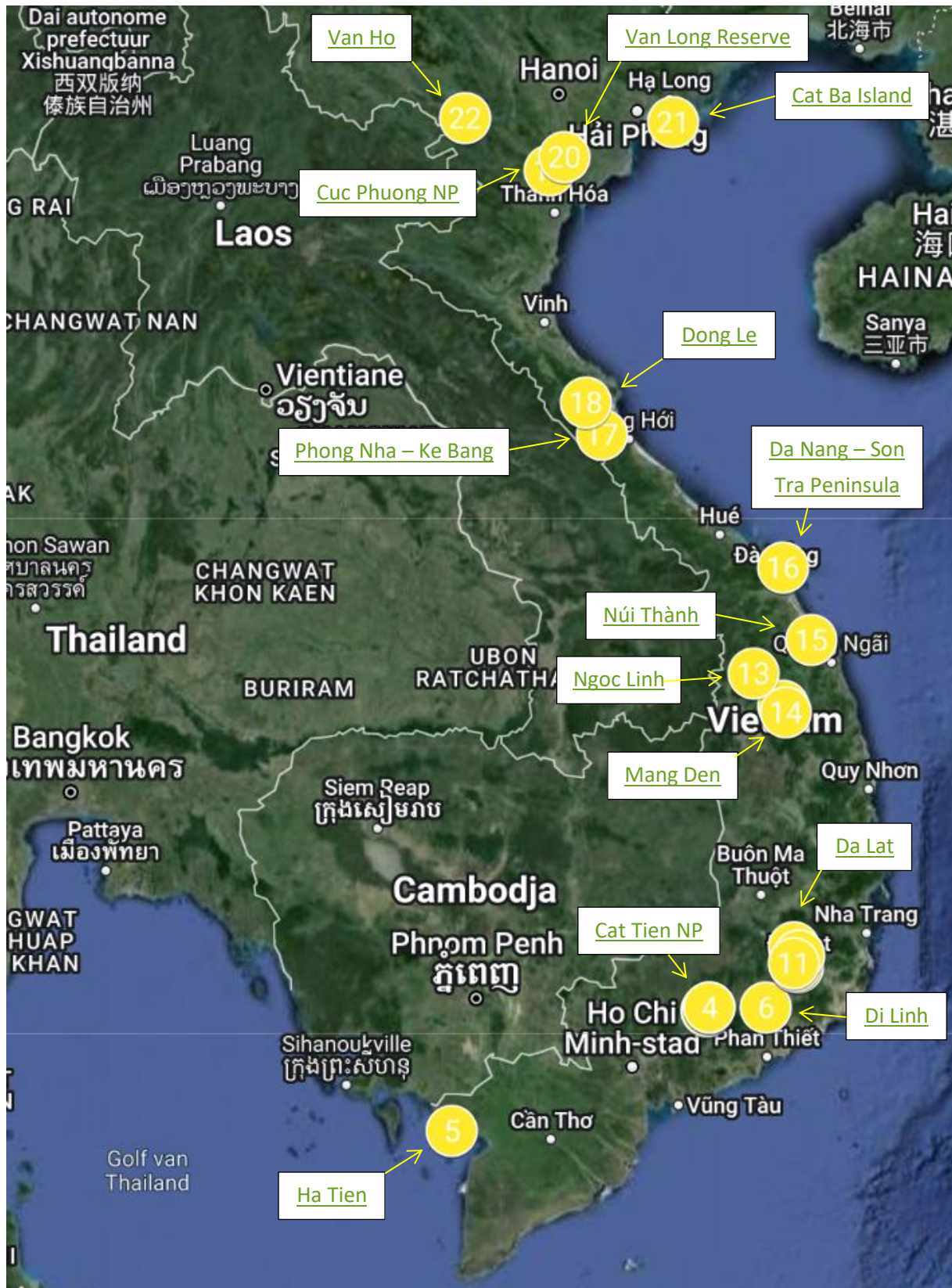
 www.robjansenphotography.com/vietnam

 www.instagram.com/robjansenphotography

Species are highlighted in this trip report: **blue for birds**, **red for mammals** and **green for herpetofauna**. Target species which we missed at a specific spot are written in *italic*. This gives you an idea which species to pay extra attention to. All observations made by us in Vietnam can be found on Observation.org. We observed a total of about 326 bird species and 42 mammal species in Vietnam. Click here for the: [bird list](#), [mammal list](#) or the [total species list](#).

For more trip reports see our website: www.robjansenphotography.com/trip-reports

Map and specific locations



After bird- & mammalwatching a big part of South America we went to Southeast Asia, beginning in Thailand, through Laos & Cambodia (see previous trip reports) and then continuing through Vietnam.

The map above shows places we visited in this country. You can click on the heading to go to that specific section in this trip report if you are only planning on visiting a certain part of the country during your vacation.

We made a [map in Google My Maps](#) with pointers of interesting trails and places and specific bird and mammal locations. You can view this map, download the points and add them to your own map (click on the three dots above the legend and download the KML file and drag this to your own map), or add them in the app 'Maps.me'. Maps.me has most walking trails on it and is usable offline. Route navigation by car doesn't always work great and it's better to use Google Maps for that purpose.

Weather and timing

Generally we had really good weather and March-April seems like a good season to travel in Vietnam. We only lost a couple of hours due to rain in Da Lat and at the end of our trip. It was a close call with the Cat Ba Langur (Cat Ba Island) and Northern White-cheeked Gibbon (Van Ho) both beginning of May, but we succeeded to search and find them despite rain for a big part of the days.

Timing-wise we missed a couple of species, mostly migrants. Cuc Phuong NP would have been better visited mid-winter, as migrant Thrushes and Flycatchers can be found. The main target Red-collared Woodpecker should be easier then as well. In the south we missed Blue-winged Pitta, which hadn't returned yet end of March from its wintering grounds.

Transportation

Most long-distance travel was done by sleeper-bus, which was surprisingly comfortable. Shorter distances were sometimes done by either seater-bus or taxis. Local transport from the accommodation to birding/mammalwatching locations was mostly done by bicycle (Cat Tien NP) and motorbike (other locations). Motorbike rental was normally between 100-150k VND per day. At most places this was an automatic motorbike (easy driving), and sometimes a semi-automatic (basically a manual without having to press the clutch when shifting gears). Gasoline was ±25k VND per litre.

Literature

- Craik, R. & Minh L.Q. (2018). Birds of Vietnam. Lynx & Birdlife International Field Guides. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. *After the Colombia version I was a fan of the Lynx bird books. The drawings are good, although sometimes I wished for a bit more (e.g., clearer bottom and upper side of birds that are often encountered flying). I also like that they pay attention to ssp. and possible splits with clear distribution maps on the same page as the bird description; this is something that was missing in the other bird books of SE Asia.*

- Francis, C. (2019). Field guide to the mammals of South-east Asia. Bloomsbury Publishing. *Just an amazing mammal guide and so happy it came out just before our travel. It's available digitally as well*

if you are travelling lightweight. It has distribution maps and short descriptions opposite to the drawings and more extensive information in the back of the book.

- BirdNet app for recording the bird sounds. If you don't know all the sounds, BirdNet can give a possible ID but it doesn't work great in SE-Asia

Equipment

Photography: Sony A9 II + 200-600mm + 1.4x converter + Sony 24-105mm, GoPro Hero 9

Binoculars and telescope: Swarovski EL 8x32 WB, Eden 8x32 XP, Swarovski 65HD + 25-50mm

Heat scope/Thermal imager: Lahoux Spotter NL 625 (lahouxbirding.com). We got to test this new and improved thermal camera from a company in The Netherlands. I owned other brands, but we are super happy with the sharpness, modes and light weight of this heat scope! More here: robjansenphotography.com/lahouxbirding

Spotlighting: Fenix HT18 Long Distance Flashlight (powerful, very focussed and my preferred choice for open areas), Fenix FD41 Focus Flashlight & Nitecore NU20 rechargeable headlight.

Use of cell phones in Vietnam

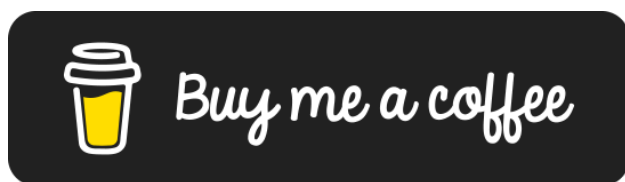
When coming into Vietnam we first bought one Vietnamobile SIM-card in a local shop for 150k VND with a data package of 1.5GB daily for 30 days, for Romy. The next day we bought one Viettel SIM-card in one of their shops in Hà Tiên for 320k VND including a data package of 1.5GB daily for 90 days for Rob. The Viettel SIM worked quite well throughout the country, and I regularly used my 4G instead of the hotel WiFi as it was faster. The reception of Vietnamobile was quite weak and sometimes (in Măng Đen, Da Lat) lacking totally, even though Viettel still had reception.

Water-to-Go

To reduce plastic usage on our travels we bought Water-to-Go water bottles. Read about our experience with Water-to-Go on our website: www.robjansenphotography.com/water-to-go. The bottle and filters are not too expensive, and you will have your investment back within one holiday. If you order with the voucher **RJANSEN15** you will get **15% discount** as well! Check the website here: www.watertogousa.com (United States of America, Canada), www.watertogo.eu (United Kingdom) or www.watertogo.shop (most countries in the EU).

Acknowledgements

A big thanks to all the people who took the effort and time to write trip reports for both www.mammalwatching.com and www.cloudbirders.com. I would also like to express gratitude to many naturalists who I contacted via iNaturalist and other channels for specific information about species and who shared their knowledge and experiences. A special thanks to Wout de Rouck for proof-reading the trip report!



If my trip report makes your trip more fun, time and cost efficient; think about supporting my creative journey by [buying me a coffee](#). Your generosity brings me closer to capturing impressive wildlife photos and untold stories

Visited sites

Hà Tiên

[10.13998, 104.63933](#)

Dates visited: 16-17 March 2024

Logistics: We crossed the border from Kampot in Cambodia to Hà Tiên in Vietnam with our e-visa. There are buses going to Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) all day long, as well as at night. These are all sleeper buses and quite comfortable, and the 8 hours ride was quite nice. If one is short on time one could take a sleeper bus from the Western Bus Station in HCMC (10.74112, 106.61905) to Hà Tiên, spend the day looking for the primate target and then take the night bus back.

We rented an automatic motorbike (150k VND per day for a crappy bike) from the accommodation. 2L fuel was enough for the ride up and down to the Hang Pagoda tourist area. Roads are paved and good all the way.

Accommodation: There are plenty of hotels in Hà Tiên, with the main centre being on the west side of the river (more availability for motorbike rent etc.)

Bird-/mammalwatching: The area we went to is actually not so much a birder's location. It took about an hour on the motorbike to reach the area, described in Google as 'Hang Pagoda tourist area - Hon Phu Tu'. The main target here is **Germain's Langur** (*Trachypithecus germaini*). We found it right away in the trees above us when we parked the motorbike. The group was quite big and not very shy. There was a huge market covering the whole area with mostly seafood, and unfortunately also at least three little stalls with **Cambodian Striped Squirrels** and **Indochinese Ground Squirrels** in little cages ☹️. Because of all those market stalls it was a bit complicated to manoeuvre around and get good photo opportunities. We followed the group for about an hour, after which they made their way up the karst forest out of sight. We then walked the road going along the mountain and found one more group of Langurs.



Germain's Langur

Germain's Langur

Cat Tien NP

[19.14842, 103.81112](#)

Dates visited: 20-28 March 2024

Logistics: After some nights in HCMC we took a local bus to Cat Tien NP. The accommodation had a list of bus options, and the Tâm Kim Hoàn seater bus (150k VND p.p.) was the best option for us time- and location wise. We left around 09.30 and arrived in Cat Tien at around 14.00.

We rented decent mountain bikes from The Green Hope Lodge (100k VND per day per bike). This is cheaper than renting crappy bikes in the park for 150K VND, and once bringing them across with the ferry (100k VND total for both ways) we were able to use them day and night and were not bound by the parks more restrictive rental hours (07.00 - 17.30).

There are two restaurants in the park, but the food is about twice as expensive as at the Green Hope Lodge. If you pay the ferryman 10k VND you can cross without buying an extra park ticket. Every time we bought food for 2 days and stored the reusable containers in the fridge in the NP room.

Accommodation: We stayed in the accommodation inside the NP for 350k VND per night (reserved via cattienvietnam@gmail.com; English). The rooms are quite old, the beds hard, but it has a fridge, kettle, WiFi, AC and warm water. Reserving seems only necessary for the weekends from Friday to Sunday, as there were barely people in the park on the other days. We even extended our stay twice without problems for the weekdays with 1-2 nights. As weekdays are quiet we were able to check in at 07.00 in the morning as well and could store our luggage safely in the room.



