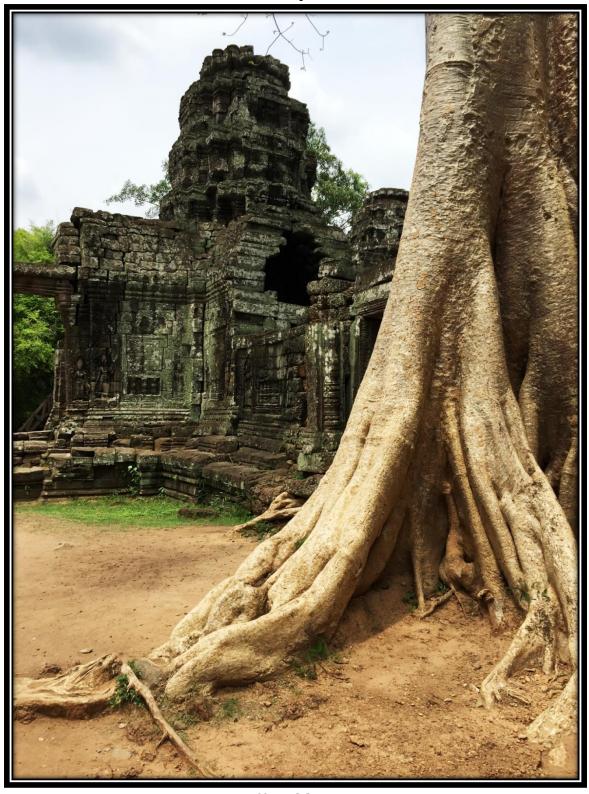
Report on a Mammal Watching Trip to Cambodia and Laos 07 – 26 April 2019



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In April 2019 I travelled with Chris Biles to Cambodia and Laos. We arrived at the end of the dry season when regional temperatures tend to be at their highest. Daytime temperatures hovered around the high 30s, with 42.6 Celsius recorded on one afternoon in north west Cambodia. Laos was slightly cooler, but we still experienced high levels of humidity. The last few days of the trip coincided with the start of the rains, which was to have a negative impact on mammal watching.

In Cambodia we utilised the services of the Sam Veasna Centre https://samveasna.org/ specialist birding and wildlife tours (but primarily birding!) to help with guiding and logistics. However, we began our trip independently, in Siem Reap, gateway to Angkor Wat (the environs of which is good wildlife habitat). We then met our Sam Veasna guide – Mr Ladong – who knew his birds well and responded with characteristic good grace regarding my near- pathological entreaties to focus primarily on mammals. After a couple of days spent around Tonle Sap, we headed to the northern plains before driving back south to Kratie, in central Cambodia, home of Irrawaddy Dolphins. From there we travelled east to Seima Protected Forest, Mondulkiri province, adjoining Vietnam, with its still healthy population of primates. We saw 15 species of mammal in Cambodia, alongside signs of several other species, together with 221 species of bird, including (sadly) two endangered and five critically endangered species. Our reptile list was comparatively poor, with nine species seen.

For Laos, we had booked a trip via Trailfinders, travelling from the northern city of Luang Prabang on a two day road journey north to Phet Et Lou National Park, close to the border with Vietnam. Our local guide was Mr Bounpanya (Phan) Phan49@hotmail.com who was not a wildlife expert, but proved the perfect facilitator for those who were. He can arrange car and van rental and all ground logistics in Laos and I would recommend him. Forewarned by the few available trip reports online (and those mostly on birds) it is not an easy country in which to spot wildlife. We saw only three species of mammal and 18 new birds, plus two new reptiles. The local penchant for hunting, trapping and consuming much of what is visible has led to the appropriate evolutionary response. Importantly, despite the admittedly shy wildlife it is obviously present. Birdsong throughout the forests attests to that (it was often Cambodian woodlands that seemed silent in comparison). Mammal signs within Phet Et Lou were numerous and from a wide range of species, including apex predators. Hence, why I have included some suggestions for those wishing to visit for themselves.



Regional Map: Cambodia and Laos

CAMBODIA

Siem Reap and Angkor Wat

The Royal Gardens (or to give them their full title, the Royal Crusade to Independence Gardens) is home to a colony of the range-restricted **Lyle's Flying Fox** (*Pteropus lylei*). A parallel row of tall trees run in a north-south axis through the centre of the park and the colony (several hundred strong) is located here. We arrived late afternoon and several individuals were already actively flying around the colony. The species is persecuted in agricultural areas, and it isn't altogether welcome in urban environments, given their predilection for noise, mess and partiality to fruit trees, but the roost in the centre of Siem Reap is still, luckily, able to provide relative sanctuary.



Lyle's Flying Fox (Pteropus lylei)

A short taxi (or longer tuk tuk) ride north from Siem Reap and one arrives at Angkor Wat. Sunrise at the temple is said to be a 'must do', so we did! Notably, huge numbers of bats swirled around the temple towers. Unfortunately, distance precluded any hope of species recognition. Later, trooping 'round inside the temple complex, bats were definitely audible, but frustratingly the origin of the calls invariably emanated from cordoned off areas. Other visitors may be luckier.

However, the forest surrounding the Angkor Wat temple remains some of the best protected in Cambodia, a country in which natural environments are usually viewed in terms of their economic rather than biological value. Approaching Angkor Wat from the south, the forest trails alongside the eastern edge of the temple are rewarding. Troops of Long-tailed (or Crab-eating) Macaques (Macaca fascicularis) are encountered here (but more fittingly, at ease in the forest, rather than seen begging for scraps around the nearby food vendors). Also, Variable (or Finlayson's) Squirrels (Callosciurus finlaysonii (C. f. annellatus or C. f. cinnanoneus) appeared to be common, with three separate sightings of individual animals. Notable birds included Hainan Blue Flycatcher (Cyornis hainanus) Taiga Flycatcher (Ficedula albicilla) and three Forest Wagtails (Dendronanthus indicus).

