

Taiwan
January 2019



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INTRODUCTION

This short report covers a 12-day trip to Taiwan in the beginning of 2019. While we were mostly focused on birds on this leg of the holiday, we also made an effort to see as many of the larger mammals as possible. Unfortunately, for practical reasons, we found it best not to include Lanyu (Orchid Island) on our itinerary, thus pretty much excluding any chance of seeing cetaceans, and since we didn't do any kind of trapping/netting either, the number of identified bats and rodent was also low. The real megas like Asiatic Black Bear and Clouded Leopard also eluded us, which is hardly surprising, and non the less we were quite satisfied with the mammals we actually did see. All species were seen very well, and even if the number of isn't particularly impressive, most of them were really nice, and the setting often amazingly beautiful. We've therefore no reservations about recommending a visit to this easily accessible island to mammal watchers as well as birders.

Clearly Taiwan isn't as often visited by mammal watchers as some other destinations in Eastern Asia. Still we found some really useful reports on www.mammalwatching.com, though we would probably have found most of the species, except the two bat species in Hualien, ourselves anyway. We haven't yet purchased a thermal scope and had to rely on torches instead on our night drives/walks.

We've made a more thorough report including general information, and with more emphasis on birds, which can be found here: <https://www.cloudbirders.com/tripreport/show/25338/37934>

On our way back from Taiwan, we made a 5-day stop in Singapore and Malaysia, and have made sperate reports on that part of the trip. They can be found here:

Mammals: <https://www.mammalwatching.com/wp-content/uploads/JL-Singapore-Malaysia-2019.pdf>

Birds and general information: <https://www.cloudbirders.com/tripreport/show/25272/37862>



Yellow-throated Marten – Yushan NP

MAMMAL LIST

Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel (*Dremomys pernyi*)

17+18/1 2+4 Dasyueshan

- We saw them at different altitudes, from the "Swinhoe's Pheasant corner" (km 23.5) to the area between the carpark and the small lake at the summit (24.281084, 121.026183). Especially the latter was very approachable (photo), but they're just generally not very shy.

Pallas's Squirrel (*Callosciurus erythraeus*)

20/1 1 Longluan Lake

24/1 1 "Blue Gate Trail", Wushe

27+28/1 9+6 Taipei Botanical Garden

28/1 4 Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Area

- The squirrel of degraded/cultivated land rather than the deep undisturbed mountain forests, and apparently not that particular when it comes to altitude. Very common in Taipei city parks and probably similar parks in other cities as well.



Maritime Striped Squirrel (*Tamiops maritimus*)

17+18/1 4+3 Dasyueshan

24/1 1 Meifeng Highland Experimental Farm

- Very nice little chipmunk-like squirrel which is probably much more common in the mountains than the numbers we saw would suggest. We saw them each time we went to the boardwalk at the Swinhoe's Pheasant hotspot (24.246498, 120.935511), so that is no doubt a reliable place.

Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel (*Petaurista alborufus*)

17/1 2h+6 Dasyueshan

21+22/1 3+7 Alishan

- An amazingly cool, and surprisingly big (!), animal which we saw extremely well, though only at night. We had seen quite a few really nice photos of this species from Dasyueshan in a number of reports, and were therefore somewhat disappointed only to see rather distant individuals here. Had we had access to the road above the gate, things might have been different since this is clearly a species which prefer high-altitude forests.

Luckily things were different in Alishan where the steep slopes mean that the boardwalk/sidewalk along the road east of the tourist village (23.512172, 120.806069) is almost at treetop-level. The flying squirrels were pretty common here and we had fantastic prolonged views of them, even seeing them flying several times, from here. This was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the trip for us!



Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel



Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel



Maritime Striped Squirrel

Yellow-throated Marten (*Martes flavigula*)

22+23/1 2+2 Yushan NP

25/1 2 Taroko Gorge

- Another great species which we saw well several times. They seem to prefer hanging out in pairs, and the car park at Tataka Recreational Area (23.482098, 120.885615) is apparently a reliable place. We saw a confiding couple, which sadly moved on much too soon, here early in the morning on the 23rd, and probably the same animals a little down the road a little later in the morning the day before.