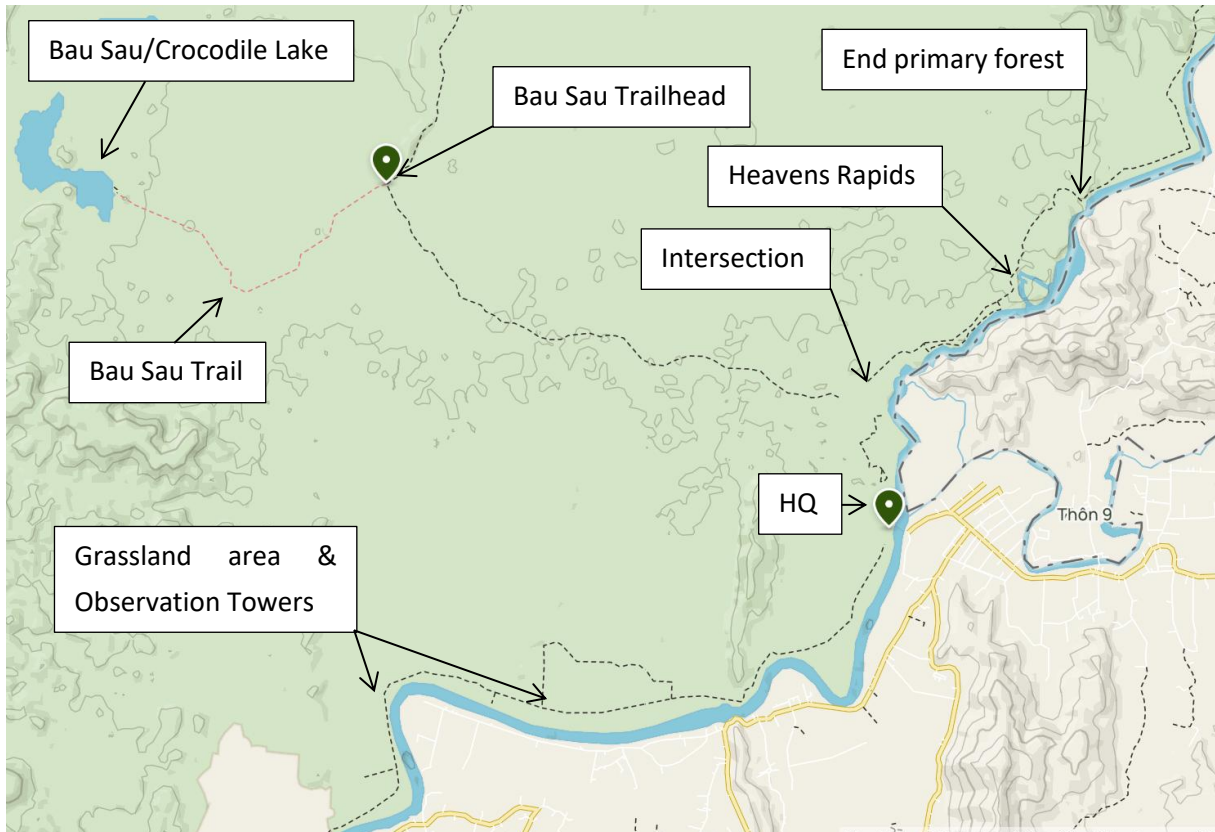
Accommodation inside Cat Tien NP

Accommodation inside Cat Tien NP

The night before and after the park we stayed at the Green Hope Lodge. Our stay there was very nice, the rooms are comfortable with a fridge, kettle, WiFi, AC, warm shower, toiletries etc. A small breakfast is included. First night via Booking was 350k VND, the second night we had a river view room for 300k VND when booked directly (Luan Pham, English via WhatsApp: +84972184683). The owner speaks perfect English and was super helpful in booking things for us and contacting some people for the rest of our trip. Definitely recommended.

Bird-/mammalwatching:

Staying inside the park and bringing bikes from outside the park allowed us to go out early and come back late. Most days we left at 05.00-05.30 and came back around 11.00 for the hot hours of the day. Around 15.00 we would go out and spotlight until 20.00/21.00. I divided the next paragraphs into sections of the park for a better overview.

**HQ area (11.42457, 107.42886)**

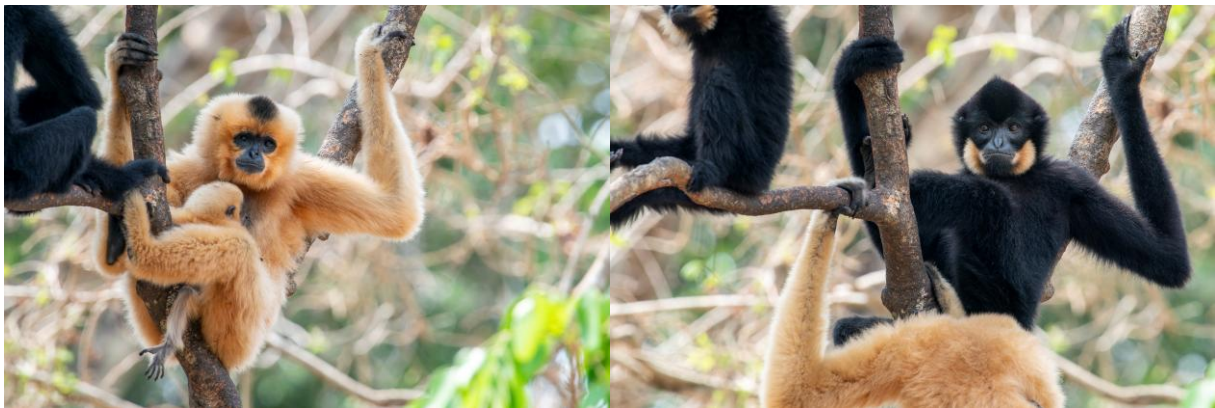
After getting the park entrance tickets (60k VND p.p. including return ticket ferry) we went to HQ reception to check in to our room. The HQ reception is where you can book cars to take you anywhere, for example to go to the start of the Bau Sau Trail or to go spotlighting.

You can also book hides at HQ. The park has two hides, the first one is 'Hide 1/2' and the second one is 'Hide 3/4' (500k VND p.p.p.d.). We went to Hide 3/4 one day. The hide is not really great for photography, but honestly none of the hides in the park are really great for that. The ranger brings mealworms and corn and stays 1 hour to call in the Pheasant. For us the afternoon (15.00-17.00) was actually better than the morning (07.00-09.30). Species were mostly the same, except that **Germain's Peacock-pheasant** stayed longer in the afternoon and **Siamese Fireback** also showed up. Both visits we observed **Blue-rumped Pitta**, **Slaty-legged Crake** and **Indochinese Blue-flycatcher**. Mammals that visited the hide were **Northern Treeshrew** and **Indochinese Ground-squirrel**. In a bare tree close to the hide we noticed **White-bellied Woodpecker**. We took a quick sneak peak in 'Hide 1/2' to see the setup and observed **Bar-bellied Pittas**.

**Indochinese Ground-squirrel****Blue-rumped Pitta**

Behind the HQ is a rehabilitation centre with a couple of cages with Gibbons in there. Semi-wild **Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbons**, previously released from those very cages, come to the captive Gibbons in the early morning. This way we had a male sitting on the outside of one of the cages around 08.00. Another day a family of 5 came and hung around for quite a while. A flowering tree above the cages attracted **Indian Giant Flying Squirrel** one night.

The trail starting on the right/north side of the HQ reception building is quite nice. This is where we observed both **Blue-rumped Pitta** and **Bar-bellied Pitta** without too much effort. **Black-and-red Broadbills** were also easily found here.

**Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon****Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon**

Grassland Area & Observation Towers (11.40479, 107.39159)

Taking the road south of the HQ leads to the grassland areas. There are multiple towers around the area, most in quite a bad state. The first tower (11.40526, 107.3744) we visited was 7.6km away from the HQ. Cycling there we had two groups of **Long-tailed Macaques** in the bamboo and **Lesser Coucal** in the grass. Around 17.00 the first of eventually three **Green Peafowl** showed up in the back of the – now dry– wetland. **White-bellied Woodpecker** flew by and **Yellow-bellied Prinias** called from the grass. **Vinous-breasted Mynas** were foraging in the short grass.

Around 17.15 we drove to the other tower (11.40479, 107.39159), 5.4km from the HQ. We hoped for **Gaurs**, but with some photographers having set up portable hides we didn't see anything besides the

many **Sambar Deer**. We went back to this last tower another night but only had **Javan Mongoose** as new species running past the waterhole. Spotlighting back at night yielded a **Small Indian Civet** hidden deep inside the grass, close to the forest.



Green Peafowl

Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon

HQ (11.42457, 107.42886) <—> **Intersection** (11.43921, 107.42642)

Going north from HQ for about 1.8km you arrive at the intersection. Turning right/NE goes to Heaven's Rapids. Continuing straight/NW leads to the Bau Sau trailhead. The only things of note seen from this part of the road was a **Yellow-throated Marten** in grass in the afternoon and a **Lesser Mouse-deer** at night. Despite having quite some bamboo on the south side of the road, we didn't find any **Pygmy Slow Loris** on this part, despite spotlighting it most nights. We only found **Great-eared Nightjar** sitting in the bamboo, a bird commonly heard at night.

Intersection (11.43921, 107.42642) <—> **Heaven's Rapids** (11.45049, 107.44272)

This first part of forest closer to the intersection is quite open, getting denser with more bamboo and high green trees towards the Heaven's Rapids. We walked this part one late morning, but didn't find it very interesting bird-wise except for some **Grey-faced Tit-babblers** (ne) we found here. We spotlighted it the first night from the intersection for about 1.3km and back, on foot with a thermal camera and flashlight. We found nothing of note besides **Common Palm Civet** and a female **Siberian Blue Robin**. The second night spotlighting here was way better as we had changed tactics; our handheld flashlight has a narrower beam and on foot we cover less ground. Therefore, we decided to cycle slowly with our headlights on. As there is quite some loose gravel in the middle of the road cycling slowly was sometimes tricky, but this new tactic paid off. Just scanning around with my head making 8-shaped-loops to cover both the ground and the upper levels while trying not to fall with the bike, I suddenly caught a glimpse of tiny bright red eyeshine. I stopped and checked again but couldn't find it. It took quite a while before I refound it in the dense bamboo, but then I was clearly looking at a **Pygmy Slow Loris**! Not much later we thought it had moved, and back, and forth, and back etc. Then we realized there were actually two together. Continuing on the road I observed the same sort of eyeshine, and again we got 2 **Pygmy Slow Lorises** together! On the third night we repeated this tactic (starting around 18.30 at the Heaven's Rapids) and again found 2 solitary **Pygmy**

Slow Lorises this time. Other things seen on this stretch of road in the two nights that we spotlighted here are 2x **Lesser Mouse-deer**, 2x **Common Palm Civet** and 1x **Small-toothed Palm Civet**.



Pygmy Slow Loris



Common Palm Civet

Heaven's Rapids (11.45049, 107.44272) <=> **End Primary Forest** (11.45887, 107.44889)

We spend quite some time on this stretch of very nice primary forest, which is only ± 1.5 km of road. This is supposed to be a good place for the rare **Annamese Silvered Langur**. We walked it two afternoons (15.30-18.00) and three mornings (06.00-10.00) and only managed to find them on our very last morning! The forest here is quite good for **Black-shanked Douc**, and every visit resulted in at least a couple of groups jumping away at first sight (unfortunately most primates in the park are still quite skittish). One group of **Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbons** was heard every morning, but only seen on the last morning. Most visits resulted in at least one or two groups of **Northern Pig-tailed Macaques** and/or **Long-tailed Macaques**. Besides the very common **Pallas's Squirrel**, this is the place where we got our only two sightings of **Black Giant Squirrel** in the park.



Annamese Silvered Langur



Annamese Silvered Langur

Bird-wise this stretch of forest is quite interesting as well. We have seen some **Bar-bellied Pittas** foraging along the road. **Siamese Fireback** was seen a couple of times (also when cycling past the good forest, through the more open bamboo part). **Germain's Peacock-pheasant** was heard only on this stretch of forest. Taking a look from a hide-in-the-making (I presume from the Forest Floor Lodge) we made out **Orange-necked Partridge** (ne) that walked away from the feeding spot. **Green-**

legged Partridge was commonly heard and sometimes seen. Besides these ground-dwelling birds we observed **Black-and-red Broadbill**, **Banded Broadbill** (HO), **Indochinese Green Magpie**. Both **Red-breasted Parakeets** and **Oriental Dollarbirds** are not to be missed, calling loudly from the bare trees. A fruiting tree delivered **Golden-crested Myna** and **Ashy-headed Green-pigeon** (in between **Thick-billed Green-pigeons**). More interesting Woodpeckers present were **Great Slaty Woodpecker**, **Laced Woodpecker**, **Heart-spotted Woodpecker** and **Pale-headed Woodpecker** (the latter in the bamboo near the end of the good forest).



Abbott's Babbler



Black-and-red Broadbill

One night we spotlighted back and forth towards the end. We stopped for a longer time near a fruiting tree and observed 2 **Indian Giant Flying Squirrel**, **Common Palm Civet**, **Lesser Mouse-deer**, **Brown Boobook** (HO) and **Blyth's Frogmouth** (HO).

Intersection (11.43921, 107.42642) <-> **Bau Sau Trailhead**

Most of the 7km road from the intersection towards the Bau Sau trailhead is luckily pretty well paved, unlike the first part from the HQ. We drove this road three times, of which twice coming from HQ around 05.30 to beat the crowds and have the best chances at primates.

One morning we checked for **Annamese Silvered Langur** at the 6-Rooted Ficus Tree (trailhead at 11.44185, 107.40663). According to a park ranger these primates sometimes sleep here and could be seen at 06.00 in the morning. We observed **Northern Pig-tailed Macaque** and **Black-shanked Douc**, but no Silvered Langurs near the tree. Every now and then we would stop because we heard rustling, which then turned out to be **Bar-bellied Pitta**, **Red Junglefowl** or **Siamese Fireback**. Two cool-looking birds were heard only along this road; **Banded Kingfisher** and **Banded Broadbill**. 4 **Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbons** were foraging in a high fruiting tree above the road both mornings that we went early. **Black-shanked Doucs** are pretty common, especially in the big trees towards the trailhead, with many groups and individuals seen.

**Bar-bellied Pitta****Black-shanked Douc**

Two times we returned from the Bau Sau trailhead towards HQ at night (18.30-20.00/20.30) to spotlight. As the road is paved it is possible to drive more quietly and it's easier to not fall due to slow driving in combination with gravel (as opposed to the road to Heaven's Rapids). Both nights were quite productive. We would recommend this trail for spotlighting if one has already seen the Slow Loris (less chance here due to habitat).

The best sighting on both nights actually came before we left. While waiting in the shelter for the sun to set Romy spotted a **Mainland Leopard Cat** around 18.15 walking on the road!

We actually observed Pygmy Slow Loris both nights, both times a little bit 'by accident'. The first time was when we checked for the Silvered Langur at the 6-Rooted Ficus Tree, as we figured if they sleep there we might find them at night. Walking the 100m trail we found a **Pygmy Slow Loris** as well as 2 **Northern Red Muntjac**. The second time we checked the Uncle Dong Reedish Wood Tree (11.43796, 107.42236) and when parking my bike I noticed a **Pygmy Slow Loris** in the tangles besides me. Both these sightings were outside of bamboo vegetation, although close to vines and other spiny plants.

**Pygmy Slow Loris****Common Palm Civet**

Sightings of other mammals were sometimes far and wide in between, and other times we would stop 3 times within 100m. This impressive list is the sum of both nights (including the abovementioned mammals): 1 **Mainland Leopard Cat**; 12 **Common Palm Civet**; 2 **Small-toothed**

Palm Civet; 1 **Wild Boar**; 3 **Lesser Mouse-deer**; 3 **Northern Red Muntjac**; 2 **Sambar Deer**; 3 **Indian Giant Flying Squirrel**; 2 **Pygmy Slow Loris**; 2 **Malayan Porcupine** (together). Nocturnal birds were quite quiet, with only **Large-tailed Nightjar**, **Great-eared Nightjar** and **Brown Wood-owl** (HO).