Most of the larger mammals were hunted out in the 1980's and 1990's, but thanks to the security afforded to a site visited by a million tourists a year, the Wildlife Alliance, in partnership with the Cambodian Forestry Administration have reintroduced **Pileated Gibbons** (Hylobates pileatus) (three pairs) and **Indochinese** (or **Germain's**) Silvered Langurs (Trachypithecus germaini) as the vanguard for ambitious plans to reintroduce further species of endangered Cambodian wildlife.



Long-tailed Macaques (Macaca fascicularis)

To the north, beyond the environs of the Angkor Wat Temple, at the nearby Elephant Terrace we came across our only two **Northern Pig-tailed Macaques** (*Macaca leonina*) of the trip. Sadly, the species is declining in numbers throughout its range, both in SE Asia and the Indian sub-continent.



Northern Pig-tailed Macaque (Macaca leonina)

A little to the east of Angkor Wat is Banteat Kdei (cover photo). It is less frequented by tourists than more famous neighbouring temples and has the added attraction of readily observable bats. The temple towers contained, in total, some 40 **Theobald's Tomb Bats** (*Taphozous theobaldi*) and 50 plus **Malayan Horseshoe Bats** (*Rhinolophus malayanus*). Other species may also be present.



Malayan Horseshoe Bats (Rhinolophus malayanus)



Theobald's Tomb Bats (Taphozous theobaldi)

Tonle Sap, Siem Reap and Battambang Provinces

Several hours drive west of Siem Reap one arrives at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, a large reservoir built by slave labour during the Khmer Rogue regime and now a haven for vast number of duck, waders, cormorants and herons. The surrounding dry grassland is also a critically important habitat for **Sarus Cranes** (*Antigone Antigone*) the world's tallest flying bird at 1.8 meters. It is classified as vulnerable, with only 1500-200 birds remaining of the SE Asia subspecies. One mammal that I had hoped to see, the endangered **Eld's** (or **Brow-antlered**) **Deer** (*Panolia eldii*) once migrated in some numbers across the border from Thailand, but persecution, particularly hunting, soya plantations and other habitat modification, including a newly constructed canal, has seen numbers fall from eleven in 2016, to two in 2017 and only one in February 2018, the last animal to be recorded here.

Prek Toal is a bird sanctuary on the southern shores of Tonle Sap. The lakeside journey begins at a jetty on the mainland and it's not an encouraging start. Cambodia appears to be inundated with rubbish, particularly plastics. There is, I believe, no regular rubbish collection service and we saw little evidence of recycling anywhere. The long muddy channel leading from the jetty being a particular case in point. Although two sightings of Small Asian (or Javan) Mongoose (Herpestes javanicus) attested to this adaptable creature still being able to make a living here. After an hour on the open water (which even at its centre is only a few feet deep) one enters Prek Toal reserve. It is like entering an earlier age, such is the profusion of life. A ranger station above the bank is a reminder to local fishermen that the area is off-limits. The waterway is clear and fresh, the banks well vegetated and the birdlife more prolific than anywhere else we visited. Upon docking our small boat we disturbed a striking Long-tailed Giant Rat (Leopoldamys sabanus) as it ran along a low branch. A short trail leads to a tower hide from where it's possible to see the nests of two of SE Asia's rarest birds, endangered Greater Adjutant (Leptoptilos dubius) and Milky Stork (Mycteria cinerea). Their respective populations, i.e. less than 1000 and 2200 birds respectively (2008) continue to face multiple threats to survival, primarily habitat destruction. Returning to the lake, a disturbance in some nearby trees revealed a group of five or six Indo-Chinese Silvered Langurs. Unfortunately, the boatman hadn't spotted them and the noise of the engine prevented a quiet approach. Very shy, the troop quickly dived for cover. We were lucky. They are rarely seen here.

North of Tonle Sap the Florican Grasslands is a rare, natural grassland dedicated to preserving the critically endangered **Bengal Florican (or Bustard)** (*Houbaropsis bengalensis*). During our early morning visit we saw five birds (less than a thousand remain) including displaying males, together with a localised winter migrant, **Manchurian Reed Warbler** (*Acrocephalus tangorum*). The only mammals seen were two recently deceased rats, both of which – curiously - had been decapitated.



Unidentified Rat sp

Tmatboey Dry Forest, Preah Vihear Province

On the long drive north from Siem Reap to the isolated village of Tmatboey, located in the Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary in the Northern Plains, it is clear to see why Cambodia has one of the highest rates of tree cover loss in the world. According to NASA, 'between 2001 and 2014, the annual forest loss rate in Cambodia increased by 14.4%. Put another way, the country lost a total of 1.44 million hectares—or 5,560 square miles—of forest'. For mile after mile cleared landscapes and burnt stumps remain where an entire forest had recently stood. Waves of new settlers have arrived from elsewhere in Cambodia to take advantage and carry out subsistence farming, but more noticeable are the many plantations, primarily Chinese owned. It is ecological devastation on a major scale. Not for the first time our guide was reluctant to comment, despite his sadness at events. Even within the wildlife sanctuary, we saw evidence of illegal logging and burning of trees.

It wasn't always like this. Surveys initiated by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in the 1960s stated, 'Cambodia is one of the great game lands of the world. Considering the distribution and number of big-game animals, parts are second only to the African game lands in game abundance.' But in the decades that followed, with prolonged political and military instability and the massive increase in availability of weapons it spelt a rapid end for the high densities of wild cattle and deer.

Today, with a certain twist of irony, the area is the flagship site for a community ecotourism model established by the Cambodian Ministry of Environment and the WCS's Cambodia Program, directly linking nature tourism, conservation and community development. Tmatboey supports globally important breeding populations of five critically endangered species: the **Giant Ibis** (*Thaumatibis gigantean*) – of which under 100 pairs survive, **White-shouldered Ibis** (*Pseudibis davisoni*) reduced locally to one breeding pair in 2002 (but now a qualified success story) and three vultures, **White-rumped** (*Gyps bengalensis*) **Slender billed** (*Gyps tenuirostris*) and **Red-necked** (*Sarcogyps calvus*).



