

Singapore Trip Report

Jake Barker

9th – 12th of July 2025

About the author

My name is Jake, and I am a 25yr old ecologist, naturalist and amateur wildlife photographer from Australia. I have spent the last three years living and working in the Kimberley region of Western Australia and have recently moved to Perth where I will likely be based for the next few years. When I travel, it's usually to look for wildlife with a particular focus on mammals, herps and birds.

To see more of my wildlife adventures or to get in contact, hit me up on Instagram at:

<https://www.instagram.com/jake.b.wild/>

Intro

I recently spent 4 days in Singapore, on my way back to Australia after a month and half in the UK and Spain. The major targets for this stopover were to see **Sunda Colugo**, **Lesser Mouse Deer**, **Raffles Banded Langurs**, **Smooth-coated Otters** and **Sunda Pangolin**, though reading others trip reports saw this target list expand. The trip was mostly successful with **14** mammal, **19** herp, and **57** bird species observed, though I am keen to return in the future!

For ease of navigating the report, mammals are in **bold blue** and other wildlife is in **bold**.

For more details about what birds I saw and where, see my ebird report here:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/396012>

Day by Day

9th July

Sungei Buloh Wetlands

I arrived at Sungei just before sunrise but sadly this coincided with a downpour. Once the rain eased (2.5hrs later) I spent 4-5hrs walking the trails. I saw a large **Saltwater Crocodile** (*Crocodylus porosus*) from the Little Heron Deck. Plenty of **Asian Water Monitors** (*Varanus salvator*) and a couple of **Clouded Monitors** (*Varanus nebulosus*) were scattered around the trails. Mammal wise **Plantain Squirrels** (*Callosciurus notatus*), **Long-tailed Macaques** (*Macaca fascicularis*) and **Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bats** (*Cynopterus brachyotis*; visitor centre) were seen. It felt a little quiet for birds with many species still away on migration, but I was pleased to see my first **Oriental Pied Hornbills** near the carpark. With hindsight, I wish I had put more effort into listening for **Blue-winged Pitta** while here, I also later learned it is one of the best places in Singapore to see **Cobra's** (though obviously a lot of luck is required).



Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat (*Cynopterus brachyotis*)



Oriental Pied Hornbill



Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*)

Mandai Track 15

That evening, I headed out to Mandai Track 15 for a spotlight. As with everywhere I went in Singapore it was easy enough to get to via public transport. Within five minutes of walking down the track I had two of my biggest targets for Singapore, with four **Sunda Colugo** (*Galeopterus variegatus*) in proximity to each other and beneath them a pair of **Lesser Mouse Deer** (*Tragulus kanchil*) – Epic!! Both species were super abundant all along the trail. Other mammals seen on the walk were **Common Palm Civet** (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*), **Sambar Deer** (*Rusa unicolor*), **Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bats** and several rodents which largely evaded ID (see photos below and let me know if you have a suggestion?). I whipped out my Echometer (*) and recorded several **Nepalese Whiskered Myotis** (*Myotis muricola*) flying up and down the path, as well as a couple of recordings of **Blyth's Horseshoe Bat** (*Rhinolophus lepidus*) which had to pass by very close to be picked up by the recorder. These IDs are tentative and based off info presented in Lee (2016) and Pottie et al. (2005). Check out screenshots of sonograms in the appendix and I welcome feedback. Other sightings from the night walk were **Large-tailed Nightjar**, **Collared Scops Owl** and several frog species (see list at the end).



Lesser Mouse Deer (*Tragulus kanchil*)



Sunda Colugo (*Galeopterus variegatus*)



One of the unidentified rodents I managed to get a photo of up in a tree

10th July

Lower Peirce Reservoir + Thompsons Nature Park

Having secured a couple of my big targets the night before I set my sights on the **Raffles Banded Langurs** (*Presbytis femoralis*). From others reports, it sounded like the trails around Lower Peirce Reservoir were one of the best places to see them. This proved accurate as I got onto a group of ~10 (here, 1.374028, 103.825924) after just 20 minutes. I was thrilled, especially as I knew they could be somewhat unreliable. I spent an hour watching them and showing some excited locals before moving on.

I followed the road along to Thompsons Nature Park and began walking the trails there. I was mainly looking for whatever birds were around but keeping an eye out for **Sunda Colugo** and snakes. I saw plenty of **Plantain** and a couple of **Slender Squirrels** (*Sundasciurus tenuis*), along with a few groups of **Long-tailed Macaques**. There were also a few **Clouded Monitors** around but otherwise it was quiet.