FYI: there are two more hides past the Bau Sau trailhead. They're not on the flyer from the NP, but upon asking the ranger did ask 500k VND p.p. for those hides as well. It seems these hides are from the birding tours. A quick peak in one of the hides after a birding group had left revealed two **Orange-necked Partridges** (ne), **Northern Slender-tailed Treeshrew** and **Northern Treeshrew**.



Orange-necked Partridge

Northern Slender-tailed Treeshrew

Bau Sau Trailhead / Bau Sau Trail / Crocodile Lake

Walking this trail costs 250k VND p.p. Tickets have to be bought at HQ reception. We bought them a day in advance, as we wanted to leave at 05.30. We found the entrance fee quite steep for a \pm 4.3km trail towards a lake (and not really worth it). We decided to walk it anyway as we heard **Annamese Silvered Langurs** are sometimes seen in the forest near a big tree (11.45080, 107.36432), about 1/3rd or 1.6km into the trail. We walked the trail up and down twice in the morning, waiting at the tree until 15.00 and walked again to the lake and back to the trailhead. Still we didn't find them.

The trail is quite small, a bit uneven, and goes mostly through more dense forest. This is why all the more common ground dwellers who love such a habitat were quite common and seen well along this trail; **Bar-bellied Pitta**, **Siamese Fireback**, **Red Junglefowl** and **Germain's Peacock-pheasant**. Other nice birds found were **Orange-breasted Trogon**, **Banded Kingfisher** (HO) and **Laced Woodpecker**.

Listening for any rustling sounds that could signal the presence of Silvered Langurs we often got excited by yet another **Pallas's Squirrel** or **Cambodian Striped Squirrel**. **Black-shanked Doucs** are quite common in the foliated parts of the forest (not in the dryer parts towards the end). A female **Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon**, with a very young child that went quite clumsily through branches, made for a nice variation from the very shy Doucs. While waiting at the big tree during the midst of the day we suddenly heard some rustling which turned out to be a **Yellow-throated Marten**.

At the lake there is an observation tower to observe the wildlife along the shores. **Long-tailed Macaques** were present in the late afternoon. **Brown-backed Needletails** were drinking water and carefully scanned in vain for **Silver-backed Needletails**. **Purple Swamphens** were common on the shore and both **Bronze-winged Jacana** and **Cotton Pygmy Goose** were quite abundant on the lake. We had one male **Asian Golden Weaver** in breeding plumage. In the afternoon one **Green Peafowl** was seen in the grassy habitat on the opposite left side of the shore. We saw two –reintroduced– **Siamese Crocodiles** in the lake.



Germain's Peacock-pheasant

Northern Treeshrew

Di Linh – Deo Nui San pass

[11.46157, 108.05866](#)

Dates visited: 28-31 March 2024

Logistics: From Cat Tien to Di Linh we first opted for the local bus that leaves early morning from the town to Dalat. The price of this local bus (200k VND) was about the same as the sleeper bus (210k VND). As we were able to share a taxi (350k VND total for 5 people) to the bus stop on the main road, we went for the more comfortable option.

Going from Di Linh to Da Lat was easier; we showed up at the Futa Bus office (11.59499, 108.07949) and 20 minutes later we were in a sleeper bus towards Da Lat (120k VND). Busses leave HCMC every hour, so in theory they should pass by in Di Linh every hour as well. Once at the main bus station in Da Lat, show your ticket and you get free transport to your hotel.

We were able to rent an automatic motorbike from the accommodation for 100k VND per day. The birding site is about 30min/20km from the hotel. We drove up and down 5 times, and used about 140k VND worth of fuel (± 5.5 L).

**Red-cheeked Ground Squirrel****Orange-headed Thrush**

Accommodation: We didn't read many good reviews about hotels in Di Linh, so options seemed limited. A room with a hard bed at Khách sạn Hotel (11.57471, 108.07284) seemed fine for 200k VND p.n., but there was no availability for our third night. We ended up at Khách sạn Diệu Anh (11.57841, 108.07558) for 300k VND p.n. Beds were luckily softer than usual in this part of Asia; decent WiFi, only a fan/no AC. Decent and quiet enough during the nights.

Bird-/mammalwatching: The birding takes place along the R28 going from Di Linh to Phan Thiết. On the way we tried many times at many places for Annam Prinia. Known sites where it used to be seen are near the cemetery (11.51983, 108.06709) and the rubbish dump (11.50964, 108.06677). At the rubbish dump we only observed **Rufescent Prinia** (*ssp. dalatensis*) in at least four visits. We tried some more spots, including near the Ivory Falls Villa (11.54254, 108.06982), but it seemed that good vegetation was recently converted to more agricultural land. We eventually found a skulking **Annam Prinia** (ne) in shrubby habitat near a school (11.55246, 108.07785) during the midst of the day. The next morning we got good views of one that seemed to forage together with a **Plain Prinia**. Also here was a stunning **Yellow-eyed Babbler**.

**Annam Prinia****Black-chinned Yuhina**

The main birding takes place between KM80 (11.47293, 108.0687) to KM75 (11.448, 108.0638). Most of the tour groups passing by Di Linh use one of the photography hides that have been set up. Rightly so, as birding along the road was quite annoying with so much traffic passing from early morning

until late afternoon. Set your mind to lots of noise, honking and 'HEELLOOO!!' from passers-by. We found the best birding along the road to be between the top of the pass (11.4615, 108.05874) down to KM80 (back toward Di Linh). The first afternoon we already got **Indochinese Barbet** (ne; very common all around), **Red-vented Barbet** (ne; it took until the 2nd morning before we found another one along the road that we actually observed) and heard **Necklaced Barbet** (ne).

Seeing other birds along the road felt like hard work with little reward. Still we managed to get some goodies every now and then, including **Blue-bearded Bee-eater**, **Indochinese Green Magpie**, **Germain's Peacock-pheasant** (HO), **Pin-tailed Green-pigeon** and **Red-headed Trogon**. Some flocks brought good species, including **Grey-crowned Tit** (ne), **Black-chinned Yuhina** and **Brown-backed Bulbul** (ne, *H. flavala remotus*).

As we were eager to get off the road we tried to walk the trail starting behind the tea stall (11.44777, 108.06393). We followed it for a couple of 100 meters until we ended up at a point where it wasn't clear anymore and we decided to turn around. Even that short distance yielded **Annam Streaked Wren-babbler** (e; *T. brevicaudatus rufiventer*), a big group of **White-cheeked Laughingthrushes** and some **Orange-headed Thrushes**.



Annam Streaked Wren-babbler

Orange-headed Thrush

Just a little bit uphill from the tea stalls, we found a trail after we observed **Blue Pitta** (*ssp. willoughbyi*). Right when we entered the trail we got a huge flock of **White-cheeked Laughingthrushes**, which moved quite rapidly through the forest. Except for the common **Pallas's Squirrel** we suspect we heard **Black Giant Squirrel** here too. The stunning **Bay Woodpecker** showed well, and through the canopy we made out our first endemic **Dalat Shrike-babbler** (*P. aeralataus annamensis*). Another morning we managed to see **Bar-backed Partridges** here. A mixed flock that other morning brought **Kloss's Leaf-warbler**, **Black-headed Parrotbills** (ne), **Grey-crowned Tits**, and more **Dalat Shrike-babblers**.

**Blue Pitta****Black-headed Parrotbill**

At the top of the pass (11.46157, 108.05866) is a trail leading into the forest. The main trail doesn't go on for very long, but there is a side trail going up on the left hand side, which seems pretty nice. It climbs up, flattens out and then descends again. We didn't follow this very far, but still observed **Large Woodshrike**, **Maroon Oriole** (quite common), **Black-headed Parrotbill**, **Long-tailed Broadbill**, **Scarlet Minivet** and **White-bellied Erpornis**.

**Bar-backed Partridges****Indochinese Green Magpie**

There are quite some trails leading uphill into the forest, mostly on the east side of the road. Most of these seem to end at a photography hide, but even then the trail towards there gets you some quieter birding as a nice distraction from the main road. Of course we checked to not disturb any photographers in the hides. These trails and areas around the hides were productive, with many species seen: **Red-billed Scimitar-babbler**, **White-browed Scimitar-babbler**, **Black-chinned Yuhina**, **Black-headed Parrotbill**, **White-throated Rock-thrush**, **Annam Streaked Wren-babbler**, **Siberian Thrush**, **Orange-headed Thrush**, **Mountain Fulvetta**, **Grey-throated Babbler**, **Ashy Bulbul**, **Silver-breasted Broadbill**. Mammal-wise we observed **Red-cheeked Ground Squirrel** and both **Eastern Striped Squirrel** as well as **Cambodian Striped Squirrel**. Surprisingly not hunted to local extinction, we even observed **Northern Pig-tailed Macaque**.

**White-throated Rock-thrush****Red-billed Scimitar-babbler**

Spotlighting didn't yield any mammals, but we did hear **Hodgon's Frogmouth** at two different locations: one time on a trail towards a hide and once in the bend of the road near KM80 (11.47285, 108.06881). There we also heard **Mountain Scops-owl**.

Đà Lạt

11.88361, 108.40843

Dates visited: 31 March – 8 April 2024

Logistics: See 'Logistics' Di Linh for how we got here. As Da Lat is a big city there are many options to get anywhere in the country by plane or bus. We got the hotel to reserve a sleeper bus ticket to Măng Đen (see 'logistics' next chapter).

We rented an automatic motorbike + 2 helmets from the hotel for 100k VND p.d. for our 8-day stay in Da Lat. In total we drove ±350km and paid 245k VND for fuel to get to all the locations mentioned below.

Accommodation: Da Lat has 100's of accommodations. We stayed at Flora Home Dalat (11.92944, 108.43253), which was decent enough. Discounted rooms were 300k VND for a double bed or 400k VND for 2 double beds and a bath. No AC, good WiFi and an owner that helped us book some things made it a decent stay. The south side of the city is a good choice as a base to reach all the birding sites. Keep in mind that the main road can be quite noisy and sound-proofing is rare in Asia.

Bird-/mammalwatching: We had quite some time in Da Lat. This was partly to build in some rest, but also as there are quite some targets, and people often miss a few when only visiting for a few days. Fog and rain are quite common here, so that can cut birding time short. In hindsight we might even have skipped Di Linh, as we barely had any species there that we didn't also see in Da Lat.

1. Tuyen Lake West Side ([11.88361, 108.40843](#))

No opening hours or entrance fees for this location.

This was one of our most productive sites and more pleasant birding experiences in Vietnam so far. Especially after Di Linh it was nice to bird in a quieter forest instead of next to a busy road. We visited this site 3 mornings (1, 6 & 7 April), 1 afternoon (3 April) and 1 evening (6 April).

Driving towards the birding spot one finds mixed pine and broadleaf forest along the main road. A bit more east, the forest is more pine-dominated and quite open (11.88238, 108.40984). On our first morning we observed **Slender-billed Oriole** in this part. Large flocks of **Vietnamese Greenfinches** (e) were found here on our last morning, feeding on the flowering plants in the pots on the ground. We also observed 2 **Red Crossbills**, which were surprisingly hard to find once foraging in the pine trees. For other bird targets the next part is especially great birding.



White-throated Rock-thrush

Beetles spec.

One can park along the main road or drive onto the road going uphill (11.88361, 108.40843) and park along the road (11.88112, 108.40614). The first two mornings we were immediately rewarded with big mixed flocks containing **White-cheeked Laughingthrush** (ne), **Vietnamese Cutia** (e), **Plain Minla** (ne; *S. cyanouroptera orientalis*), **Dalat Shrike-babbler** (e; *P. aeralataus annamensis*), **White-spectacled Sibia** (e; *H. desgodinsi robinsoni*), **Annam Sunbird** (e; *A. gouldiae annamensis*) and **Black-headed Parrotbill** (ne). The latter was seen relatively often around this area. Some fruiting trees next to the parking spot were a popular spot for **Necklaced Barbet** (ne), **Brown-backed Bulbul** (ne; *H. flavala remotus*), **Southern Mountain Bulbul** and **Black Bulbul**. A male **White-throated Rock-thrush** was a pleasant surprise. Other good birds seen in this area were **Siberian Thrush**, **Dark-sided Thrush**, **Indochinese Green Magpie**, **Clicking Shrike-babbler** (ssp. *indochinensis*) and **Mugimaki Flycatcher**. On a forest trail we heard **Rusty-naped Pitta**, but couldn't get it into views. Mammals seen around here are **Red-cheeked Ground-squirrel**, **Northern Smooth-tailed Treeshrew**, **Eastern Striped Squirrel** and **Pallas's Squirrel**.

**Black-headed Parrotbill****Eastern Striped Squirrel**

Spotlighting in the forest around the uphill parking spot yielded **Mountain Scops-owl** (HO), **Grey Nightjar** (HO), **Large-tailed Nightjars** (heard and 2 nests found) and after quite some effort we got views of **Hodgson's Frogmouth**!

2. Dalat Bush Warbler site ([11.91067, 108.39945](#))

No opening hours or entrance fees for this location.

Checking eBird for this species, one's attention is directly drawn to a seemingly random spot southwest of Da Lat. Driving some small and steep forest roads with the motorbike from the west side of Tuyen lake, we arrived to this grassy area. Soon after we heard the species and not much later got decent views of a **Dalat Bush Warbler** (e). Taking the eastern road going downhill we made a stop when we heard **Hill Prinia** (11.91534, 108.40218). Suddenly our attention was drawn to a bigger bird flying into the pines. This turned out to be a female **Red Crossbill**. She later joined another Crossbill drinking from the gully next to the road. Then **Vietnamese Greenfinches** (e) flew into some pines nearby. A bit further down the road a mixed flock brought our first **Langbian Tit** (e; *P. monticolus legendrei*), **Annam Minivet** (e; *P. ethologus annamensis*) and **Kloss's Leaf-warbler**.

**Vietnamese Cutia****Red Crossbill**

3. Bi Doup NP/DT722 Road ([12.10333](#), [108.36087](#))

No opening hours or entrance fees for this location.