Civet tracks

In the grounds of the camp we found a single **Indo-Chinese Ground Squirrel** (*Menetes berdmorei*). Walking the tracks around the forest, there were good signs that smaller mammals were at least still prospering. We disturbed a probable **Red (or Indian) Muntjac** (*Muntiacus muntjak*) (the only surviving Cervinae represented here). Unfortunately, the local guide's method of enticing the animal from its hiding place, by noisily approaching and kicking the bushes, perhaps unsurprisingly failed to achieve a sighting! Two **Cambodian Striped Squirrels** (*Tamiops rodolphii*) were also seen (both mid-storey around nesting holes) with the distinct appearance and behaviour of a chipmunk.

Mekong River, Kampi, Kratié Province

In 1997 there were 200 **Irrawaddy Dolphins** (*Orcaella brevirostris*) remaining in the Mekong River. According to WWF that number reduced to 80 in 2015. However, a recent census has shown a slight increase in numbers to 92. Concerted conservation efforts, including the removal, 'over the past two years [of] 358km of illegal gillnets – almost double the length of the dolphins' remaining home range – have been confiscated from core dolphin habitat'. Spotting the dolphins is a noted tourist activity and there are plenty of boats available for hire. We elected to head out onto the Mekong early morning and were rewarded with prolonged views of five individuals and a couple of single animals. The largest of the five remaining population groups of this species are found here.

As well as the dolphins, this particular stretch of the Mekong is also notable as providing prime habitat for the range-restricted **Mekong Wagtail** (*Motacilla samveasnae*). It is best looked for early morning, and frequents the numerous small islands. The Sam Veasna Centre is named after the naturalist who first described the species, in 2001, but tragically died of malaria aged only 33.



Irrawaddy Dolphins (Orcaella brevirostris)

Keo Seima Protected Forest, Mondulkiri Province

To the east of Kratié, bordering Vietnam is the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (approx. 2900 sq km). We stayed here for three nights at the Jahoo Gibbon Camp located around 25km from the town of Sen Monorom. It's a pretty basic camp, but pleasant and well run by indigenous Bunong people. Keo Seima hosts a wide variety of habitats: evergreen, semi-evergreen, mixed deciduous, dry dipteropcarp and bamboo. 93 mammal species, along with 334 bird species and 60 reptiles and amphibians have been recorded. Our reason for visiting was the chance to see endangered Blackshanked Douc Langurs (Pygathrix nigripes). The population comprises some 42,000 animals (2007 census) together with the similarly endangered Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbons (Nomascus qabriellae) of which 3,700 animals (2007 census) survive here. The sanctuary protects the world's largest population of these two species and forms the basis for a key WCS conservation initiative in cooperation with the local Bunong. The importance of this area only became apparent from the year 2000 when WCS began surveying a timber concession in the eastern part of the country and identified it as one of the most important sites for wildlife in Cambodia. Logging operations were suspended and in 2002 and the area declared a Biodiversity Conservation Area. As the WCS 2007 annual report made clear Keo Seima is home 'to at least seven, probably more, species of primate. This high species richness is comparable with areas internationally famous for their primates'.



Black-shanked Douc Langur (*Pygathrix nigripes*)

On our initial walk into the forest we located two **Black-shanked Douc Langurs**. (Also look out for this species in roadside trees when approaching Keo Seima). Later, we came across a troop of 20 **Doucs** feeding in the canopy and, perhaps disturbed (or else attracted) by their activities a **Black Giant Squirrel** (*Ratufa bicolor*). Upon returning to camp we caught our first glimpse of two **Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbons**, but which quickly disappeared. Notable birds included **White-throated Rock Thrush** (*Monticola gularis*) (also possible to see at Angkor Wat) excellent views of a pair of **Silver-breasted Broadbill** (*Serilophus lunatus*) and single **Banded Broadbill** (*Eurylaimus javanicus*).

The Sam Veansa website advertises night walks here. However, they do come with a risk. Five to eight **Asian Elephants** (*Elephas maximus*) have begun to frequent an area of the forest edge close to the camp. We saw signs of their presence during our daytime walks. Recently their behaviour has become more unpredictable and at times aggressive, culminating, last year, in a tourist being killed when attempting to obtain a photograph of a cow and her calf and getting too close. A local villager was also killed attempting to protect his crops. An indicator for the cause of this change is present in the landscape itself. When a Bulong sets up home he is entitled to clear a hectare of land. A problem may be arising however in that an outsider marrying into the local community may also claim this right. That is a valuable dowry. How commonplace the practice was difficult to ascertain. What *was* clear (and whatever the reason) there has been a recent, significant loss of forest cover. Elephants are being squeezed out of their habitat, with obvious, resultant problems.

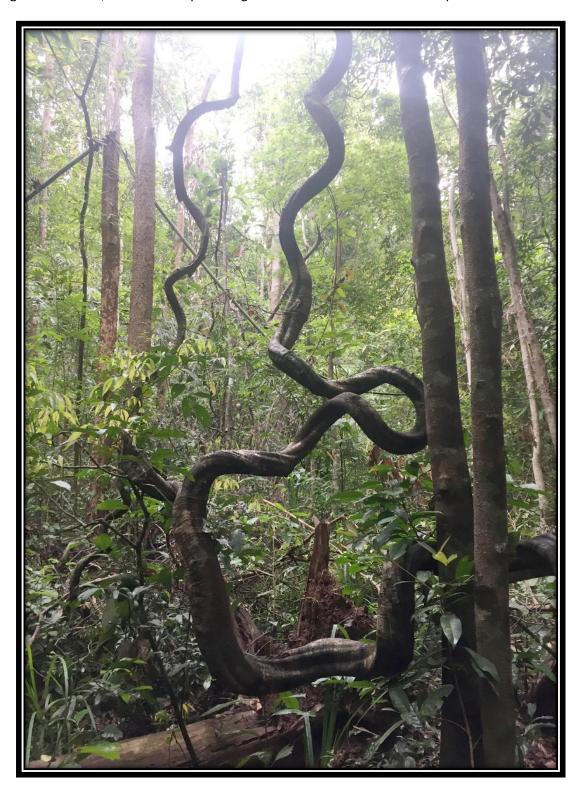
We did undertake a short night walk. The first lesson I learned is that should a guide ask to use your flashlight, because he has forgotten his own, think twice before saying yes! We hadn't even departed camp when I very nearly trod on a **Giant Forest Scorpion** (Heterometrus spinifer). 600 meters down the steep track we heard rustling, followed by the guide suddenly shouting 'run!' His (or rather my) flashlight had alighted on a pair of eyes belonging to, he thought, a surprised **elephant**. We didn't wait to find out whether it was also a belligerent elephant. Later, safely back at camp, we sat recording our notes and at the bottom of the grassy knoll in front of us we could clearly hear two or three elephants making their way out of the forest toward the village fields.



