

Laotian Endemic Mammals April 2023 Trip Report

Immediately after our Vietnam Rare Primates Group Tour, our direct Martin Royle headed to Laos to meet a solo client on a private tour to try and see the amazing Khanyou (also known as the Laotian Rock Rat). This client (Dr. Stewart Summers) is after seeing a member of every family of mammals in the world. He has already ticked off a member of every bird family and only has a few mammal families left. He has done several trips with Royle Safaris in the past and we have helped him with fulfilling some of these remaining families.

The discovery of the Kha-nyou in 2005 resulted in a new family of rodents being described and ever since it was an animal high on Stewart's (and many other mammalwatchers lists). The problem came in the form that hardly anyone had ever seen one and the locations where they live was not fully known. That all changed a couple of years ago when an intrepid mammalwatcher (and specific cat enthusiast) Stuart Chapman found a likely location in Loas. He was living there working for WWF and had explored most of the country and found this specific location.

This trip is both one of success and one of failure. Firstly we (Martin and Stewart) managed to get to the location that Stuart had visited and contact the same local, we were successful in seeing endemic **Lao Langurs** as well as the **Kha-nyou** (and several other species of small mammals), however the intense interest some of the local (hunters – trackers – poachers (probably a combination of all)) showed in us wanting to see one was not being channelled in the right way. We were increasing concerned that they were going to capture some, maybe even kill some, redistribute some to areas easier for people to see them and other things which would heavily impact the small local population of Kha-nyou. We managed to find our Kha-nyou using the thermal scope and scouting out areas around the accommodation (which backed up along a huge limestone cliff face). This was on the last day (after dark) and it showed that we were perhaps looking in the wrong places previously. We also visited some local caves (there are huge caverns and extensive cave systems throughout the region) and most had some very nice bat colonies. We have done our best to ID these species, but they are not 100% confirmed in all cases.

Due to the nature of locals and the very likely scenario that certain numbers of Kha-nyou will be heavily disturbed or even killed with an increase of people coming to see this species, we have decided not to disclose any more information. In conversation with Stuart Chapman and Jon Hall the original trip report that was quite revealing in how to get to this place has been removed. Royle Safaris will be working over the next few years with a purpose of trying to come up with a better plan to see the species without disturbing the species. Like we did on this trip, where the one we saw was not trapped, touched or disturbed in anyway, but we are conscious that local people were out in other areas (trying to help us) looking for them and their methods of doing this were likely not to the standards we require for repeated wildlife watching.

We do believe that this species can be seen repeatedly without disturbance in the future, but it is not quite there yet. One of the other reasons for this report is that we managed to see Lao langurs (which are possibly more endangered than Kha-nyou) at the rock view point (which is widely known) and that is important as we were the first mammalwatchers to visit the location since they had installed a very popular zipline through their habitat. It was unknown to Stuart and others who had visited in the past whether the zipline and subsequent development of the area had resulted in the population of langurs leaving the area or dying out completely. So we are happy to announce they are still there and can still be seen with relative ease.

For those of the birding persuasion we also had some nice views of the endemic Bare-faced Bulbul at the rock view point where we saw the Lao Langur.

Species List

Mammals

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Trident roundleaf bat	Aselliscus stoliczkanus
2	Variable squirrel	Callosciurus finlaysonii
3	Cave nectar bat	Eonycteris spelaea
4	Ashy roundleaf bat	Hipposideros cineraceus
5	Intermediate roundleaf bat	Hipposideros larvatus
6	Kha-nyou	Laonastes aegnmaumus
7	Western bent-winged bat	Miniopterus magnater
8	Horsfield's bat	Myotis horsfieldii
9	Northern woolly horseshoe bat	Rhinolophus perniger
10	Cambodian striped squirrel	Tamiops rodolphii
11	Lao langur	Trachypithecus laotum
12	Northern treeshrew	Tupaia belangeri

Note: Some bats identified 100% at roosts or with good views. Others identified with spectrograms in combination with sightings (no spectrograms without visual confirmation are recorded as a sighting), behaviour and habitat – so not 100% but best educated guesses. For more information please email me.