As this location was quite far from the city (± 40 km/1h drive) we only visited it twice and didn't do any spotlighting (although this is probably the place to go around Da Lat if you want to do some spotlighting for mammals). The road is paved all the way so driving a motorcycle up is quite easy. It also saves you the hassle of a taxi that has to wait all day or agreeing on a fixed time for pick-up.

Driving up the mountain we encountered multiple **Grey Bushchats**, **Indochinese Barbets** (ne) and **White-faced Jays**.



Large Niltava female



Large Niltava male

On our first visit (2nd of April) we booked a hide ([12.10251](#), [108.36139](#)) via [Tien](#), working at AnnamBirding. Even though they normally already charge 1,000,000 VND per person for the hide, he even tried to make it 1.2m VND! The hide itself was a bit disappointing as well: very uncomfortable stools (not even chairs); not the best setup for photography; and we had to share with a small bird tour that had loud playback on repeat the whole day despite the birds already showing up next to the speaker. Compared to the great-quality private hides you get for the same money in Europe it's staggering that the hide is occupied most days. There are a couple of other hides -we eventually found at least 4 more- in the area, and it was unclear to us which species come to which hide.



Northern Smooth-tailed Treeshrew



Dark-sided Thrush

Rusty-naped Pitta comes to the hide we visited, but mostly until the end of March. As it had rained the days before chances were low, and indeed we dipped this species here. **Blue Pitta** (ssp. *willoughbyi*) showed well multiple times during the day. **Rufous-throated Partridge**, **Short-tailed Scimitar-babbler**, **Langbian Lesser Shortwing** (ne; *B. leucophris langbianensis*) and **Grey-bellied Tesia** were amongst the best birds seen during our time in the hide (07.00-17.00). **Black-crowned Fulvetta** (e) sometimes shows up, but not this day. Other species worth mentioning are **Snowy-browed Flycatcher**, **Dark-sided Thrush**, **White-cheeked Laughingthrush** and **White-spectacled Sibia** (e; *H. desgodinsi robinsoni*). Mammals coming to the hide were **Pallas's Squirrel**, **Red-cheeked Ground Squirrel**, **Eastern Striped Squirrel**, **Northern Smooth-tailed Treeshrew** and **Northern Treeshrew**.



Grey-bellied Tesia



Langbian Lesser Shortwing

The second day we mostly focussed on the jungle trail. For this, you have to go past the fence (12.10333, 108.36087). After the fence the trail is paved, without people and with good views of the forest. We walked the trail up and down twice and found **Black-crowned Fulvetta** (e) only once, and only after using playback. If we came across a mixed flock we sometimes tried to lure the flock closer with Collared Owlet tape and this is how we observed one of our other targets; **Yellow-billed Nuthatch** (ne).



Yellow-billed Nuthatch



Black-crowned Fulvetta

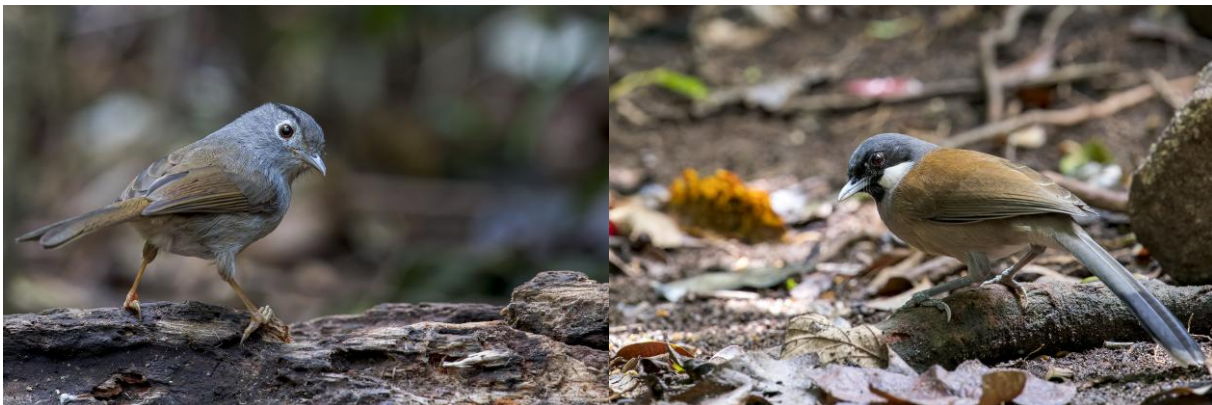
Many of the specialties from the highland plateau were seen in flocks this day: **Grey-crowned Tit** (ne), **White-spectacled Sibia** (e; *H. desgodinsi robinsoni*), **Annam Sunbird** (e; *A. gouldiae*

annamensis), **Chestnut-crowned Warbler** (*ssp. annamensis*) and **Black-headed Parrotbill** (e). Other nice birds in such flocks were **Mountain Tailorbird**, **Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** and **Pygmy Blue-flycatcher**, to name a few.

These lists can give the impression we observed birds all the time, but this was certainly not the case. Besides the common **Maroon Oriole**, **Greater Yellownappe** and the occasional **Long-tailed Broadbill** (HO) or **White-throated Fantail**, bird activity was sometimes far and wide in between.

Be sure to walk quietly when approaching the stream at the little bridge (12.09713, 108.35694). This is a known spot for Spotted Forktail. It responded to playback immediately, but didn't come into the open. We worked our way through the shrubs and then spotted two birds flying away, and the only one seen properly turned out to be a **Slaty-backed Forktail** to our surprise. Luckily, later during the day we took another short trail just before the bridge and observed **Spotted Forktail** (*ssp. robinsoni*).

Walking along the main road yielded just a couple of birds, including **Mountain Hawk-eagle** in the sky. On some of the trails towards other hides we found **Annam Streaked Wren-babbler** (e; *T. brevicaudatus rufiventer*).



Mountain Fulvetta

White-cheeked Laughingthrush

4. Lang Biang Mountain ([12.01932](#), [108.42438](#))

We're not entirely sure about the official opening hours, but other birders did get in around 06.00. The entrance fee is 50k VND p.p.

From the parking lot you have to park your motorbike/car, and either walk or take one of the park taxis (120k VND p.p. return price) up to the start of the summit trail (12.03794, 108.42555). We took the local way up and parked our motorbike in front of a local's house (12.0232, 108.42607; the local said this was a safe place). From there we took the trail going up the mountain. The first part is open and then goes through pine forest. **Chinese Francolin** and **Hume's Treecreeper** (*ssp. meridionalis*) were both heard going up early morning. **White-faced Jay** was seen both going up and down this way. The steep trail took us in about 45 minutes to the main road/entrance of the summit trail.

**Hume's Treecreeper****White-faced Jay**

The summit trail (12.03794, 108.42555) itself is luckily not as steep as the walk uphill. The trail first goes through pine forest with some shrub downslope and later enters broadleaf evergreen forest. Only towards the end of the trail there is a steep climb up, which according to others should be worth it for the views –but which we gladly skipped–.

Already on the first part of the trail we noticed a mixed flock, containing **Dalat Shrike-babbler** (e; *P. aeralataus annamensis*), **Langbian Tit** (e; *P. monticolus legendrei*) and **Grey-crowned Tits** (ne). Unfortunately, we missed the **Vietnamese Cutia** that was seen in that very same flock by other birders standing a bit further up the trail.

**Grey-crowned Tit****Little Pied Flycatcher**

Talking to the other birders Romy noticed a **Hume's Treecreeper** (*ssp. meridionalis*) that flew in a tree near us. Further up, some **Annam Minivets** (e; *ssp. P. ethologus annamensis*) were going in the treetops.

In the broadleaf forest we mostly heard birds, including **Blue Pitta** (*ssp. willoughbyi*), **Green Cochoa**, **Langbian Lesser Shortwing** (ne; *B. leucophris langbianensis*) and **Grey-bellied Tesia**. A **White-tailed Robin** on the path was the first of its kind seen by us outside a bird hide!



Langbian Sunbird



Langbian Sunbird

5. Ta Nung Valley ([11.93387](#), [108.37615](#))

This site is open from 06.00-17.30. Entrance fee is 100k VND p.p.

We visited this site one morning and found the entrance price a bit steep for what it is. Construction was going on everywhere and besides mostly fake flowers there were just a couple of flowering plants attracting **Annam Sunbird** (e; *A. gouldiae annamensis*) and **Langbian Sunbird** (e; *A. saturate johnsi*). The park seems to offer little protection for nature, as we even found a bird net with different birds entangled and bird trapping cages in the shrubs.

This site was known as a good site for **Grey-crowned Crocias** (e), **Black-hooded Laughingthrush** (ne) and **Rufous-backed Sibia** (e; ssp. *eximia*) but we couldn't find any of those here. We are not sure if these sites are still good for these species. Other than the two Sunbirds, we observed birds that are not very hard to see at other places; **Hill Prinia**, **Plain Minla** (ne; *S. cyanouroptera orientalis*), **Dalat Shrike-babbler** (e; *P. aeralataus annamensis*) and one **Vietnamese Greenfinch** (e).



Vietnamese Greenfinch



Hill Prinia

Măng Đen & Ngọc Linh

[14.59707, 108.28905](#)

Dates visited: 9-13 April 2024

Most people don't visit Măng Đen and Ngọc Linh independently as information on logistics, accommodation and birding is a bit thin. We tried to arrange a trip from Da Nang by car with HIVOOC (Tuan Bui), but prices were very expensive. For a car they charged 170USD per day for example, and we needed an extra day 'to minimize driving at night for our own safety'. As that was not the budget we had, we decided to try these places on our own. As there are sensitive species (see last chapter) at both locations, it was a bit hard to find a good balance on the detail of this chapter. If you're an experienced independent birder you might do the trip the same way and you can probably read between the lines.

Măng Đen ([14.66874, 108.25805](#))

Logistics:

Măng Đen is getting quite popular with the general tourist, and I expect public transportation to/from here to become easier over the years. Nowadays there is one direct sleeper bus from/to HCMC, and there should be a sleeper bus from/to Da Nang as well. One could also fly on Pleiku and take a taxi or local bus to Măng Đen. We took the 18.00 sleeper bus (company Việt Tân) from the main bus station (11.92705, 108.44534) in Da Lat. We got our hotel to reserve two seats via telephone (0269 3838 378). This was far from a touristy sleeper bus and the least comfortable one we took in Vietnam, but for 350k VND we got as far as Kon Tum (14.36765, 107.99419). As we arrived at 04.15 we decided to take a taxi (600k VND; we were too sleepy to negotiate; in hindsight we should have) to Măng Đen. For a shorter holiday one could consider to have the car company (see Ngọc Linh logistics) pick you up and go straight to Ngọc Linh to save a day.

Locally in Măng Đen we hired a semi-automatic motorbike from the accommodation for 120k VND per day. The birding site is only 30min/15km away from the town.

Accommodation: Nowadays there are lots of accommodations in Măng Đen, with 10's of new ones being built as we speak. We stayed at Big Măng Đen's Home, which was decent enough for the price.

Bird-/mammalwatching: The first morning we arrived near the birding location (14.66874, 108.25805) around 06.15. We went to the location of the hide as that seemed like a good starting point of our main target (but a sensitive species). We were not sure why Tim Dinh didn't let us reserve the hide (1m VND p.p.p.d.), as it wasn't occupied the whole morning. In the end we were glad we couldn't reserve, as it was the crappiest hide we've ever seen. To top that, we found our target quite quickly that morning on a side trail further up, while there are stories of people sitting in the hide the whole day before the target shows up.



Rufous-faced Warbler

Hodgon's Hawk-cuckoo

We then parked our motorbike on a road that looked really good on Google Maps (14.66666, 108.25563). Unfortunately the road had just been broadened, paved and adorned with a power line next to it. This made it way less interesting for birding. We did hear **Eyebrowed Wren-babbler** (14.66532, 108.25650). By climbing up the steep sides we entered the forest and got short but satisfying views of the little fella. **Necklaced Barbet** (ne) was commonly encountered along the road. We walked the road for about 1.5km, hoping for mixed flocks with **Annam Sultan Tit** (ne) in there, without luck. One flock brought **Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike**, **Grey-crowned Tit** (ne), **Short-billed Minivet** and **Grey-chinned Minivet**, but not much else. It got really quiet already around 08.00 and around 09.00 the cicadas were ear-deafening. Walking some trails into the forest only made it worse. We only ran into one more flock that morning, containing goodies like **Grey-headed Parrotbill**, **Black-throated Sunbird** and **Gould's Sunbird**. **Hodgon's Hawk-cuckoo** was heard multiple times, mostly around dusk. We managed to see one at the end of the day.



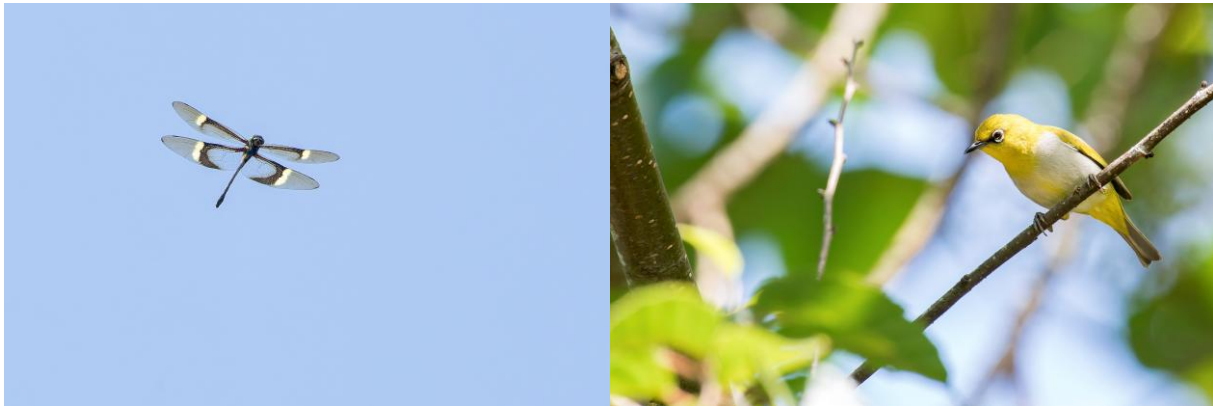
Newly paved road



These are the 80USD/day hides

The second day we walked the same road as the day before, but it wasn't much better, as already around 07.00 it got quiet. In the afternoon we went on the motorbike to cover a bigger distance and stopped whenever there was bird activity. It resulted in mostly the same birds as the day before, but with more sightings of each species. **Annam Sultan Tit** (ne) seemed to respond to playback, but couldn't be lured into the open. Surprisingly we also had zero **Yellow-billed Nuthatches** (ne) in all the flocks. **Pale-blue Flycatcher** was observed a couple of times (mostly heard) this day. Needletails flew over and only because of the pictures I could identify one as **Silver-backed Needletail**, a new species

for us. In the afternoon more Needletails flew over, which turned out to be **White-throated Needletails!**



Dragonfly spec.