Giant Forest Scorpion (Heterometrus spinifer)

The following morning, as the forest awoke to another smudgy sunrise, we left camp to pick our way towards the sound of **gibbons**' duetting. Soon we came upon them and were able to enjoy prolonged views of eight gibbons, one with infant, as they foraged. In 2012 the area only held four gibbons, but there are now twelve. The local Bulong guide told us that the Bulong no longer kill them, but that people come 'from the city' with air rifles to hunt them and that this remains a risk.

On our last day in the forest we had two further sightings of small family groups of four to six **Douc** and one new mammal, a **Pallas's squirrel** (*Callosciurus erythraeus*). Recent claw marks on a tree from a resident **bear** illustrated the richness of this habitat. In the afternoon, as we were leaving Keo Seima, I had a final view of a **Douc**, sitting high in a tree and peering out toward us from the edge of the forest, across a bare piece of ground that in 2018 had still been prime Douc habitat.

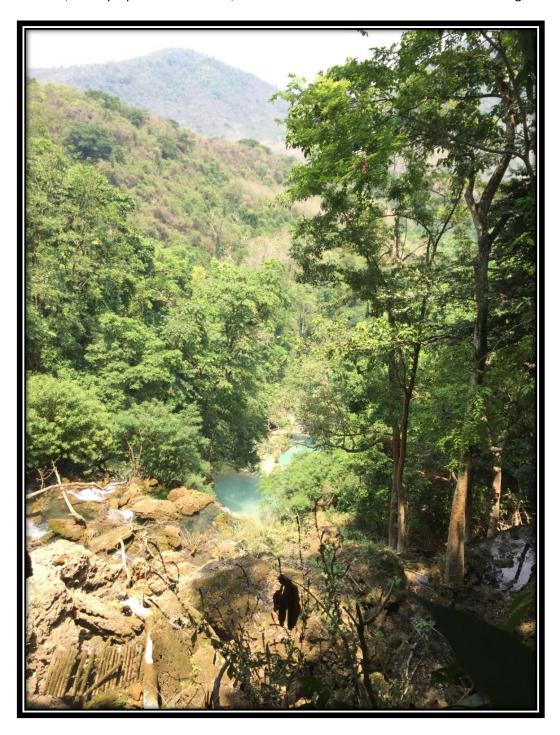


Keo Seima Protected Forest

LAOS

Kuang Si, Luang Prabang Province

From Luang Prabang in northern Laos a popular day trip is to the nearby Kuang Si Waterfall located 23km SW of the city. We didn't see any mammals (and precious few birds) but the surrounding forest appears in good condition and various signage around the head of falls attest to sightings of various fauna, mostly squirrels. However, the area could warrant a more detailed investigation.



Kuang Si

Close to the bottom of the falls is the Tat Kuang Si Bear Rescue Centre, founded by Free the Bears in collaboration with the Laos Department of Forestry in 2003. The enclosures are located on the waterfall trail, with the result that the 200,000 tourists who now visit the area each year have an opportunity to learn about the plight of these animals. Hopefully some will lend support to the charity's work to rescue and where possible rehabilitate bears and other species, often intersected smuggled to/ from China. The original enclosures were built to house 25 bears, but such is the scale of the problem that to date 60 bears have been rescued, with a record thirteen in 2018, primarily **Asiatic Black (or Moon) Bears** (*Ursus thibetanus*). This increase may also reflect action by the Laos government to increase its capacity to combat the illegal wildlife trade. In 2017 a new facility, the Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary opened to ease the strain on facilities at Kuang Si.



Tat Kuang Si Bear Sanctuary

Nam Et-Phou National Park

Formerly known as Nam Et-Phou Protected Area, earlier this year it was granted full national park status. It is located in the north-east of the country, close to the main 'highway' through Laos to Vietnam. With an area of 401,720 ha, it is the largest of Laos' protected areas, covering seven districts and three provinces (Houaphan, Luang Prabang and Xieng Khouang). Surrounded by traditional tribal communities, who still largely conduct slash and burn agricultural practices, it is a crucial sanctuary for a wealth of biodiversity. A high percentage of primary forest clings to its hills and mountains. The Et is the main river and Phou Louey the "Forever Mountain". Details of the park, it's fauna and options for exploring it can be found here: http://www.namet.org/wp/en/

One must pre-book one of several treks within the protected area, or, alternatively, to the south east of the park (and at the time of writing, not included within the national park boundary) is the location of the popular Nam River Night Safari. We elected to do a three day trek, into the heart of the protected area, overnighting first at an site set up for camera traps and, the second night, in spherical baskets called aptly 'The Nests', as every wasp and ant in the area took as read! Near the camp there is an observation tower overlooking a salt lick that attracts animals and this was to be the culmination of our three days travel. We decided not to include the Nam River Night Safari in our itinerary, as information gleaned prior to departure did not suggest there to be a particularly high return in terms of mammal sightings. NB: Each trek is graded 'moderate' to 'hard'. I don't actually remember the moderate bit. Physically it is tough going and the pace isn't really allowed to slacken. Our guide had made no provision for fresh water other than what we carried with us. The other point to bear in mind is that one travels mob-handed. We had a tracker, guide, porter, two cooks and two ecology students accompany the two of us. That's necessary, minus students, but a bigger, nosier group size does increase disturbance and reduce the chance to see anything.