I later learnt that the boardwalks around Lower Peirce Reservoir are great for **Twin-barred Flying Snake** (*Chrysopelea pelias*), and that the trails around Thompsons Reserve can give opportunities to see **Malayan Blue Coral Snake** (*Calliophis bivirgatus*) during the daytime (if your lucky).



Raffle's Banded Langur (*Presbytis femoralis*)



Raffle's Banded Langur (*Presbytis femoralis*) with juv

Singapore Botanical Gardens

My next mammal target was the **Smooth-coated Otter** (*Lutrogale perspicillata*), and I decided to try my luck that arvo at the Botanical Gardens. Arriving late in the arvo, I walked from the bottom of the gardens to the top with no luck. I had a quick look in the Ethnobotany Garden for **Greater Bamboo Bat** (*Tylonycteris robustula*) as recommended in Rob and Romy Jansen's trip report but with fading light decided I would come back the following day and try again.

Mandai Track 15

With one of my big targets being **Sunda Pangolin** (*Manis javanica*), I decided to head back to Mandai Track 15 for another spotlight. This decision was partly driven by not knowing where else I could spotlight since most parks close at 7pm.

Not long into spotlighting I bumped into a local herper who was out looking for snakes. We joined up to increase our chances but sadly didn't have much luck, only seeing a **Painted Bronzeback** (*Dendrelaphis pictus*). Otherwise, I saw a similar assemblage to the first night with lots of **Sunda Colugo**, **Lesser Mouse Deer**, **Sambar Deer**, **Common Palm Civets**, more **fruitbats** and unidentified rodents – still a very exciting night! I added **Buffy Fish Owl** to my bird list.

11th July

Singapore Botanic Gardens

Still needing the **Otters**, I committed to another early start despite getting back late from spotlighting. This time I arrived at the gardens in the early morning from the north end. I spent some time watching Eco Lake before heading to Symphony Lake. It started raining so I took shelter at the visitor centre. Once it reached 8:30am there were some staff around, so I asked them about the **Otters**. They advised me they hadn't been seen in the park for the last few days and were likely elsewhere in their territory. Bugga! Before leaving the Gardens, I spent a little bit of time looking for **Red-legged Crake** in the Heliconia patches near Symphony Lake – dipped. On the way out I revisited the Ethnobotany Garden for **Bamboo Bats** but only found a couple of slits in the bamboo with no bats.

Gardens By the Bay

I left the botanical gardens and headed for Gardens by the Bay where I was getting desperate to connect with the resident **Smooth Coated Otters**. It was getting later in the morning and after walking along the edge of the bay for a while I decided to cut my losses and get some rest for a big final spotlight.

Central Catchment Nature Reserve

For the last night I arranged to meet up with local wildlife enthusiast, John Lee, who was kind enough to share some tips for searching for **Pangolin** in Singapore (I promised not to share specific details). John walked with me briefly before he headed off to do his own thing and I set about with renewed energy looking for **Pangolin** and other wildlife. Once again, **Sunda Colugo** and **Lesser Mouse Deer** were abundant and easy to find with the headtorch. Along the path were a few **Oriental House Rats** (*Rattus tanezumi*). I also got onto at least 4 different **Horsefield's Flying Squirrels** (*Iomys horsfieldii*) which was exciting. I then had probably my rarest sighting as I briefly watched a couple of **Malayan Flying Foxes** (*Pteropus vampyrus*), pass above the path before disappearing over the tree line. They were many times bigger than the fruit bats which commonly flew between the paths, and I am quite confident they had to be Flying Foxes but recognise sightings of them in Singapore are extremely rare. Later, I again bumped into some local herpers who showed me a couple of **Wagler's Pit Vipers** (*Tropidolaemus*

wagleri) they had located. I eventually threw in the towel and headed back to my accom at 4am, still stoked with a great night of spotlighting!



Horsfield's Flying Squirrel (*Iomys horsfieldii*)



Common Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*)



Wagler's Pitviper (*Tropidolaemus wagleri*)



Oriental House Rat (*Rattus tanezumi*) I believe?