Oriental White-eye

Spotlighting the road at night yielded multiple **Hodgon's Frogmouths** (HO), **Brown Wood-owls** (HO) and a **Large-tailed Nightjar**. A presumed **Small-toothed Palm Civet** crossed the street, but was too quick for a photo.

Ngoc Linh ([15.0018](#), [107.92203](#))

We were a tad nervous about this location. Ngoc Linh only recently opened up to foreigners, and because of the valuable *Ginseng* that is found and grown here, they are not keen on any outsiders (neither foreigners nor non-locals). We heard stories about foreigners getting into problems in the past, and we also heard something about a passport check. The latter probably refers to checking in at the hotel, as your passport goes to the police station for a copy. Nothing serious; the local authorities just want to register this. The road where the birding takes place seems public, without any barriers or other obstacles that could hamper birding independently. We found the local people actually quite friendly, and most people that passed by waved and shouted loudly "HELLO" or "HOW ARE YOU?!".

Logistics: We rented a car with a driver (you're not allowed to rent a car without one) via WhatsApp (+84 93 162 49 99; Vietnamese/English). We got picked up at 03.00 from our hotel in Măng Đen and reached the birding spot in Ngoc Linh \pm 3.5h later. Besides the 1.8m VND per day, we had to pay food and hotel for the driver. NOTE when reserving; be very clear in what you want. I just globally said what we wanted, but was kept to the times without much room for changes. It's good to mention for example that the car has to stay on the mountain, so you can return to the car if it rains or if you need something from your bag. Also, better mention you want to return at 19.00 and go back earlier if you want to once there, than the other way around.



Banh Mi, great Vietnamese street food



They can be so loud...

Accommodation: There is one very (very very!! Did I say 'very' already?) basic place to stay in Ngoc Linh (14.96163, 107.93289; 150k VND p.n.). A better option is to drive to the only hotel in the wide area, 1h drive from the birding location. The hotel *Nhà Nghỉ Hoang Gia Trang* is located in Tu Mo Rong. Rooms are basic and quite dirty, and for this they charge 300k VND p.n. Our driver reserved the rooms in advance (0987 082 136). The hotel has a restaurant, which charges 40k VND for dinner.

Bird-/mammalwatching: As the main targets here are found from 1800/2000m and higher, we focussed on the higher parts of the road, mostly between ± 1900 m altitude (15.0018, 107.92203) towards the top of the road (± 1950 m) and down to 1800m (15.01933, 107.92659). Because the valuable plant *Ginseng* is grown here, most local trails into the forest are fenced and gated off. The forest along the road is not the best, with quite open and deforested roadsides.

We mostly focussed on birding the roadside and regularly played the tape of **Annam Golden-breasted Fulvetta** (ne). We heard it once, but it wouldn't come down to the road. Most likely due to the very open nature of the slope in between us and the forest it was calling from. Indochinese Fulvetta seemed to respond to this tape as well, as it came out of the shrubs a couple of times during our 1.5 days here. One time we thought we might have a Golden-breasted Fulvetta, but it turned out to be an **Indochinese Fulvetta** with quite a similar call. Apparently, they sometimes travel in groups, so be sure to scrutinize any party of Fulvettas passing by.



Snowy-browed Flycatcher



Rusty-capped Fulvetta

Both **Necklaced Barbet** and **Indochinese Barbet** appeared common along the road. Flocks of birds often brought **Green-tailed Sunbird**, **Gould's Sunbird** and a wide array of warblers, including **Chestnut-crowned Warbler**, **Grey-cheeked Warbler** and **Ashy-throated Warbler**. Surprisingly we didn't see any **Red-tailed Minla** in any of the groups.



Rusty-capped Fulvetta



Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher

There is one trail leading into the forest (15.00689, 107.92717), which didn't seem to be private property. At the stream, 50m into this trail, is where we heard **Pygmy Cupwing** and **Grey-bellied Tesia**. **Rufous-winged Fulvetta** (not uncommon inside the forest), **Rusty-capped Fulvetta** (only one time), **Brown-crowned Scimitar-babblers** (multiple noisy groups), **Snowy-browed Flycatcher** and **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** were all seen inside the forest.



Brown-crowned Scimitar-babbler



Frog spec.

We tried another road a bit further to the west, which was the only other road that we found on Google Maps that neared (and went over) 2000m altitude. This road required a 4x4 to get up to. We started birding (14.9755, 107.91238) at a gate that was open and walked up to above 2000m. Except for the roadsides there wasn't much access to good forest, as both sides had fences and at the top there were some warning signs in Vietnamese with symbols of handcuffs. We birded it anyway, but found little of interest and didn't get much higher than 2000m. One flock brought in **Yellow-cheeked Tit**, **Grey-crowned Tits** (ne) and **Black-eared Shrike-babbler**. A very loud sound turned out to be a **Red-cheeked Ground-squirrel**. We then ran into someone who hand signalled us not to watch

through binoculars there and told our driver to move down the road. In short; this doesn't seem like a great place to try for the specialties, and hopefully there will be other access to good forest above 2000m in the future.

Núi Thành – GSDL site

[15.37585, 108.57613](#)

Dates visited: 14-15 April 2024

Logistics: Searching for the Grey-shanked Douc Langur can be done with Tuan Bui/[HiVooc](#). With him you can go from Da Nang and even make it a one-day trip. If you are on a budget like us, and want to go independently, you still need local guides to search for the Grey-shanked Doucs. No matter who you go with, the conservation fee for visiting the area is 500k VND p.p. (one-time fee). The owner of the accommodation -Mr. Danh- arranged for two guides with motorbikes to take us into the field. The price for this was 500k VND per guide per day. One of the local guides -Cong Phuong Huynh- was very happy to help us. You could try and contact him to arrange the hotel and guides via [Facebook](#). If that doesn't work, then let your first hotel in Vietnam call Mr. Danh (+84 985 665 077) and for sure it will be arranged (like we arranged it one week before).

We arranged private transport from Mang Den to the accommodation with the same company that brought us to Ngoc Linh. Originally the price was set at 2m VND. This time he was surprisingly firm on paying up front, even though this wasn't necessary for the trip to Ngoc Linh. It turned out they didn't live up to their agreement and put extra people in our private ride. Luckily we hadn't paid yet and were able to bring the price down to 1.2m from Mang Den to our guesthouse at the GSDL site.

The local guide Cong Phuong Huynh knew a friend with a taxi, and we ended up paying 1m VND from the guesthouse at the GSDL site to our hotel in Da Nang.

Accommodation: Thanks to the excellent information from Alex Schouten (2023) we stayed in the very local guesthouse (15.37585, 108.57613; Mrs. Dung +84 985 665 077, Vietnamese only) called Trang trại sinh thái Dung Danh on Google Maps. This place has multiple swimming pools and three very basic rooms. Rooms are 200k VND (fan) or 300k VND (aircon). Neither are clean and huge ants came out of the ceiling. Not really recommended, but it was very convenient during our search for the Grey-shanked Douc. Meals weren't a set menu, so we just agreed on rice, vegetables, egg and a beer for 50k VND p.p. During weekends this place is full of Vietnamese families that swim, share meals and –most importantly- try to have their music come out of the huge sound speakers louder than the others sound systems. If you have your own transport, we would definitely recommend staying in Nui Thanh instead of here.



Not all guides are actively searching



Only some good forest on top of the hills

Bird-/mammalwatching: We went out searching the first afternoon and arrived at 14.30. It took about 15-20 minutes by motorbike to get to the location of the Doucs. Most of the time driving is spent manoeuvring very rocky roads (not very comfortable on the back of a motorbike!). The Doucs live in very small patches of forest surrounded by agriculture (mostly tree plantations). There are a couple of small forest patches, and despite their small sizes it can be really hard to find the monkeys in them. The two guides only had one pair of binoculars between them that afternoon and the next morning. The good thing about having two guides is that they can call each other so that one of the guides can be send off with the bins to check the other side of the forest patch.

The guides mainly seemed to focus on one particular big tree, which they said the Doucs like a lot (and had many photos of to prove that point). Despite waiting the whole first afternoon and checking from some other vantage points, we didn't see the Doucs that afternoon. We did see **Brown Fish-owls** that shortly came out of their roost in between the vines. The next morning we brought the telescope and saw movement already when we arrived at 06.00 (it took some persistence to have the local guides to leave at 05.30 instead of 06.30). Unfortunately we couldn't see which primates made the movement, and it might have been the big group of **Northern Pig-tailed Macaques** that resides in the same patch of forest. The rest of the morning was again spent scanning the trees. Already at 07.15 one of the guides said that it's too late and too warm, and we were not going to see them today. The other guide used Google Translate a couple of times to say that the sound of the chainsaws and people working in the tree plantations probably scares the monkey. He continued typing that that is the reason why the Doucs wouldn't come out, and that he preferred to rest at home instead.. -even though he was mostly lying down and on his phone anyway^^-. Luckily we are not the people to give up, even when guides seem to. We insisted on going higher on the path and to scan another small patch of forest. We then suddenly both saw a **Grey-shanked Douc** (e) jumping in a fruiting tree, but I subsequently only managed some record shots of the head in between the leaves despite waiting for an hour after this.

That afternoon we went back to the forest as we weren't satisfied with our short sighting yet. Back at the spot where we observed them that morning we immediately observed movement in that same tree through the telescope. We took some trails higher up to get a better angle and sunlight, and got distant but great views of 2 **Grey-shanked Doucs** (e). After a while these 2 disappeared into the trees and right at that moment our guide got a call. The call came from the other -new and very

enthusiastic- guide that we had left behind at the big tree. A 'ok' with a nod and a hand with 5 fingers made clear that he had also seen a group. 10 minutes later we were at the same spot and got even better views of a family of at least 5 Doucs, plus a very small baby! Amazing sightings of this very rare primate!



Grey-shanked Douc

Grey-shanked Douc

Da Nang – Son Tra Peninsula 16.11984, 108.24862

Dates visited: 15-18 April 2024

Logistics: Plains, trains, busses and taxis can be arranged from anywhere to Da Nang. We left Da Nang by train and booked our tickets to the next place at the counter (in English) in the train station without any problems.

Da Nang is a huge seaside city, with more hotels and seafood restaurants than you can imagine. It seems to be very much influenced by China, as Chinese might have been more abundant here than Vietnamese. The plus side of such a big city is that motorbike rental is available anywhere and competition is fierce. We rented a semiautomatic motorbike for 100k VND per day. Be sure to get a manual or semiautomatic, as an automatic motorbike is not allowed after the barrier up the mountain. An automatic is fine for the lower parts of the peninsula (the temple and statue along the east coast for example), but this is not where the RSDL are. To get to that area, take the road going up (16.11401, 108.24287) until the barrier (16.11984, 108.24862). On a manual/semiautomatic motorbike they will just wave you through, no entrance fee, between 07.30 and 17.30. We left later both days, but didn't try to get in earlier on our own. The one day we went with a 'local tracker' from [HiVooc](#), we went in around 06.15. It seems Vietnamese people can go in before 07.30, and we also saw some foreigners (on foot) that were already in. So it might depend on the guard and the size of your smile if they let you in before 07.30 or not.

For 2.5 days we paid 140k VND worth of gasoline for our 5 visits to Son Tra peninsula.



We were not the only ones searching for the Red-shanked Douc Langur

Accommodation: It surely isn't hard to find accommodation here for any budget. Be careful with reviews on Booking and Google, as we found dozens of places with fake reviews and therefore high rating (exact same texts coming back multiple times for example). Consequently we like to check the room first before we book/pay, and this way we ended up in [Thanh Hiền HB Hotel](#) (16.06647, 108.24428). We paid 250k VND per night for a room with 2 medium-hard beds, AC, fridge, good WiFi, and, a warm and proper shower. The people were friendly and there are plenty of restaurants in the neighbourhood.



Red-shanked Douc Langur

Red-shanked Douc Langur

Bird-/mammalwatching: Surely anyone coming to Da Nang has to visit Son Tra peninsula to see the **Red-shanked Douc Langur** (ne). Tours can be arranged with Tuan Bui from [HiVooc](#). We paid 2.4m VND for one day for one guide (as we had our own motorbike). If you are not comfortable driving a motorbike, you can ride with the local tracker and might need one guide per person to get around. Our first day we went alone, and we met two of the local trackers that were with another group. They were very kind to us as well, and seemed very keen in finding the best spot for photography. We didn't have them as our guides and we have to say that -although enjoyable company- we didn't find any added value in having someone with us for the day. This species can easily be found on your own. Searching is best done early morning and late afternoon.

The species can be found along the main road, and we had one group within 200m after the barrier on the roadside on 2 mornings. Except for the first (colder) day we encountered multiple groups going up the mountain.



Butterfly spec

Rhesus Macaque

Another good part for the RSDL is from just after the top (16.11841, 108.2742), going almost all the way down towards the east coast. This is where we had multiple groups in the trees along the road on our first day. All the tour groups searching for the Doucs went into a side road once down the hill (16.11492, 108.30723) and it seems that at least a part of this road is good for Doucs, despite that we didn't see any during our two visits.



Red-shanked Douc Langur

Rhesus Macaque

The best road for the Doucs however, starts just after the top of the mountain (16.1261, 108.2644). Don't try to go in or out through the barrier at the bottom. It's officially off-limits for anyone without a permit, but if there is no guard one can easily drive into the road from the top. All three mornings we didn't see a guard, but in the afternoons there was one. This was an exception according to our HiVooc guide, as apparently normally there never is one. Locals can get permits, and HiVooc arranges permits for their guests to go on this road. The permit together with the early start does add value to your visit to the peninsula with HiVooc. Judging by the amount of local photographers as well as some other tourists -both on motorbike and mountain bike-, it doesn't seem to be as strict as some

make it out to be. We also went in without a permit on our last morning by ourselves and nobody seemed to bother.