The Nests

The first two days of the trek were characterised by steep ascents, culminating at the summit of Phou Pha Mai (1500 meters). This point was strategically important militarily, both during the latter period of French colonisation and, later, as part of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. One sees evidence of the supply lines, a network of paths and tracks, including possibly the one we ourselves trekked. As such, Nam Et Phou was a target for intense US bombing. There remains an estimated 80 million tonnes of unexploded ordinance and air-dropped cluster munitions in Laos, which is very sobering.

The second morning we awoke to the sounds of critically-endangered **Northern White-cheeked Gibbons** (*Nomascus leucogenys*). Even though only six or so small family groups are present in the park, they may represent one of only two viable populations left in the world (the other being a newly discovered number in northern Vietnam). Unfortunately, we couldn't see them. The terrain and distance precluded it. I was told few people ever do. Chris then went up with the guide to examine the camera traps. These confirmed the presence of **Dhole** (*Cuon alpinus*) **Marbled Cat** (*Pardofelis marmorata*) and **Clouded Leopard** (*Neofelis nebulosa*). In fact, most species that one might expect within this ecosystem still survive here. Similarly, a **Tiger** (*Panthera tigris*) print was discovered recently. Optimistic estimates had suggested up to 30 animals were still present in Nam-Et Phou. The true figure may be six to nine individuals, but still significant in today's SE Asia.

Animal signs were plentiful today. Almost immediately we came upon tracks of **Asian Brush-tailed Porcupine** (*Atherurus macrourus*) **Red Muntjac**, **Indo-Chinese Serow** (*Capricornis milneedwardsii*) and we also heard **Phayre's Langurs** (*Trachypithecus phayrei*) that remained frustratingly invisible. Further signs as to the ecological richness of these forests followed, with several **bear** nests, located high up in the trees, considerable evidence of activity by **Wild Boar** (*Sus scrofa*) and, at one point, our tracker detected prints and scratch marks of **Asian Golden Cat** (*Catopuma temminckii*) where it appeared to have tracked the boar! Close by we discovered fresh diggings made by a **Hog Badger** (*Arctonyx collaris*) and a large pile of **Civet** droppings! A **Pallas's Squirrel** was heard giving its alarm call. Finally we had quite a prolonged view of an *actual* mammal, a **Black Giant Squirrel**!

Not unexpectedly, birdlife is also very rich (December is possibly the best month to view birds here when there is less leaf cover). Burmese Nuthatch (Sitta neglecta) Flavescent Bulbul (Pycnonotus flavescens) Silver Pheasant (Lophura nycthemera) White-crowned Forktail (Enicurus leschenaulti), Black-eared Shrike-Babbler (Pteruthius melanotis) a pair of Blue-naped Pitta (Hydrornis nipalensis) noisy Buff-breasted Babblers (Pellorneum tickelli) and a gorgeous Black-throated Tit (Aegithalos concinnus) offered a tantalising glimpse of the 299 species to have been recorded in Nam Et Phou. Very little work however has been done on the herpetofauna. Thirty species are already known to exist in the park, but, notably, that includes six species of turtle, most of which are under threat.

That night we camped at 'The Nests'. The big draw for me was to spend a few hours in the nearby hide after dusk looking for animals coming to the salt lick. We had only been inside the hide for twenty minutes or so when the guide told us we had to leave as a big storm was approaching. We got back to camp just in time, but a stroke of bad luck to have come all that way and seen nothing.

At daybreak we began to trek out of the forest, having quickly organised with the guide to drive the two hours to the trailhead of the Nam River Safari, once reunited with our vehicle, so that we might have something more to show for our not inconsiderable labours! But we were to see some mammals today. Shortly after we set off we had a brief view of the largely crepuscular Inornate Squirrel (Callosciurus inornatus) often found near rivers and watercourses and an Eastern Striped Squirrel (Tamiops maritimus). We then reached the rendezvous point, but not before the rains again proceeded to dog the final days of our adventure. The weather didn't look good for the Nam River Night Safari and after discussion we accepted the local, expert advice that heavy rain would likely result in few if any sightings. And with that went our last chance to see any more mammals.



Hog Badger (Arctonyx collaris) Diggings



Bear Nests

Environmental Issues

Any visitor taking the road up to Nam Et-Phou will pass the huge construction sites that are set to create a series of large dams on the upper reaches of the Mekong. Laos is now beginning to realise its ambition to utilise the Mekong to become the primary supplier of hydroelectric power in the region. These Chinese-funded dams however represent a significant environmental risk given, according to WWF, 'the Mekong River is the world's largest inland fishery, accounting for up to 25 percent of the global freshwater catch, and provides livelihoods for at least 60 million people. With 1,100 species of freshwater fish it is second only to the Amazon River in terms of fish biodiversity.' WWF estimate that 40% of fish stocks will be destroyed. The future for Laos' three remaining Irrawaddy Dolphins, already reduced in number through the use of gill nets, has become bleak.



Dam construction on the Mekong

Despite the gloom, there are a few positives. As well as the Laotian government having upgraded the status of Nam Et Phou to a National Park, heavy fines have been introduced for poaching of endangered species (albeit local courts are reluctant to enforce the full weight of the legislation, and middlemen (primarily Vietnamese) can still find locals willing to run the risk). Laws have also been enacted to prevent illegal logging and these appear to be having success. Nam Et-Phou is providing jobs and much needed income for local communities through village development funds.

Nam Et-Phou Recommendations

Although seeing animals is a challenge at Nam Et-Phou, we noticed considerably more mammal signs on the latter half of our trek, coinciding with slightly less demanding terrain and – in places - a more open aspect. Approaching the Nests from the east rather than, as we did, from the west would still provide a chance to see occasional animals on the trails; to visit the salt lick hide and 'buy' an extra day to undertake the Nam River Night Safari. This is best undertaken during the dry season, when the river runs slower and the animals are better seen. **Muntjacs** or **Sambar** (*Rusa unicolor*) (The latter a rare animal in Laos) are the most regularly noted species. However, **Clouded Leopard**, **Golden Cat**, **Dhole** and even **Bears** have also been observed. Undertaking *two* night river safaris (especially given no two nights are the same) perhaps with a foreshortened trek in between would be the optimum choice. It may take some negotiation, but perhaps Phan can help with this.