Birds

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Shikra	Accipiter badius
2	Cattle egret	Bubulcus ibis
З	Striated swallow	Cecropis striolata
4	Asian emerald dove	Chalcophaps indica
5	Feral pigeon	Columba livia

6 White-rumpe	ed shama	Copsychus malabaricus	
7 Large-billed o	crow	Corvus macrorhynchos	
8 Ashy drongo		Dicrurus leucophaeus	
9 Black drongo)	Dicrurus macrocercus	
10 Little egret		Egretta garzetta	
11 Blue whistling	g thrush	Myophonus caeruleus	
12 Bare-faced b	ulbul	Nok hualon	A small numbers seen around the rock view point – not difficult to find or
13 Scarlet miniv	/et	Pericrocotus speciosus	
14 Sooty-headed	d bulbul	Pycononotus aurigaster	
15 Black-crested	d bulbul	Rubigula flaviventris	
16 Pied bushcha	at	Saxicola caprata	
17 Sooty babble	er	Stachyris herberti	

Reptiles

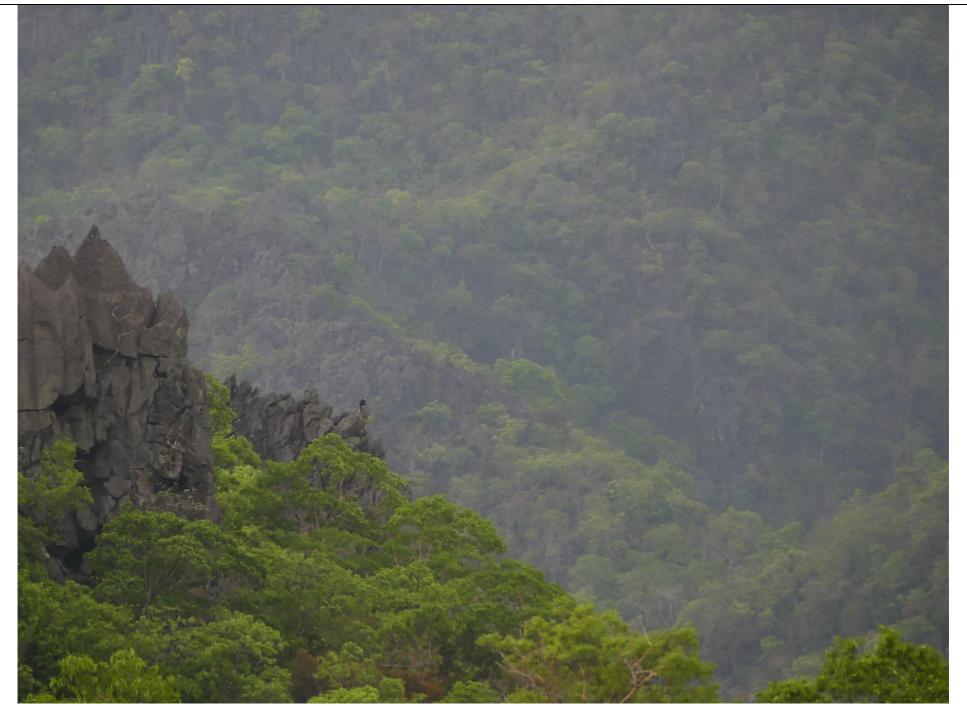
	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Common sun skink	Eutropis multifasciata
2	Tokay gecko	Gekko gecko
3	Flat-tailed house gecko	Hemidactylus platyurus

Amphibians

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Asian common toad	Duttaphrynus melanostictus
2	Green puddle frog	Occidozyga lima

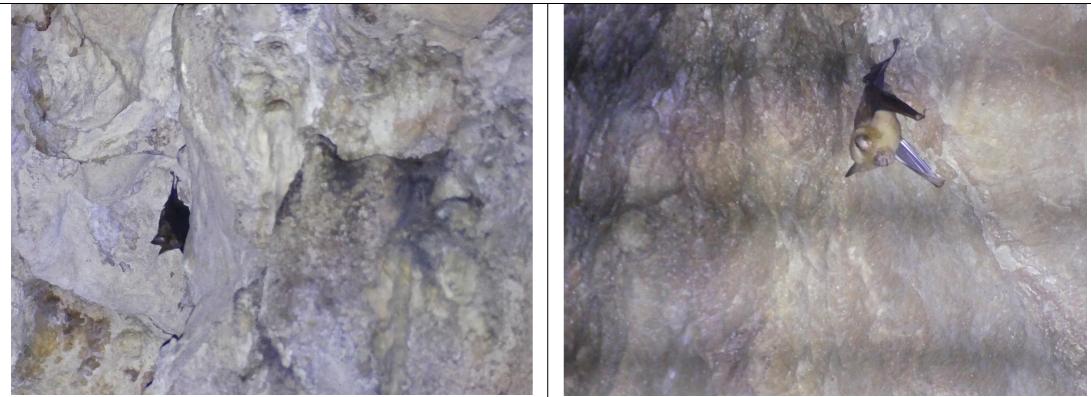
Freshwater Fishes

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1		Cyclocheilichthys armatus
2		Henicorhynchus ornatipinnis



Lao Langur (the small black blob on the far right of the limestone karst – with the white head) – the below picture is taken of the same rocks after the langur moved – to confirm it wasn't just a monkey shaped and coloured rock 😊





Likely Intermediate Roundleaf Bat