Red-shanked Douc Langur



Rhesus Macaque

As it was purple-flower-season, it was very busy with local photographers –which might explain the guard in the afternoon-. Of course they all wanted the same thing we wanted; a stunning photo of one of the most stunning primates in the world! Because of this we didn't have to search much ourselves, as mostly there were at least a couple -or 20!- photographers taking photos when we arrived at a group of Langurs. And the times we did find them ourselves, we would be joined by multiple photographers within minutes. This caused many Langur groups to dart off further from the road, as quite some of the photographers seemed to lack any patience and common sense about running, shouting and sudden movements near wild primates. Luckily this species is quite common and we had multiple good opportunities to take photos in different settings. Two males stayed amazingly close to the road, despite all the observers, and allowed for great photos. Another family group –luckily- chose a flowering tree further away from the road, which allowed for everybody to get a decent angle without chasing them off. One of the coolest monkeys we've ever seen and photographed!



Red-shanked Douc Langur



Red-shanked Douc Langur

NOTE TO MAMMALWATCHERS: We wanted to go to Bach Ma NP for the **Northern Yellow-cheeked Gibbon**. Unlike what has been stated previously –and still is in some trip reports–, it's this species in

Bach Ma NP and not Southern White-cheeked Gibbon, according to primatologist Tuan and multiple recent scientific research papers. However, one cannot go in by motorbike and has to hire a private car/driver to be flexible enough within the park to search for them. Chances are low and the species is mostly only heard. But this might change in the future¹.

Phong Nha – Ke Bang NP

[17.51901, 106.27224](#)

Dates visited: 19-23 April 2024

Logistics: It's easiest to take a train from anywhere -Hanoi & Ninh Binh in the north, or Dong Ha, Hue, Da Nang etc. from the south- to Dong Hoi (17.46898, 106.59985). From there, one can take a bus from the bus station (17.46826, 106.60398). For what we read it should be bus B4, which leaves Dong Hoi at the following times: 05.20, 06.00, 07.10, 08.00 and then on the hour every hour until 17.00 (except no bus at 12.00). Unfortunately we arrived just too late by train to make the local bus, so we decided on a taxi straight to our hotel. A short negotiation brought the price to 400k VND.

At the accommodation they arranged an automatic motorbike for us. Normal price is 150k VND per day, but if you ask for a bit older one (still very fine), it was 120k VND per day.



Riverside restaurants



Packed for some wildlife watching

Accommodation: We stayed 4 nights at Phong Nha Cherish House (17.60248, 106.2985). Booked via Booking.com the price for a big private room, with a nice soft bed (yes, in Asia!), with AC, good shower and a small breakfast was 1,335k VND in total. The breakfast was officially from 07.00-09.00, but upon request they made it when we came back from primate searching (often around 10.30).

¹ An, L. T. (2022). International Tourists' Willingness to Pay for A Wildlife Conservation Program: A Case Study of Northern Yellow-cheeked Gibbons in Bach Ma National Park, Vietnam. *Environment and Ecology Research*, 10(6), 755-769.



Bird-/mammalwatching: We found surprisingly little information on where to watch birds and mammals here. It's good to know that Phong Nha-Ke Bang NP is a protected area, but the roads going through the park are public. There is one army checkpoint (17.5747, 106.30744) on the D-20 road, but the barrier was open whenever we passed (even in the morning around 04.00). There is no entrance fee when bird-/mammalwatching from the road. There are a couple of places inside the NP like caves and botanical gardens that all have their own opening hours and entrance fee.

QL-15 - Tri Mong gate until intersection

One of the main reasons people visit the park is the many caves. We visited the Paradise Cave on our own (17.51945, 106.22328; 07.30 – 16.30; 270k VND).

Other than that there are some unique primates around, but finding them is not that easy. Hatinh Langur (ne) is one of those primates. This species is sometimes seen near Mooc Spring (17.55665, 106.23811). The forest and rock formations northwest of the parking seem the best according to the

local staff we asked. Others have seen the Langur on the other side of the river between the entrance gate Tro Mong (17.57551, 106.25307) and Mocc Spring.

D-20 - Road until intersection

We mostly used this road to get from and back to the hotel as it was the shortest route to the other locations. The road itself is not as good as the QL-15 though. On our way back to the hotel the last morning I mumbled semi-disappointed to Romy that we still hadn't seen **Stump-tailed Macaques** in Vietnam, despite driving the roads so many times without other traffic. Only seconds after, a small group of Stump-tailed Macaques crossed the road. On top of that we had another group a few kilometres further. Getting better views turned out to be impossible, as they hid in the shrubs and only made alarm calls. Besides one **Common Palm Civet**, our most interesting sighting on this road was **Mainland Leopard Cat** at 04.20 on the last part before the intersection.



Stunning butterfly towards the cave

Paradise Cave

Intersection going southwest up the DT562 road

Going southwest from the intersection one enters the DT562 road to Laos. After a couple of kilometres one arrives at the Eight Ladies Cave (17.50254, 106.26018). This is also a place where others have seen Hatinh Langur. According to the staff we asked, they are mostly found on the rocks and in the forest northwest of the temple.

A species that is rarely seen, but has been heard by a few, is the **Southern White-cheeked Gibbon** (ne). Some trip reports mention Northern WCG here, but according to recent literature it's the Southern species that occurs here². We heard from Cheryl (part of the Royle Safaris 2023 tour) that they had heard the Gibbons around 09.00 near the Eight Ladies Cave. Some of the staff there said they never heard them, others said they sometimes heard the Gibbons 1km further up the road, but

² See for example:

- Van Tran, D. *et al.* (2023). A review on the status and modeling of suitable habitats of the southern white-cheeked gibbon. *Primates*, 64(2), 227-237.

- Haus, T., Vogt, M., Forster, B., Vu, N. T., & Ziegler, T. (2009). Distribution and population densities of diurnal primates in the karst forests of Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, Quang Binh province, Central Vietnam. *International Journal of Primatology*, 30, 301-312.

only very early in the morning (05.00). We were there at 07.00 the first morning, but didn't hear anything. The next morning we were there at 05.15, but again heard nothing (and it was still quite dark). We drove up the road and spoke to the rangers at the top of the road (17.45886, 106.22167). He said that they hear them every morning from the hills north of their house, but never see them. Unfortunately, strong winds prevented any searches for movement during the first two mornings that we were in the park.

Doing scans from the roadside at places where we had open views I suddenly noticed one **Hatinh Langur** (ne) on top of a branch at 06.00, despite the strong winds blowing. We were just in time to set up the telescope to allow for short but good views before it jumped off the branch (or was blown off?!). On the way back we scanned this same patch to see if we could refind it. In a rare moment without wind I saw movement, but these turned out to be at least 3 **Assamese Macaques**.

The ranger from the house also mentioned sometimes seeing **Stump-tailed Macaques** on the road. All with all, this seems like a pretty good stretch of road to drive and scan for primates in the early morning.

Bird-wise we saw **Limestone Leaf-warbler** and **Yellow-vented Green-pigeon** at the Eight Ladies Temple.



Landscape from near the intersection



Lizard spec.

Intersection going east up the QL-15

As we had already two mornings without even hearing a Gibbon, I delved once more in the literature. I found an article from 2006 in which the researcher describes very well how she investigated the (sound of the) Gibbons. For the sake of other mammalwatchers interested in seeing the Gibbon I will cite some parts:

"During this study (16 to 25 July 2006), we monitored gibbon song activity from listening posts on five different hilltops along the road between km 40 and km 52, trying to locate and record as many gibbons as possible. [...] Every day, we arrived on our chosen listening post between 04:00 and 04:30 hrs and stayed there until 11:30 hr. [...] I heard an average [...] of 3.1±1.0 songs per day

(range 2-5 song bouts; n = 10 days). Gibbons often started a few minutes before sunrise (i.e. 05:26 hr local time), and 80% of all songs started between 05:00 and 05:30 [..]. No song started earlier than 04:58 hr and no songs were heard that started after 05:53 hr. Song bouts had an average duration of 13.2±2.8 minutes (range 6–18 minutes; n = 24 song bouts)."

Based on people we spoke and this research it seems that the Gibbons are mostly heard during a very short time very early morning, unlike some Gibbon species we had heard even later during the morning. This meant we had to leave at 04.00 to be at KM40 before 05.00, as sunrise was at 05.34. On the way we sighted another **Mainland Leopard Cat!**

Like the research paper stated, except for a **Grey Nightjar**, nothing was heard before 05.00. Then Romy found three shapes across the valley in the Lahoux Spotter NL 625 thermal camera. As we waited for some light we already set up the scope, and once we had enough light we made out three **Red-shanked Doucs** (from 17.48323, 106.33366). At 05.23 a group of **Southern White-cheeked Gibbons** was heard calling from near KM40/the ranger station and the bridge (17.48403, 106.33063). Unfortunately they were behind the first hill and out of sight. We then drove the main road and scanned and listened at various points between KM40 and KM45. At 06.22 we heard another distant group of Gibbons (7.483362, 106.344276), but they were too far down in the valley. It was from this exact point that we later (07.06) heard a group of at least 3 Gibbons, but way closer by. We believed at that moment it was only a matter of time before we would see one in the telescope, as the call was very loud and one of them seemed to be in an unobstructed line from us.... However, we did not manage to see them unfortunately. We scanned many hillsides and trees after this along the road, selecting good vantage points, but we couldn't find any more primates this morning (nor did we hear any).

The last morning we repeated the strategy from the morning before. We did hear the Gibbons again, but they were less vocal than the day before. The weather was pretty ok (no overcast and not a lot of wind). We still didn't manage to see these primates unfortunately. We drove a bit further along the road (until the next ranger station around KM50) but found the part between KM40-45 to be the best. This because there are more good points where one can scan hillsides from. A cloudy (but not foggy) morning might be the best option, as it allows for longer effective scanning with the thermal camera.

We had **Ratchet-tailed Treepie** both mornings on this road. **Crested Serpent Eagle** and **Mountain Hawk-eagle** were also seen on both mornings. but especially our last morning on this road was pretty birdy. **Black Eagle**, **Great Hornbill** and **Austen's Brown Hornbill** were only seen the second morning. From the same viewpoint as where we heard the Gibbons we observed **Oriental Hobby** and **Pied Falconet**.



That's a helpful sign



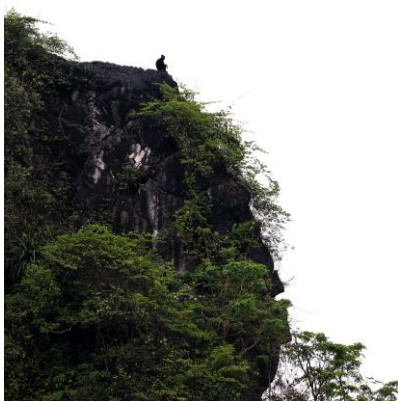
We can hear them in the valley below

Dong Le – Hatinh Langur

17.85925, 106.11079

Dates visited: 23-25 April 2024

Logistics: Getting into contact with Mr. Tu was a bit harder than we expected as he doesn't speak English and didn't respond to the email we sent. I included multiple ways to contact him in this report, as one of them should work when you plan to go independently. Mr. Tu is punctual and everything was well arranged once confirmed. Try emailing him (thantu62qb@gmail.com or tuvoc.tvoc@gmail.com) or contact him via [Facebook](#). If all that doesn't work, just let your first hotel in Vietnam call him (0948 218 034), and I am absolutely sure it will be arranged just as well. We arranged it one week before. If Mr. Tu is not available for some reason, for sure one of the many volunteers in the village will be able to guide you and he will arrange it for you.



Hatinh Langur on the limestone



Hatinh Langur

How to get to Dong Le will depend of course on where you come from, but it was easier than we expected for a non-touristy location. We came from Phong Nha and arranged a taxi via our hotel to Dong Le for 850k VND. Another option is to get a train to Dong Hoi and take a taxi or rent a motorcycle from there. One could also opt for a day trip by motorcycle/taxi from Phong Nha and back.

In Dong Le we first went by the train station (17.88814, 106.02216) to buy our tickets from Dong Le to Ninh Binh. Trains leave at 09.00 and arrive in Ninh Binh at 16.00. Tickets were 211k VND per lower bed (6-person cabin).

We got Mr. Tu to pick us up by motorbike and borrowed a motorbike from him to go back and forth between the hotel and his house.

Accommodation: We would recommend staying with Mr. Tu, as the mammalwatching locations are quite close to his house (17.85925, 106.11079). We wanted to stay with him, but weren't allowed in the same room and hence had to rent 2 rooms for 250k VND per room per night (we later found out that this was because he thought we weren't married). This made us stay in Dong Le at Nhà nghỉ Huyền Anh (17.8856, 106.02065) for 250k VND per night. People were nice, the room had AC and a warm shower, but I am pretty sure even Fred Flintstone would find the bed too hard. Note: other mammalwatchers found the hotel bed soft compared to the one at Mr. Tu!

Bird-/mammalwatching: If you want to see the **Hatinh Langur** (e), we would definitely recommend going here! Unless it's raining or very windy, I would say sightings are 95% guaranteed. Mr. Tu and other villagers protect the primates already since 2012. Consequently, the primates are not very shy. Mr. Tu knows very well where the Langurs sleep and in the morning it didn't take any scanning before he found them. We watched a group of at least 10+ individuals until 07.30, after which Mr. Tu announced the Langurs would go to sleep and we would go back. The first afternoon was just as good from 15.30/16.00 until 17.30/18.00. The second afternoon they stayed high up, not allowing for any better photos unfortunately. A really cool conservation project and definitely recommended for anyone interested in seeing this rare primate!

Bird-wise we observed **Lanceolated Warbler** from up close, many **White-shouldered Starlings**. A Tit species remains a bit of a mystery, as it seems to be **Cinereous Tit**, even though Japanese Tit would be way more logical distribution-wise. Photographing the Langurs while standing in tall grass I suddenly heard **Barred Buttonquail** calling very close by.



Hatinh Langur

Hatinh Langur

Cuc Phuong NP

[20.24979, 105.7152](#)

Dates visited: 26-29 April 2024

Logistics: We were picked up from the train station in Ninh Binh by our local guide Huyen and were able to borrow his motorbike for free during our time with him! Otherwise I would advise to rent a taxi or motorbike to get to Cuc Phuong NP (20.24979, 105.7152). There are motorbikes for rent at the NP as well, but they are pricy (250k VND per day). Entrance to the park is 60k VND p.p.d.