MAMMAL LIST

(17 species seen. A further four species heard)

Lyle's Flying Fox (*Pteropus lylei*)

Theobald's Tomb Bat (Taphozous theobaldi)

Malayan Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus malayanus)

Indo-Chinese Silvered Langur (*Trachypithecus germaini*)

Phayre's Langur (heard only) (Trachypithecus phayrei)

Black-shanked Douc (Pygathrix nigripes)

Long-tailed Macaque (Macaca fascicularis)

Northern Pig-tailed Macaque (Macaca leonina)

Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon (Nomascus gabriellae)

Northern White-cheeked Gibbon (heard only) (Nomascus leucogenys).

Small Asian Mongoose (Herpestes javanicus)

Irrawaddy River Dolphin (Orcaella brevirostris)

Asian Elephant (heard only) (Elephas maximus)

Red Muntjac (heard only) (Muntiacus muntjak)

Black Giant Squirrel (Ratufa bicolor)

Inornate Squirrel (Callosciurus inornatus)

Pallas's Squirrel (Callosciurus erythraeus).

Variable Squirrel (Callosciurus finlaysonii

Cambodian Striped Squirrel (Tamiops rodolphii)

Large rat sp (Deceased) (*Rattus sp.*)

Long-tailed Giant Rat (Leopoldamys sabanus)

Eastern Striped Squirrel (Tamiops maritimus).

TRACKS AND SCAT ONLY

Asian Black Bear, Hog Badger, Civet sp (probably Large Indian), Common Palm Civet, Asian Golden Cat, Eurasian Wild Pig, Indo-Chinese Serow, Brush-tailed Porcupine.

Camera Trap Images courtesy of Nam Et-Phou NP



Clouded Leopard (Neofelis nebulosa)



Marbled Cat (Pardofelis marmorata)

BIRD LIST

256 species recorded

KEY: C. Cambodia L. Laos (only birds seen are included in the list)
Sites not mentioned in the main text of report:

Ang Trapaeng Thmor is the Sarus Crane Reserve in the Tonle Sap floodplains. Boeng Toal 'Vulture Restaurant' is in the northern plains, part of Preah Vihear Wildlife Sanctuary

Common Name	Scientific Name	
Chinese Francolin	Francolinus pintadeanus	C Tmatboey dry forest
Blue-breasted Quail	Synoicus chinensis	C Florican Grasslands
Scaly-breasted Partridge	Arborophila chloropus	C Seima Forest
Silver Pheasant	Lophura nycthemera	L Nam Et-Phou
Small Buttonquail	Turnix sylvaticus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Yellow-legged Buttonquail	Turnix dyrvaticae	C Florican Grasslands
Barred Buttonquail	Turnix suscitator	C Tmatboey dry forest
Lesser Whistling-Duck	Dendrocygna javanica	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Garganey	Spatula querquedula	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Comb Duck	Sarkidiornis melanotos	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Cotton Pygmy-Goose	Nettapus coromandelianus	C Ang Trapaeng Thinor C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Indian Spot-billed Duck	Anas poecilorhyncha	C Prek Toal
Asian Openbill	Anastomus oscitans	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Woolly-necked Stork	Ciconia episcopus	C Boeng Toal
Lesser Adjutant	Leptoptilos javanicus	C Prek Toal
Greater Adjutant	Leptoptilos dubius	C Prek Toal
Milky Stork	Mycteria cinerea	C Prek Toal
Painted Stork	Mycteria leucocephala	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Little Cormorant	Microcarbo niger	C Prek Toal
Indian Cormorant	Phalacrocorax fuscicollis	C Angkor Wat
Oriental Darter	Anhinga melanogaster	C Angkor Wat
Spot-billed Pelican	Pelecanus philippensis	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Yellow Bittern	Ixobrychus sinensis	C Prek Toal
Cinnamon Bittern	Ixobrychus cinnamomeus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Black Bittern	Ixobrychus flavicollis	C Prek Toal
Gray Heron	Ardea cinerea	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Great Egret	Ardea alba	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Intermediate Egret	Mesophoyx intermedia	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Cattle Egret	Bubulcus ibis	C Siem Reap
Chinese Pond-Heron	Ardeola bacchus	C & L Angkor & L. Prabang
Striated Heron	Butorides striata	C Prek Toal
Glossy Ibis	Plegadis falcinellus	C Prek Toal
Giant Ibis	Pseudibis gigantea	C Tmatboey dry forest
White-shouldered Ibis	Pseudibis davisoni	C Tmatboey dry forest
Black-headed Ibis	Threskiornis melanocephalus	C Prek Toal
Black-shouldered Kite	Elanus caeruleus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Black Kite	Milvus migrans	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Gray-headed Fish-Eagle	Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus	C Prek Toal
Red-headed Vulture	Sarcogyps calvus	C Boeng Toal
White-rumped Vulture	Gyps bengalensis	C Boeng Toal
Slender-billed Vulture	Gyps tenuirostris	C Boeng Toal
Crested Serpent-Eagle	Spilornis cheela	C Tmatboey dry forest
Mountain Hawk-Eagle	Nisaetus nipalensis	C Seima Forest
Changeable Hawk-Eagle	Nisaetus limnaeetus	C Tmatboey dry forest
Rufous-winged Buzzard	Butastur liventer	C Tmatboey dry forest
Crested Goshawk	Accipiter trivirgatus	C Boeng Toal
Gray-faced Buzzard	Butastur indicus	C & L Seima & Kuang Si

