

Trip Report - Vietnam langurs and Philippine tarsier

We just came back from a 7 week holiday around SE Asia that was definitely not a mammal-watching trip. But as we happened to be visiting Bohol in the Philippines and as four places we chose to visit in Vietnam have local rare langurs, we did have a look for these primates and have a few notes to share. So just **10 species** here, though 8 lifers for us!

Bohol - Philippine tarsier

We contacted Habitat Bohol and asked if Julius could guide us (see Jon's trip report), and after a bit of faffing they sorted this out. It's possible the tarsier habitat is getting harder to find, as Julius took us on a four hour night walk through the forest in search of them, including a torrential rain storm in the middle. We spotted two **Philippine tarsiers** and an **Asian palm civet**. We spotted them 20 minutes in, so perhaps the other 3.5 hours was Julius feeling like he ought to spot something for us himself! Note: Raja Sikatuna is a nice spot, and it seems very easy to see **Philippine colugos** there, as well as **crab-eating macaques**.

Cat Ba island - Cat Ba (golden-headed) langur



We got very lucky here. The local operator we picked for our touristy Ha Long Bay tour said she might be able to get us a speedboat and permission to look for langurs. So this is what

we did, early one morning, and in a part of Cat Ba island's convoluted south coast that isn't open to tourist boats we did find a group of 9 **golden-headed langurs** in a perfect spot and watched them for most of an hour. We also saw a **maritime striped squirrel** on a hike on the island, and **rhesus macaques** on (duh) Monkey Island.

A different group of langurs is occasionally seen by tourists kayaking or chilling out on boats in a part of Ha Long Bay that's on the east coast of Cat Ba island, but that seems to be very much hit and miss. Apparently the handful of langur groups on Cat Ba have small territories and most are effectively cut off from each other - a bit worrying for the viability of the species.

I can share the detail of this tour operator with anyone interested.

Van Long nature reserve, Ninh Binh - Delacour langur



It seems that if you go on a boat trip between 7-9am or 4-6pm here, you have a very good chance of spotting these nifty langurs. The boatmen and women know their habits well and will try and get tourists a sighting. It's very possible with binoculars to spot the monkeys on the cliffs from across the lake on the roadside, before committing to a boat trip for a better view.

We saw a group of four adults **Delacour langurs**. Also on the boat trip we surprised a pair of **yellow-throated martens** and got a great view of them.

Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park - Hatinh langur

Here we got lucky with a tip, as our guesthouse owner had seen a group three days ago and his understanding is that they seldom wander more than a couple of hundred metres in a day. Again, the first and last two hours of daylight are when all these langurs are active, and an hour before dusk at about the same place he saw them (Mooc Springs, on the east road into the park beyond Dark Cave) we saw a small group of **Hatinh langurs** high up in the trees. No photos, as they were in thick canopy and we really only saw them when they leapt.

Son Tra peninsula, Da Nang - Red-shanked douc

Ironically, what seemed the easiest langur turned out to be our only miss. The day we arrived in Da Nang it started pouring with rain. It rained torrentially the whole of the next day. And the next day. It turned out that the rain had caused a couple of landslides to block the roads onto the peninsula too. And then we had to go home. Bum.

It's perhaps just worth mentioning what a local bird-watching guide advised us: it should be pretty easy to find these langurs, especially on a weekend; just get a motorbike or a taxi and drive along the roads around Son Tra until you see a group of people with bit telephoto lenses. They are tourists watching the langurs.

Hope this helps!