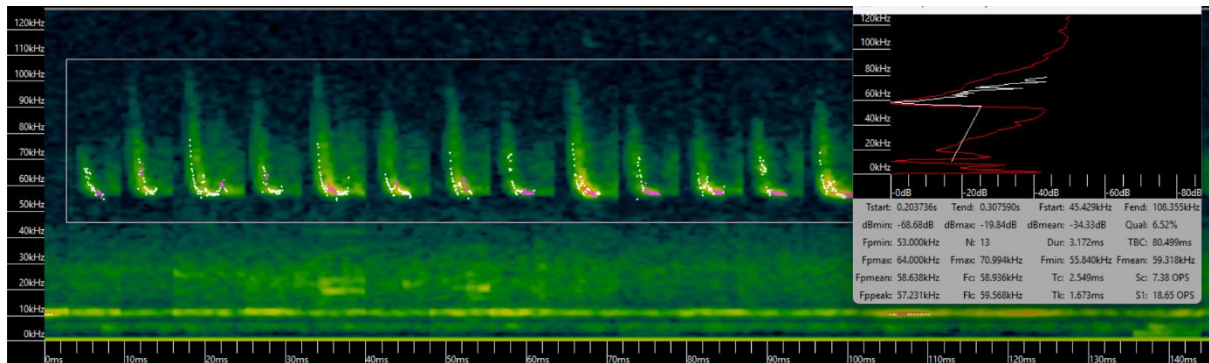
12th July

Gardens by the Bay

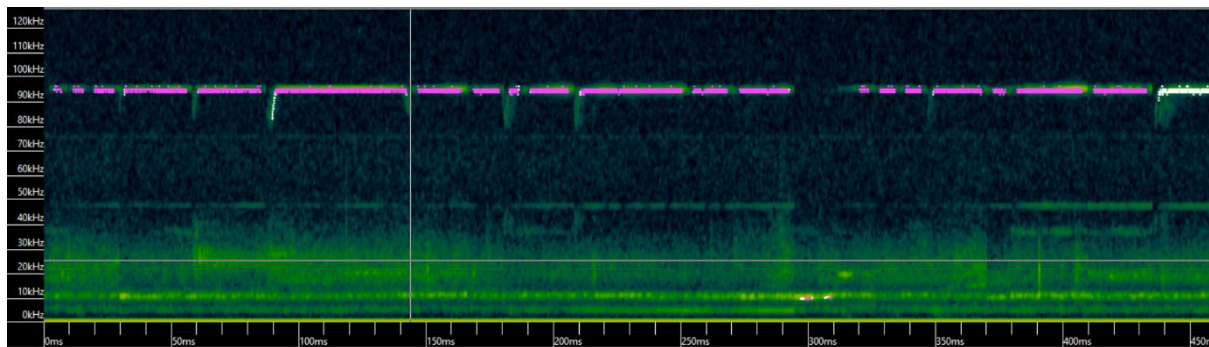
Not wanting to dip on the **otters**, I only slept for 2hrs before checking out of the hotel and heading to Gardens by the Bay with my suitcase. I sat and looked out over Marina Bay for a couple of hours before I grew restless and decided to walk along the Bay and up the Singapore River, suitcase in tow. I eventually had to head to the airport and so the alleged easy **otters** shall evade me till next time!

Appendix

Bats



Tentatively ldd as **Nepalese Whiskered Myotis** (*Myotis muricola*) due to characteristic frequency of 58.9 (closest match being *M. muricola*)?



Tentatively ldd as **Blyth's Horseshoe Bat** (*Rhinolophus lepidus*) due to constant frequency calls of ~94khz most closely matching *R. lepidus*?

References used

Lee BPYH (2016) *The urban ecology of bats in Singapore: understanding the human-wildlife interface*. University of Kent (United Kingdom).

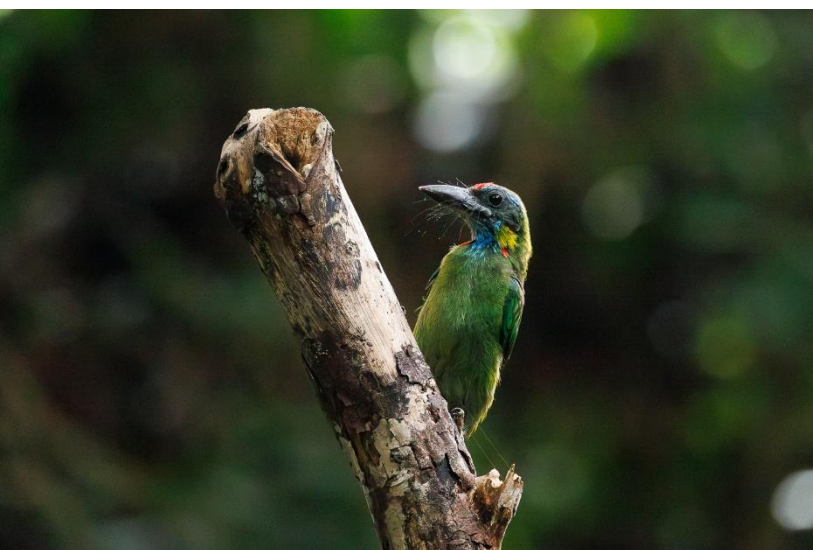
Pottie SA, Lane DJ, Kingston T, Lee BPYH (2005) The microchiropteran bat fauna of Singapore. *Acta Chiropterologica*, 7(2), 237-247.

