

# Vietnam

## October 2–11, 2026

Jan Ebr

I was invited to give a talk at a conference in Quy Nhon, so I added a few days before and after to look for some animals.

On the way there, I stopped in **Nha Trang**, mostly for snorkelling, which was reasonable, but even during many hours on a boat, I saw no cetaceans. Nha Trang is a bustling city and the built-up areas are surrounded mostly by uncomfortably steep hills. However I found an appealing, almost level, path on a map, directly north behind Hon Kho, the popular viewpoint at the northern edge of the city. Indeed one can easily walk there into a nice forest – it's only about 1.5 kilometers across, but it was completely deserted and provided a **Pygmy Slow Loris**. Another evening I tried walking up Hon San, closer to the center, but there was just a locked gate. iNat has some squirrel sightings at the tower temple downtown, but I haven't found any.

In **Quy Nhon**, the conference was in ICISE a few kms south of town, which is set in a beautiful garden complex, where I found a **Cambodian or Maritime Striped Squirrel** during a coffee break. I visited the hill between town and ICISE at night, with no result. Due to change of weather that brought large waves, the conference snorkelling trip was cancelled, so they took us to Thap Binh It instead, where one of the towers has a **Black-bearded Tomb Bat** colony. While I sat on a bench above the beach next to the Seagull hotel in town around midday, a **Rattus sp.** came to investigate some rubbish.



*Black-shanked Douc Langur*



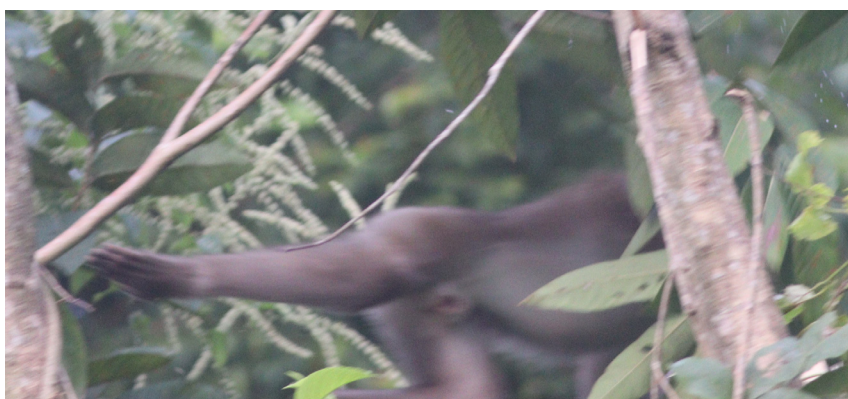
*Pygmy Slow Loris*



*Pallas' Squirrel and Cambodian or Maritime Striped Squirrel*

Having just one spare night realistically, I let people online convince me to go to **Cat Tien** nevertheless and it was good advice, even if there weren't so many animals. After a night train to Saigon and a direct bus from Nga Tu Ga, I showed up at the reception at 2 pm without any booking and they gave me a nice room inside the park for 400k. I walked north mostly on the paved roads, where there are less leeches and you see the animals better anyway and encountered **Black-shanked Douc Langurs** twice. The dusk found me at the Six-rooted tree and so I waked back thermalling, which brought only two **Lesser Oriental Chevrotains**. Online sources say that walking at night is not allowed, so I was a bit worried that I would meet the night safaris and get kicked out, but apparently they all go south from the entrance towards some open areas with deer, so I had several hours of complete solitude. In the morning I found a **Macaque (Long-tailed or Pig-tailed?)** next to the entrance and heard a lot of **Southern Yellow-cheeked Gibbons** calling around the rapids 1 kms north. Unfortunately they all sounded like they were across the river, but with the very high water levels it was not possible to find a place to actually look across the river, so they remained heard-only. Right next to the room there was a **Pallas' Squirrel**, bringing the total to a glorious 9 mammals (with 4 lifers).

I didn't really have much of an idea about Vietnam, so I was pleasantly surprised by it. The people are quite nice, everything is dirt cheap, the Reunification Express is a very efficient way to get around (I got proper sleep in the 4-bed arrangement) and the food is quite good - I just had a "no cilantro" picture in Vietnamese on my phone and it always worked. The amount of even basic English speakers is among the lowest I have seen anywhere in the world, but everyone is willing to try to communicate somehow. Cat Tien is great with the ability to walk around unmolested, but I am not sure if the currently almost-finished bridge across the river won't bring too much extra traffic and other problems.



*Macaque*



*Lesser Oriental Chevrotain*

*Black-bearded Tomb Bat*



*Rattus sp.*