Ryukyu Flying Fox (*Pteropus dasymallus*)

25/1 1 Hualien

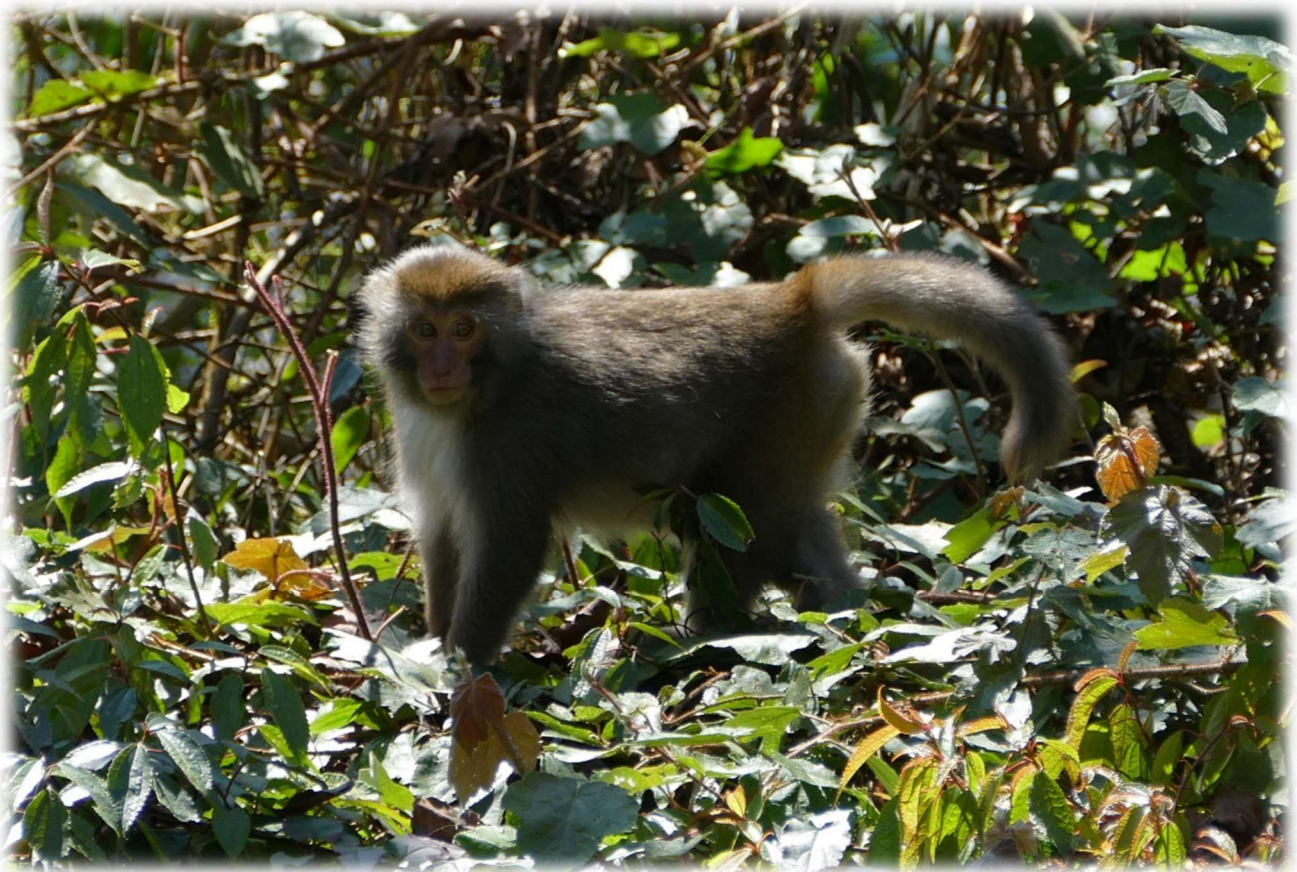
- Seen briefly but well, flying by at tree top level over the northern riverbank (23.981845, 121.614962) at Meilunxi Riverside Park. It was almost dark when we finally saw one, but luckily it was quite close by, and lit up by the street lights. This lone individual was flying west along the river, and we almost didn't see it, since it was obscured by the trees for much of the time. If this is the route usually follow by these big bats, maybe a better strategy for people coming here to see them, is to walk along the other side of the river where the view is less obstructed by trees.