Eastern Marsh-Harrier	Circus spilonotus	C Florican Grasslands
White-rumped Pygmy Falcon	Polihierax insignis	C Tmatboey dry forest
Shikra	Accipiter badius	C Siem Reap
Bengal Florican	Houbaropsis bengalensis	C Florican Grasslands
Black-backed Swamphen	Porphyrio indicus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Pintail Snipe	Gallinago stenura	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Sarus Crane	Antigone antigone	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Black-winged Stilt	Himantopus himantopus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
White-headed Stint	Himantopus leucocephalus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Little Ringed Plover	Charadrius dubius	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Pacific Golden Plover	Pluvialis fulva	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Grey-headed Lapwing	Vanellus cinereus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Red-wattled Lapwing	Vanellus indicus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Pheasant-tailed Jacana	Hydrophasianus chirurgus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Bronze-winged Jacana	Metopidius indicus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Green Sandpiper	Tringa ochropus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Wood Sandpiper	Tringa glareola	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Marsh Sandpiper	Tringa stagnatilis	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Common Greenshank	Tringa Nebularia	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Long-toed Stint	Calidris subminuta	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Oriental Pratincole	Glareola maldivarum	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Small Pratincole	Glareola lactea	C Mekong River, Kampi
Rock Pigeon	Columba livia	C & L Siem Reap & LP
Red Collared-Dove	Streptopelia tranquebarica	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Little Cuckoo Dove	Macropygia ruficeps	L Nam Et-Phou
Spotted Dove	Streptopelia chinensis	C Siem Reap
Zebra Dove	Geopelia striata	C Siem Reap
Thick-billed Pigeon	Treron curvirostra	C Tmatboey dry forest
Green Imperial-Pigeon	Ducula aeneaeen	C Tmatboey dry forest C Tmatboey dry forest
Greater Coucal	Centropus sinensis	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Lesser Coucal	Centropus sinerisis Centropus bengalensis	C Florican Grasslands
Green-billed Malkoha	Phaenicophaeus tristis	
	Cacomantis sonneratii	0 1 1011 1001
Banded Bay Cuckoo Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo	Surniculus dicruroides	C Tmatboey dry forest C Seima Forest
Asian Koel		
	Eudynamys scolopaceus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Large Hawk-Cuckoo	Hierococcyx sparverioides	C Tmatboey dry forest
Indian Cuckoo	Cuculus micropterus	C Tmatboey dry forest
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Oriental Bay Owl	Phodilus badius	L Nam Et-Phou
Oriental Scops-Owl	Otus sunia	C Tmatboey dry forest
Asian Barred Owlet	Glaucidium cuculoides	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Spotted Owlet	Athene brama	C Tmatboey dry forest
Spotted Wood-Owl	Strix seloputo	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Savanna Nightjar	Caprimulgus affinis	C Tmatboey dry forest
Germain's Swiftlet	Aerodramus germani	C & L Siem Reap & LP
Brown-backed Needletail	Hirundapus giganteus	C & L Seima & NEP
House Swift	Apus nipalensis	C & L ATT & L. Prabang
Asian Palm-Swift	Cypsiurus balasiensis	C Angkor Wat
Crested Treeswift	Hemiprocne coronata	C Tmatboey dry forest
Red-headed Trogon	Harpactes erythrocephalus	L Nam Et-Phou
Eurasian Hoopoe	Upupa epops	C Tmatboey dry forest
Common Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
White-throated Kingfisher	Halcyon smyrnensis	C Prek Toal
Pied Kingfisher	Ceryle rudis	C Mekong River, Kampi
Blue-bearded Bee-eater	Nyctyornis athertoni	L Nam Et Phou
Green Bee-eater	Merops orientalis	C Tmatboey dry forest
Blue-tailed Bee-eater	Merops philippinus	C Tmatboey dry forest
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	Merops leschenaulti	C Tmatboey dry forest

Buceros bicornis Psilopogon faiostrictus	C Seima Forest
Psilonogon faiostrictus	C Coima Farant
1 Shopogori lalostrictas	C Seima Forest
Psilopogon lineatus	C Angkor Wat
Picumnus innominatus	L Kuang Si
Dendrocopos canicapillus	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Tmatboey dry forest
•	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Boeng Toal
	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Angkor Wat
	C Seima Forest
	C Seima Forest
	C Seima Forest
	L Nam Et-Phou
	L Nam Et-Phou
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	C Seima Foest
	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Tmatboey dry forest
Hemipus picatus	C Boeng Toal
Pericrocotus cinnamomeus	C Tmatboey dry forest
Pericrocotus speciosus	C Tmatboey dry forest
Tephrodornis pondicerianus	C Angkor Wat
	C & L Tmatboey & K. Si
1 -	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Angkor Wat
	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
	C Angkor Wat
	C Seima Forest
	C Seima Forest
	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
•	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C & L Seima & Kuang Si
	C Seima Forest
	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Tmatboey dry forest
1	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
	C Angkor Wat
Mirafra javanica	C Florican Grasslands
Mirafra erythrocephala	C Tmatboey dry forest
Alauda gulgula	C Florican Grasslands
Aegithalos concinnus	L Nam Et-Phou
Riperia riperia	C Prek Toal
Hirundo rustica	C Siem Reap
	L Kuang Si
1 -	L Nam Et-Phou
	C Tmatboey dry forest
	C Seima Forest
1 ** *	C Seima Forest
Pycnonotus kocosus Pycnonotus flavescens	C Seima Forest L Nam Et-Phou
	Dendrocopos mahrattensis Dendrocopos hyperythrus Picus erythropygius Picus canus Dinopium javanense Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus Mulleripicus pulverulentus Psittacula roseata Psittacula alexandri Loriculus vernalis Serilophus lunatus Eurylaimus javanicus Pitta oatesi Pteruthius Erpornis zantholeuca Coracina macei Lalage polioptera Hemipus picatus Pericrocotus cinnamomeus Pericrocotus speciosus Tephrodornis pondicerianus Aegithina tiphia Lanius christatus Lanius collurioides Oriolus chinensis Oriolus xanthornus Dicrurus macrocercus Dicrurus leucophaeus Dicrurus paradiseus Rhipidura javanica Rhipidura javanica Rhipidura aureola Hypothymis azurea Terpsiphone affinis Urocissa erythroryncha Dendrocitta vagabunda Crypsirina temia Corvus macrochynchos Mirafra javanica Mirafra erythrocephala Alauda gulgula Aegithalos concinnus Riperia riperia