Mammal + Herp List

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sightings
Long-tailed Macaque	Macaca fascicularis	Sungei and many places in the Central Catchment area
Raffle's Banded Lungur	Presbytis femoralis	Lower Pierce Reservoir
Sunda Colugo	Galeopterus variegatus	Many spotlit on Mandai Track 15 and elsewhere in the Central Catchment area
Plantain Squirrel	Callosciurus notatus	Everywhere
Slender Squirrel	Sundasciurus tenuis	Sungei and Thompsons park
Horsfield's Flying Squirrel	Iomys horsfieldii	Undisclosed location where I was looking for Pangolin
Common Palm Civet	Paradoxurus hermaphroditus	Mandai Track 15 and Pangolin location
Lesser Mouse Deer	Tragulus kanchil	Mandai Track 15 and Pangolin location
Sambar Deer	Rusa unicolor	Mandai Track 15
Oriental House Rat	Rattus tanezumi	Pangolin location
Malayan Flying Fox	Pteropus vampyrus	Pangolin location
Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat	Cynopterus brachyotis	Roosting at Sungei visitor centre and flying around at Mandai at night
Nepalese Whiskered Myotis	Myotis muricola	Mandai Track 15
Blyth's Horseshoe Bat	Rhinolophus lepidus	Mandai Track 15
Rodent sp.		Mandai Track 15
Painted Bronzeback	Dendrelaphis pictus	Mandi Track 15
Wagler's Pitviper	Tropidolaemus wagleri	Pangolin location
Common Sunskink	Eutropis multifasciata	many places
Asian House Gecko	hemidactylus frenatus	Many places including bus stops
Double-spotted Gecko	Gekko monarchus	Pangolin location
Saltwater Crocodile	Crocodylus porosus	Sungei Buloh
Asian Water Monitor	Varanus salvator	Everywhere
Clouded Monitor	Varanus nebulosus	Sungei and Thompsons
Four-striped Bent-toed Gecko	Cyrtodactylus quadrivirgatus	Mandai Track 15
Pond Slider	Trachemys scripta	Botanic gardens and Sungei
Common Southeast Asian Tree Frog	Polypedates leucomystax	Mandai Track 15
Blyth's River Frog	Limnonectes blythii	Mandai Track 15
Dark-sided Chorus Frog	Microhyla heymonsi	Mandai Track 15
Greenhouse Frog	Eleutherodactylus planirostris	Mandai Track 15
Paddyfield Frog	Fejervarya limnocharis	Mandai Track 15
Asian Common Toad	Duttaphrynus melanostictus	Mandai Track 15
Black-eyed Litter Frog	Leptobrachium nigrops	Mandai Track 15
Malayan White-lipped Frog	Chalcorana labialis	Mandai Track 15
Mukhlesur's Narrow-mouthed Frog	Microhyla mukhlesuri	Mandai Track 15

Bird List

Ashy Tailorbird	Medium Egret
Asian Emerald Dove	Milky Stork
Asian Glossy Starling	Mute Swan
Asian Koel	Olive-winged Bulbul
Black-crowned Night Heron	Oriental Magpie-Robin
Black-naped Oriole	Oriental Pied-Hornbill
Blue-throated Bee-eater	Ornate Sunbird
Brahminy Kite	Pacific Reef-Heron
Brown Boobook	Pacific Swallow
Brown-throated Sunbird	Pied Imperial-Pigeon
Buffy Fish-Owl	Pink-necked Green-Pigeon
Collared Kingfisher	Pin-striped Tit-Babbler
Collared Scops-Owl	Purple Heron
Common Flameback	Red Junglefowl
Common Hill Myna	Red-crowned Barbet
Common Iora	Red-eyed Bulbul
Common Tailorbird	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)
Copper-throated Sunbird	Rose-ringed Parakeet
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker
Gray Heron	Spotted Dove
Great Egret	Striated Heron
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	swiftlet sp.
House Crow	White-bellied Sea-Eagle
Javan Myna	White-breasted Waterhen
Large-tailed Nightjar	White-rumped Shama
Lineated Barbet	White-throated Kingfisher
Little Egret	Yellow-vented Bulbul
Little Tern	Zebra Dove
Malaysian Pied-Fantail	



Lineated Barbet



White-breasted Waterhen