Japanese Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus abramus*)

25/1 15 Hualien

- All seen hunting above the river at Meilunxi Riverside Park immediately west of Jinghua Bridge (23.981466, 121.616447). it's difficult to be absolutely certain about the identification, but they fit the bill and corresponds well with Jon Hall's observation of similar small bats at the same location in 2017, identified by local expert Chao-Lung.

Unidentified bats were seen in several other places as well. Most notable were more than a hundred small to medium sized bats flying out at dusk on the 19th. We saw them just south of the Aogu Wetlands, on the west coast, while driving to Budai, and reckon they must have been sleeping the day away under the highway (61) bridge.



Formosan Rock Macaque – Taroko Gorge

Formosan Rock Macaque (*Macaca cyclopis*)

17+18/1 (h+2)+(h) Dasyueshan

20/1 7 Sheding Natural Park

21/1 9 Mudan

22+23/1 3+4 Yushan NP

25/1 12 Taroko Gorge

- Based on the experience of others, we feared that it would be a little difficult to find Taiwan's only primate. Luckily it wasn't, but then we saw the highest numbers in places not very often visited by birders.

Reeves' Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*)

17+18/1 (5h+3)+(4h+3) Dasyueshan

22+23/1 (1h+2)+(1h+2) Yushan NP

24/1 2h "Blue Gate Trail", Wushe

- Seems to be common and widely distributed in the central mountains. We saw/heard it in much higher numbers than expected, and while most were rather shy, we had prolonged and very nice views of an individual in Dasyueshan, between the last parking lot and the small lake (24.281084, 121.026183).



Formosan Serow & Reeves' Muntjac – Dasyueshan

Formosan Serow (*Capricornis swinhoei*)

18/1 1 Dasyueshan

- Surprisingly, we didn't see this species on any of our multiple night drives in Dasyueshan, even if other people seem to find it quite easily along the road here. However, we weren't able to drive the road above the gate which is closed by night. The serows apparently favour the higher reaches of the road, but Dominique Bruigere even found them below the gate in fair numbers in 2016. We did most of our night driving further down the road, though, but did reach the gate on one of them, and should therefore have been able to find them here.

Luckily, we stumbled across a very confiding individual on forest road 210 (starting at 24.245423, 120.974837), which branches off the main road by the small temple just above the gate. There's a fence where the road starts, but it's easy to get around, and access is allowed on foot here. The animal came out on the track less than a hundred metres in front of us and kept coming closer, seemingly without taking any notice of us whatsoever. While we were watching it, it climbed both the small cliff face above the track and a small tree, before slowly moving downhill again. A very nice observation indeed!

Introduced Species

Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon*)

20/1 3 Shedding Natural Park

- Seen in the evening while spotlighting in the open areas along road (21.956397, 120.818657) leading through the park. No doubt they'll be there in the early morning as well, but during the day this place is rather crowded and therefore completely deer-free.

The Taiwanese race, *taiouanus*, was extirpated in 1969. In 1994 a group was reintroduced in Kenting National Park, where the species is now thriving with a population of more than a thousand individuals. However, apparently this population isn't completely pure strain *taiouanus*, and these days the purest Formosan Sika Deer are found on Kinmen Island.



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