Yellow-vented Bulbul	Pycnonotus goiavier	C Siem Reap
Streak-eared Bulbul	Pycnonotus blanfordi	C Angkor Wat
Gray-eyed Bulbul	lole propingua	C Seima Forest
Ochraceous Bulbul	Alophoixus ochraceus	C Seima Forest
Manchurian Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus tangorum	C Florican Grasslands
Yellow-bellied Warbler	Abroscopus superciliaris	C Seima Forest
Chestnut-crowned Warbler	Seicercus castaniceps	L Nam Et-Phou
Dusky Warbler	Phylloscopus fuscatus	C Mekong River, Kampi
Radde's Warbler	Phylloscopus schwarz	C Seima Forest
Two-barred Warbler	Phylloscopus plumbeitarus	C Seima Forest
Thick-billed Warbler	Arundinax aedon	C Florican Grasslands
Black-browed Reed-Warbler	Acrocephalus bistrigiceps	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Oriental Reed-Warbler	Acrocephalus orientalis	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Striated Grassbird	Megalurus palustris	C Florican Graslands
Lanceolated Warbler	Locustella lanceolata	C Mekong River, Kampi
Zitting Cisticola	Cisticola juncidis	C Florican Grasslands
Golden-headed Cisticola	Cisticola exilis	C Florican Grasslands
Common Tailorbird	Orthotomus sutorius	C & L Angkor Wat & L.P.
Cambodian Tailorbird	Orthotomus chaktomuk	C ENDEMIC Phnom Penh*
Brown Prinia	Prinia polychroa	C Tmatboey dry forest
Rufescent Prinia	Prinia rufescens	C Tmatboey dry forest
Gray-breasted Prinia	Prinia hodgsonii	C Tmatboey dry forest
Yellow-bellied Prinia	Prinia flaviventris	C Mekong River, Kampi
Plain Prinia	Prinia inornata	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Chestnut-capped Babbler	Timalia pileata	C Boeng Toal
Pin-striped Tit-Babbler	Mixornis gularis	C Seima Forest
Gray-faced Tit-Babbler	Mixornis kelleyi	C Seima Forest
Scaly-crowned Babbler	Malacopteron cinereum	C Seima Forest
Buff-breasted Babbler	Pellorneum tickelli	L Nam Et-Phou
White-crested Laughingthrush	Garrulax leucolophus	C Tmatboey dry forest
White-rumped Shama	Copsychus malabaricus	C Tmatboey dry forest
Asian Brown Flycatcher	Muscicapa dauurica	C Angkor Wat
Oriental Magpie-Robin	Copsychus saularis	C Siem Reap
Hainan Blue-Flycatcher	Cyornis hainanus	C Angkor Wat
Taiga Flycatcher	Ficedula albicilla	C Angkor Wat
Verditer Flycatcher	Eumyias thalassinus	L Kuang Si
White-throated Rock-Thrush	Monticola gularis	C Seima Forest
Blue Rock Thrush	Monticola solitarius	C Angkor Wat
Bluethroat	Luscinia scevica	C Florican Grasslands
Stejneger's Stonechat	Saxicola stejnegeri	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Pied Bushchat	Saxicola caprata	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
White-crowned Forktail	Enicurus leschenault	L Nam Et-Phou
Black-collared Starling	Gracupica nigricollis	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Chestnut-tailed Starling	Sturnia malabarica	C Tmatboey dry forest
Asian Pied Starling	Gracupica contra	C Florican Grasslands
Vinous-breasted Starling	Acridotheres burmannicus	C Boeng Toal
Common Myna	Acridotheres tristis	C Siem Reap
Great Myna	Acridotheres tristis Acridotheres grandis	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Common Hill Myna	Gracula religiosa	C Tmatboey dry forest
Blue-winged Leafbird	Chloropsis cochinchinensis	C Seima Forest
Golden-fronted Leafbird	Chloropsis aurifrons	C Tmatboey dry forest
Asian Fairy-bluebird	Irena puella	C Seima Forest
Plain Flowerpecker	Dicaeum minullum	C Seima Forest
Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	Dicaeum cruentatum	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Crimson Sunbird		L Kuang Si
Purple-naped Sunbird	Aethopyga siparaja	L Kuang Si
	Hypogramma hypogrammicum Cinnyris asiaticus	<u> </u>
Purple Sunbird Olive-backed Sunbird	-	C Angker Wet
	Cinnyris jugularis	C Angkor Wat C & L Angkor & NEP
Forest Wagtail	Dendronanthus indicus	

Mekong Wagtail	Motacilla samveasnae	C Mekong River, Kampi
Eastern Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla tschutschensis	C Prek Toal
Paddyfield Pipit	Anthus rufulus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Red-throated Pipit	Anthus cervinus	C Florican Grasslands
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	C & L Siem Reap & L.P.
Plain-backed Sparrow	Passer flaveolus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	C & L Siem Reap & L. P.
Streaked Weaver	Ploceus manyar	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Baya Weaver	Ploceus philippinus	C Ang Trapaeng Thmor
Asian Golden Weaver	Ploceus hypoxanthus	C Mekong River, Kampi
Red Avadavat	Amandava amandava	C Florican Grasslands
White-rumped Munia	Lonchura striata	C Tmatboey dry forest
Scaly-breasted Munia	Lonchura punctulata	C Siem Reap



White-shouldered Ibis (Pseudibis davisoni)



Oriental Scops Owl (Otus madagascariensis)

REPTILE LIST

Impressed Tortoise (Manouria impressa)

Collared Butterfly Lizard (Leiolepis belliana)

Tokay Gecko (Gekko gecko)

Spiny-tailed House Gecko (Hemidactylus frenatus)

Spotted Flying Dragon (Draco maculatus)

Oriental Garden Lizard (Calotes versicolor)

Bronze Mabuya (Eutropis macularia)

Speckled Forest Skink (Eutropis macularia)

Common Sun Skink (Eutropis multifasciata)

Common Striped Skink (Lipinia vittigera)

Common Mock Viper (Psammodynastes pulverulentus)



Impressed Tortoise (Manouria impressa) (VU) Kuang Si, Laos

This report is a personal account. I have tried to ensure information is correct as at July 2019. Any errors are mine.

Keith Millar

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