Accommodation: There is accommodation in the NP at HQ, Mac Lake (2km from HQ) and at the park centre; Bong Substation. Accommodation can be viewed on the [website](#) and they can be contacted in English by email (see [Services Center on website](#)). As it was going to be weekend *and* a holiday, we decided to reserve in advance, which normally doesn't seem necessary. I would recommend staying at Mac Lake, as the Bong Substation is very dilapidated. It also doesn't have any electricity, unlike mentioned on the website, which means that fans or AC don't work and you can't charge batteries!



The Prehistoric Man Cave



The hide near the Bong Substation

Bird-/Mammalwatching: It wasn't the best time for visiting this park. I already heard from others that this might be one of the hardest parks for birding in Asia. Now that most winter visitors had already left and breeding season had begun, it was very hard to get the target birds. Add on top of that a heat wave and a super busy holiday –one day a 2km double line of cars for the entrance!-, and you can understand why we didn't enjoy the birding so much.

We visited the Primate Rescue Centre (20.24682, 105.71525), which was interesting enough for the entrance fee (50k VND p.p.). The only wild animal we saw here was a very cool **Oriental Whip Snake** (*Ahaetulla prasina*).

One other morning we went shortly into the Botanical Gardens (20.24911, 105.71243), and within 300m we had the local target; **White-winged Magpie**. It did respond to playback, but didn't really come in, so it took quite some effort to get good views of it.

**Oriental Whip Snake****Indochinese Babbler**

There is only one road going to the centre of the park (starting from HQ at 20.2505, 105.71412). Don't even think about going to the 'observation hide' at the beginning of the road: it's a steep climb up, to end up at an unsafe observation tower without a platform or anything.

The vegetation along the main road gets more interesting after the gate (20.27597, 105.68069). Two mornings we spent some time at the 'Cave of the Prehistoric Man' (missed opportunity for 'Prehistoric Man Cave'). Both mornings we encountered **Annam Limestone Babblers**. Both **White-winged Magpie** and **Red-collared Woodpecker** are sometimes seen here. Not far from here we ran into a guide who was just showing **White-tailed Flycatcher** to his clients.

Most of our time was spent near the park centre; Bong Substation (20.34951, 105.59406). Depending on the amount of people in the park, you might have to walk already from the restaurant 500m before that (20.34763, 105.59792). We ran into a bird hide on the grid system between the restaurant and the Bong Substation, and this is where we observed **Tonkin Partridge** (ne) and **Perny's Long-nosed Ground Squirrel** (*Dremomys pernyi*).

**Perny's Long-nosed Ground Squirrel****Tonkin Partridge**

One morning we walked the loop trail in clockwise direction (starting at 20.35152, 105.5918). The grassland around the water basin is where we observed **Northern Red Muntjac** in the early morning. The trail itself took about ± 3.5 h to complete to the restaurant and back to the substation. The loop

has some elevation gains, with 2-3 hills that have to be climbed. Luckily the trail was worth it for us as this is where we finally connected with our main targets. **Black-browed Fulvetta** (ne) was once seen transporting food and another time in the only mixed flock seen during our whole time in the NP. Other birds in this mixed flock were **Fork-tailed Sunbird** and **Mugimaki Flycatcher**. **Indochinese Babbler** (ne) was heard just before the start of the trail, but it was too dark to see them. Then at the 1000-year-old-tree -which is mostly remains more than it is a tree- we finally observed it very well. **Red-collared Woodpecker** (ne) was only heard, and didn't come in. **Tonkin Partridge** was heard along the trail once as well.

Two afternoons and one morning were spent birding along the main road from the Bong Substation. Along the main road we heard **Red-collared Woodpecker** twice, but it didn't come in here either. **Rufous-throated Fulvetta** was a treat to see multiple times. **Red-vented Barbet** (ne) was heard quite often, but only seen once in a dead tree next to the road. **Pallas's Squirrel** was quite common, and unlike expected, we never saw **Inornate Squirrel**.



(presumed) **Hairy-footed Flying-squirrel**

(presumed) **Hairy-footed Flying-squirrel**

The spotlighting in Cuc Phuong NP was surprisingly much fun, and after Cat Tien NP probably the best we had in Vietnam. Once in the park the rangers don't seem to care about your whereabouts and spotlighting at night at all! The first night we spotlighted around the accommodation at Bong Substation and along the main road for ± 2 km forth and back. Waiting for dusk I could just make out a **Narcissus Flycatcher** in a nearby tree, not common in Vietnam! **Brown Boobooks** (HO) called at dusk around the substation. **Asian Barred Owl** (HO) and **Mountain Scops-owl** (HO) were quite common all around Cuc Phuong NP. We heard **Collared Scops Owl** in the 1.5km before the restaurant, but not the **Spot-bellied Eagle-owl** which is sometimes seen here. Along the main road is where we picked up the first eyeshine (with the headlight), which turned out to be a **Pygmy Slow Loris**. Besides a cool **Gordon's Bug-eyed Frog** (*Theلودerma gordonii*) we found one **Hairy-footed Flying-squirrel** (thanks to Huyen for the ID on both). As Huyen first ID-ed it as **Vietnamese Mossy Frog** (*Theلودerma corticale*) from my picture, we unfortunately didn't go out searching specifically for that species anymore (as Huyen knows two spots for it).

When we drove a short part on the motorbike I suddenly noticed bright eyeshine, which looked like that from a cat.. It was also not low to the ground, like you would expect from a Leopard Cat. However, as we stopped it ran deeper into the shrubs and I never got to see more than the bright eyeshine... *Clouded Leopards* have been seen on camera traps, but are very rare here.

The second night we decided to spotlight from Bong Substation towards the entrance by motorbike. This turned out to be quite a good choice, as within the 4 hours of spotlighting we found 2 *Pygmy Slow Lorises*, another *Hairy-footed Flying-squirrel*, *Masked Palm Civet* and *Large Indian Civet*. The last night we spotlighted from the Prehistoric Man Cave until Bong Substation and back. This night we observed 2 *Pygmy Slow Lorises*, 2 *Hairy-footed Flying-squirrel*, *Masked Palm Civet* and also had 2 sightings of *Mainland Leopard Cat* (many km in between). It's good to realise that both nights we drove the main road, it was still quite busy with Vietnamese people leaving by car and motorbike. I can only imagine what else we would have seen if we would have visited outside the holidays and weekend. Most rangers we spoke to said they never saw *Chinese Pangolin* (not even when patrolling on the trails at night), but most of them do report one or two sightings of the rare *Owsten's Civet*.



Gordon's Bug-eyed Frog



Pygmy Slow Loris

Van Long Reserve

[20.38082, 105.86571](#)

Dates visited: 30 April - 1 May 2024

We went to Van Long Reserve with local guide Huyen Dinh (+84 91 607 1058; English/Vietnamese). He can also be contacted by [Facebook](#) or email (huyencucphuong@gmail.com). Huyen was a ranger at Cuc Phuong NP for about 20 years. Now he guides nature tours. Huyen is also hired by most companies if they need a local guide for the northern part of the trip. He is mainly interested in primates, but also knows many birds and herps. We didn't go out herping with him, so I am not sure about his level of knowledge there. He did know quite some birds when we went to Van Long, but also didn't seem to recognize all of them by sound. As we came from the south of Vietnam, we observed some species new to us, which only occur in north Vietnam and more northerly. Huyen

didn't mention any of these as we passed them, so I doubt he is as fanatic about birds as he is with primates. All in all he is a really nice guy and invited us to stay and eat at their house and borrow his motorbike. We experienced some very local Vietnamese life because of him and are very thankful!

Logistics/accommodation: If one goes independently, one could stay either in Van Long or in Ninh Binh. One could rent a motorbike from Ninh Binh and drive up and down from there to Van Long Reserve. Many accommodations near Van Long Reserve also have bicycles for rent/loan.

Bird-/mammalwatching: The reason to go to Van Long Reserve for us was of course the Delacour's Langur (e). There have been several trip reports covering the traditional way to see this primate per bicycle or boat (see for example the trip report from Alex Schouten, 2023 on mammalwatching.com). We hired Huyen's services because he can get a permit from the NP to visit the 'core area'. The core area is basically a valley where some locals live. In this valley 4 groups of Delacour's Langurs reside, and seeing them within 1-2 days seems practically guaranteed if weather cooperates. The whole process is a bit shady, but part of the money is a conservation fee going to the local families. They will also call the park rangers and/or the police if anyone tries to get into the valley without a permit.

We left very early morning and arrived in the core area around 05.45. Huyen wanted to be waiting before the primates even came down, and we can't agree more. In the meantime we enjoyed the **Yellow Bitterns** and **Cinnamon Bitterns** that flew by in good numbers. A **Yellow-bellied Prinia** might have been the *ssp sonitans* (known as Chinese Prinia), but it was still a bit dark and too far to be 100% sure. **Light-vented Bulbul** was a nice addition to our trip list.



On the motorbike to Van Long



Ha Long Bay / Cat Ba Island (next paragraph)

It took only until 06.11 before we noticed the first groups of **Delacour's Langurs** coming down the mountains. Then we just had to wait and see which of the groups would actually come down far enough to forage, so that we could take good pictures. Huyen knows the groups very well, and knows which routes and places they tend to go to. This is the reason we waited a long time for one group to come further down.. The whole group (14 individuals) was on rocks and went feeding into a tree and didn't advance to the place we were hidden. After asking many times and waiting more than 1.5h we insisted on going closer to that very tree, only to find out there was another tourist group already there for a long time taking pictures. Another tourist group is of course not a problem, but according

to Huyen their guide of VietBird had instructed him to keep us away (as the guide would've been afraid our groups would talk about them paying 3 times more...). Unfortunately once we arrived the Langurs weren't on top of the rocks or the tree anymore, but mostly hidden inside, and chances for good photos were gone. The next morning something similar happened. We were waiting already for a while for a group to come down and start foraging, as once they forage they are approachable and don't flee-. The VietBird guide arrived and went straight with his clients to the Langurs, which of course went uphill again and lingered in a tree. Luckily after waiting a long time the Langurs came down on the other side of the mountain and we were able to observe and photograph them from a nice distance. It's a pity that some guides don't seem to take the well-being of the Langurs as the highest priority. With quite some tourists groups going to this area it might have a significant influence on the amount of time a group can forage on plants lower down the mountains.

The only afternoon we were in the valley, turned out to be best photography-wise. Most of the Langur groups were observed high up on the mountains, but one group of only males sat on a low rock for a while. Huyen guided us there in stealth-mode and we got great and close-by views of these Langurs chilling out on the rocks! After a while they turned to some dense bamboo to forage. Other than that we also observed **Yellow-throated Marten** high up on the steep cliffs; an unexpected find! We also searched shortly for **Assamese Macaques** in the valley, but didn't find any.



Delacour's Langur

Delacour's Langur

Cat Ba Island

20.73213, 107.0591

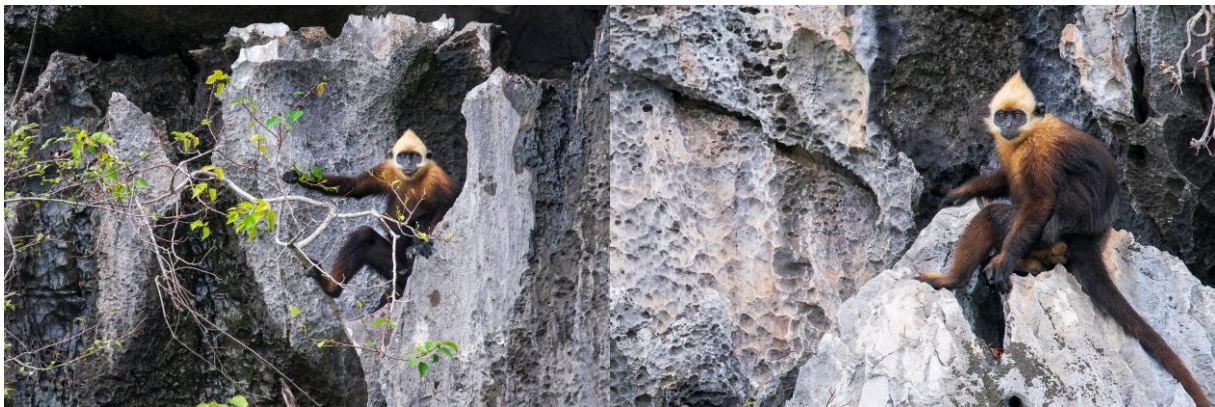
Dates visited: 1-3 May 2024

Logistics: We booked bus tickets from Ninh Binh to Cat Ba with the [Cat Ba Express](#) (13USD p.p.). We can highly recommend this company! An hour before departure somebody contacted us by WhatsApp to confirm the exact pick-up place and time (after already getting a confirmation via email when booking). On Cat Ba Island they drop you off at any hotel you want. On the way back we were picked up again from our hotel and went straight to Hanoi.

Accommodation: We slept at Le House Homestay (20.73119, 107.05683), which is close to the harbour. For 350k VND per night, including WiFi, airco, warm shower etc. this was a very decent hotel and actually clean for a change (a rare feat in this price range in Vietnam). The location saves time and money on getting a taxi or motorbike to see the Cat Ba Langur.

Bird-/Mammalwatching: The main target on Cat Ba Island is of course the very rare **Cat Ba Langur** (e). We first emailed Neahga Leonard, the director of the Cat Ba Langur Foundation. He said: “*Langur tourism is illegal in the region due to the small size and fragility of the population, and because of the utterly irresponsible and unregulated nature of tourism in the area. It is completely forbidden for tour companies to offer Langur watching, and it is similarly illegal for visitors to hire local people to take them to Langur areas to look for them.*” According to him, if the Foundation takes people out, its people with vested professional interest (eg. fellow conservationists, reporters, members of zoos affiliated with their sponsors, people organizing fundraisers, etc), and only if they have contacted them very far in advance and after having good conversations. Clearly this was not us, and we gave up on the idea that we had a chance of going with them to see these Langurs.

That all being said, we still decided to go with a guide as he was able to get a permit. We only found out later that every tour organization -even the ones specialized in birds and mammals/primates- get permits the same way. I’m not going into detail about this, but it turns out Neahga was not an ‘overprotective conservationist’, but indeed 100% telling the truth; there is no legal way to get a permit and do a tour specifically aimed to see the Langurs. I did want to include this information so that people can decide for themselves if they want to go or not. ‘Normal’ tourists do get to see the Langurs as well sometimes, but chances are low (especially on the boat tours offered).



Cat Ba Langur

Cat Ba Langur

On our day searching for the Langur: we woke up at 05.00 to pouring rain, which luckily subsided around 06.30. We got to see two different groups that morning, in total about 16-20 individuals (of the ± 77 left). Rain poured down again heavily from 12.00-14.30 and around 15.00 we set out again and found one group. Unfortunately -despite me being very clear we wanted to keep distance; 50m horizontal distance is the policy according to Neahga- the driver went closer and the Langurs went up

the karst. Later we met the same family again, but with me being even clearer this time, the driver kept more distance. That worked out better for both the Langurs as well as for us! The Langurs came down further and further while we were waiting, and we got great sightings of them foraging! We are amazingly happy we got great sightings of this Langur but have some mixed feelings -from ethical and conservational viewpoints- about how one can see them.

Van Ho

20.77159, 104.79024

Dates visited: 4-7 May 2024

Logistics: For a very non-touristy place, it was surprisingly easy and comfortable to get here. We booked the limousine bus [Xuan Trang](#) (leaving Hanoi at 20.99446, 105.80576). The actual booking was made via [Vexere](#), as they allowed payment by credit card. A ticket from Hanoi to Moc Chau (end destination, 20km beyond Van Ho) is 250k VND p.p. It took about 3.5 comfortable hours to get dropped off at our hotel along the main road.

Locally we got a semi-automatic motorbike to go around for the steep price of 200k VND p.d. (0911214688; let your hotel call for you).

Accommodation: Due to our limited budget we stayed in a crappy local hotel (not recommended). We would recommend booking at 'A Chu Homestay' via [Facebook](#) or email (achuvanho@gmail.com; English/Vietnamese). Private double rooms are 800k VND p.n. including breakfast (but they weren't very flexible with mammalwatching hours). One of the sisters speaks perfectly English and can help booking the bus and arrange the local guides and a motorbike (if needed).



Typical Vietnam: beds so hard they can double as a table **A sign near a village about the Gibbons**

Bird-/mammalwatching: After quite some research I got in contact with Ms. Ngoc from NGO [People and Nature Reconciliation \(PanNature\)](#). She wrote about a project near Van Ho district, Son La province. Working with 10 locals and 2 rangers, they protect about 60ha of forest. In these forests live about ±15 Northern White-cheeked Gibbons (ne). After seeing a [YouTube video](#) of the project we decided we wanted to give it a try. We owe a big thanks to A Chu for arranging the local guides for

us, even without us staying at their homestay! Another reason to stay at A Chu Homestay is that besides a comfortable place to stay, it's easier to go through all the things you want/expect when searching for the Gibbons. The hostel we stayed suddenly didn't have a motorbike for us anymore, and again A Chu (bless you) helped us getting one.

We had arranged two local guides to search for the Gibbons from 04.30-11.00 (500k VND per guide per morning). The first morning we were up and ready to go before the agreed time (04.30). Of course we got nervous when no guide showed up to pick us up. At 04.45 he arrived, and we drove straight towards the forest. The area is quite mountainous, and locals have agricultural land (corn and legumes) in the valleys between the mountains. There are very small and partly steep concrete trails into the valleys, and following these on a motorbike was sometimes quite a challenge. Even riding on one as a passenger wasn't always a pleasure according to Romy, who regularly had to jump off because the bike didn't get up the steep hill. At 05.10 we parked our motorbikes and scanned and walked around, eagerly hoping for the Gibbons to start calling. We climbed steep hills to get better viewpoints, and climbed into other valleys, but heard nothing (except for some birds like **Hodgson's Hawk-cuckoo**, **Slaty-bellied Tesia** and **Long-tailed Broadbill**). Besides the local guide that we joined, we had arranged another local guide to search in nearby valleys. By doing so, we would cover a bigger area, but would still have enough time to get to the area of the other guide in case he found them. The whole morning went by rather uneventful, but with a motivated and happy local guide we felt like we gave it a good chance. While scanning, we had a flock of **Black-chinned Yuhinas** passing by, and **Silver-backed Needletails** flying over. When the guide asked multiple locals working on the land if they heard Gibbons, it turned out one group had been calling between 06.00-06.30 on a hillside that we had passed quite early that very morning.



Northern White-cheeked Gibbon female

Northern White-cheeked Gibbon male

The second morning we thought about returning to the place the Gibbons were heard the morning before, but our guide had other plans. He had asked around and people had heard Gibbons in another valley around 13.00 O'clock the afternoon before. As it had rained the whole afternoon after about 14.00, chances of the Gibbons still being around there somewhere were quite good. To reach the valley we had to walk a very steep and slippery concrete path. Once there, it rained and was very

foggy, so we just sat down and waited underneath umbrellas. Then suddenly around 05.50 we heard one call, not much later followed by the song of **Northern White-cheeked Gibbons**! Walking down the valley (agricultural use) we came very close to where they were calling, but due to the persistent thick fog we couldn't see anything. Then it started raining and again we waited under umbrellas for the rain to stop, this time 2 hours. After that, the fog had cleared, but we weren't able to see or hear the Gibbons again.

The third and last morning our guide showed up 40 minutes late -and only after we called him via Facebook, probably waking him up-. He didn't have any information from other locals, except that most of them expected the Gibbons to pass a certain valley. That valley looked quite steep, and once up there, there wouldn't be a good overview of the hillsides. We therefore decided the guide would go up the hill alone and we would wait and scan from the path with the telescope. After two hours we hadn't even heard the Gibbons, so we called the guide via FB on Romy's phone and used Google Translate on my phone to tell him in Vietnamese that we wanted to go to the next place (yes, creative stuff). As we hadn't heard the Gibbons and the guide had run out of ideas, we decided to get back to a spot where we had searched the first morning. We drove uphill on the concrete small paths and stopped at a good viewpoint. The guide took off to ask locals if they had heard them that morning, while Romy went a bit uphill to search. Not much later I heard: "Rob! Come! Camera! Scope!!" I grabbed the stuff and ran uphill, to find out Romy had found two white blobs with the Lahoux Spotter NL 62 thermal camera. As it was still a little bit foggy, it was hard to find anything with the telescope. When I had finally referenced the image of the thermal camera with the telescope and figured out where they should be, we didn't see anything. Then Romy saw some branches moving and a male **Northern White-cheeked Gibbon** turned his head and was clearly visible! It took a while before I saw it too, but they were clearly there, feeding in a tree! As the distance was more than 500 meters -yes, I later measured using Google Maps- we decided to move closer. Luckily not much later our local guide came back as well, making it possible to go onto some private property and find a good view. This way we were able to observe four Gibbons (3 males and 1 female) for more than one hour, while they were grooming, feeding and going through the branches. An amazing experience with such a rare ape!

NOTE TO MAMMALWATCHERS: from what we have gathered and videos that we have seen, we believe the Gibbons are not hunted nor are they very shy. However, there are only few and the area is relatively big. If you're lucky, one could hear and observe them from one of the small roads near the village, but quite likely one has to climb into the valleys between the mountains. Depending on which valley, the trail can be long and steep, while there are also valleys that are less demanding. If you're a bit less agile or adventurous, this will limit the options for searching. Given that chances are already a bit low, this is something to keep in mind.

As the locals only see them when working on the farms, this might bias the sightings and areas where to search. There are some places where I believe they might be heard/seen from places that are reached more easily as well, but this requires some research from (local) guides.

Feel free to ask for any advice. I will also pass on information about this location, all the necessary info and other insights to guide Huyen Dinh (+84 91 607 1058). After our visit he went to this area as well, to get to know the locals and the area. He will be able to arrange a visit to this area, and it can be a nice addition to a tour searching for other special primates in the north of Vietnam.



Very steep hillsides and foggy conditions make it a tough search

Species at risk

Most Vietnamese people seem to keep anything with a heart in cages or would otherwise eat it. Generally speaking their love for nature seems to be limited to a plate or a cage. Already on our first day we observed species in cages that we hadn't seen in the wild yet. Seeing motorbikes with 10+ cages including 50+ birds in Di Linh made us deeply sad. A store in Da Lat with at least 100 (!) Red-whiskered Bulbuls and some other bird species was saddening as well. As the owner spoke English we tried to open-mindedly ask questions. He told us they were all caught in the wild by having one bird in a cage and then catch the ones attracted by that individual in bird nets. The birds go for anything between 500,000 – 1,000,000 VND per individual. Tournaments are held in which the birds have to perform, and the bird that sings best and moves best (a beautifully singing bird that sits still is worth nothing) can win you big prizes; even motorbikes and cars! He said the best and most expensive bird will be 100,000 USD (yes, USD!). Of course not all Vietnamese people support this and luckily there are people doing good work. We heard laws are getting stricter, which is hopeful but too late for many species already. From what we understood the act of catching any bird in the wild is illegal in Vietnam (so cages and nets), as well as advertising the sale of wildlife (online for example). The problem is that some birds can be held and sold legally, and once in cages it can be hard to prove if they come from a farm or are wild-caught. We always carried a knife to destroy nets, and trampled cages when we came across them. There is an organization where you can report any illegal activities. You can even call (they have English speaking staff) if you see something happening that needs immediate attention. Be sure to note species and coordinates if you report online: <https://env4wildlife.org/report-a-crime/#>

As I don't want to contribute to this songbird trade I will not provide information on certain species in a public trip report like this. These include all species that are marked as sensitive on eBird. To give you an overview of potential targets for bird- and/or mammalwatchers going to Vietnam we will mention them here, without giving away any sensitive information.

Black-crowned Barwing (ne)

This species turned out to be quite common and was heard and seen regularly throughout the day we birded in the species' distribution.



Black-crowned Barwing



Black-crowned Barwing

Black-hooded Laughingthrush (ne)

We observed a flock of about 5-7 birds of this species, of which one had a hanging wing (probably shot by a hunter).



Black-hooded Laughingthrush



Black-hooded Laughingthrush

Brown-backed Sibia (ne; *H. desgodinsi engelbachi*)

This species turned out to be quite common and was heard and seen regularly throughout the day we birded in the species' distribution.

**Brown-backed Sibia****Black-crowned Barwing****Collared Laughingthrush (e)**

We observed two flocks (3 and 6 individuals) in a place where it still seems to have a stronghold. Luckily for this species it's only very pretty but doesn't sing that nicely.

**Collared Laughingthrush****Collared Laughingthrush****Golden-winged Laughingthrush (e)**

When we observed the first Red-tailed Laughingthrushes we played the call of Golden-winged Laughingthrush, as it sometimes associates with this species according to literature. To our astonishment we immediately got a very clear response of a Golden-winged Laughingthrush! We heard it calling 3 times, but unfortunately we didn't record it as we hoped to lure it into views. Alas it didn't come into views. This is the only time we observed this species. As Tim Dinh said the hides were fully booked we couldn't reserve for that day. Fortunately for our state of mind, the 2 birders who sat in the hide all day long (not nearly full occupancy) didn't see it either. We heard some people having to spend multiple days in the hide to see this species, or don't even see it at all.

Grey-crowned Crocias (e)

We observed this species three times. Two times in mixed species flocks (both times 3-4 birds), but also in a mono-specific flock of 5 individuals.

Orange-breasted Laughingthrush (e)

Unfortunately we didn't see this endemic species. During Covid they have been caught at all the known places (mostly around hides in Di Linh and Da Lat). It has been seen in 2023 once as far as we know and not at all in 2024. Hopefully there is still isolated forest somewhere, where this bird still has a stronghold far away from songbird traders.

Red-tailed Laughingthrush (ssp. *vitryi*)

This species turned out to be more common than we expected and was heard and seen a couple of times throughout the day we birded in the species' distribution.

**Red-tailed Laughingthrush****Red-tailed Laughingthrush****Rufous-backed Sibia (e; ssp. *eximia*)**

It took quite some effort to find this bird. We eventually localized it by its call, but it flew from the tree when we got close. Later we localized another bird foraging in the forest, which call was quite dissimilar to the one in the Merlin App.

**Grey-crowned Crocias****Rufous-backed Sibia****Rufous-cheeked Laughingthrush (ne)**

We heard multiple individuals at two different locations. On both locations we eventually got decent looks inside the shrubs of a flock of 3-4 individuals. This species was surprisingly harder to see than we imagined, especially as we heard it quite a few times.

Yellow-crowned Green Magpie (e. ssp. *C. chinensis margaritae*)

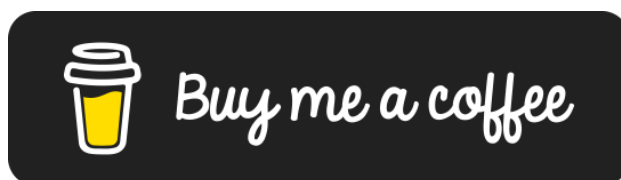
This rare species was found by its call. I thought I heard a Magpie, but wasn't sure if it might be Indochinese Green Magpie. Then one of the two birds came into view. Even though the white tertial-spots weren't visible, the bright yellow crown and green underside was enough to determine this was indeed the scarce Yellow-crowned Green Magpie.

Sunda Pangolin

One night when spotlighting we heard some rustling. As I didn't see any eyeshine I decided to go into the bush and found a **Sunda Pangolin** with a youngster on its back! Another night we spotlighted and heard loud rustling in a tree. Just for a split second we saw a **Sunda Pangolin** crawling down a tree, head down first. We tried to get closer by going into the dense shrub, but it was already gone.

**Sunda Pangolin****Sunda Pangolin****You made it! Thank you for reading 😊**

For all photos of our trip, comments, compliments, any specific questions, visit and/or contact us via our website. We would love to hear from you!



If my trip report makes your trip more fun, time and cost efficient; think about supporting my creative journey by [buying me a coffee](#). Your generosity brings me closer to capturing impressive wildlife photos and untold stories

 www.robjansenphotography.com/vietnam

 www.instagram.com/robjansenphotography

All observations made by us in Vietnam can be found on [Observation.org](#). We observed a total of about 326 bird species and 42 mammal species in Vietnam. Click here for the: [bird list](#), [mammal list](#) or the [total species list](#).

Our Top 5	Birds	Mammals
1	Bar-bellied Pitta	Red-shanked Douc
2	Germain's Peacock-pheasant	Sunda Pangolin
3	Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush	Northern White-cheeked Gibbon
4	Red-tailed Laughingthrush	Cat Ba Langur
5	Grey-crowned Crocias	Pygmy Slow Loris

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Red-shanked Douc Langurs

Red-shanked Douc Langur