

Biodiversity Record: First sighting of Raffles' banded langur at Bukit Timah Nature Reserve in 40 years

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Subject: Raffles' banded langur, *Presbytis femoralis* (Mammalia: Primates: Cercopithecidae).

Subject identified by: Andie Ang.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, summit of Bukit Timah, 31 May 2026, around 0900 hr.

Habitat: Primary hill dipterocarp forest.

Observers: Alvin Wong and Chris Devillers.

Observations: An adult male was observed on the summit from the eastward facing observation platform. The individual was feeding on young leaves and fruits in the trees (Figs. 1, 2). Some movements were seen in the trees nearby but there was no positive identification of the presence of other conspecifics. The langur moved off after 10 minutes. At the time, no long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*) were seen in the vicinity.



Fig. 1. In-situ lateral view of adult male langur eating leaves. (Photograph by: Alvin Wong).



Fig. 2. A silhouette of the lone langur. (Photograph by: Alvin Wong).

Remarks: The Raffles' banded langur population in Singapore was long restricted to the Central Catchment Nature Reserve (CCNR) following the death of the last individual in Bukit Timah Nature Reserve (BTNR) in 1987 (Yang & Lua, 1988; Ang et al., 2021).

In recent years, however, langurs have begun venturing into areas outside the CCNR. In September 2017, a langur was found dead on the Bukit Timah Expressway (BKE) just 70 m south of the Eco-Link@BKE; dash cam footage revealed two langurs running across the BKE from the center divider away from BTNR, likely a failed attempt to reach BTNR across the six-lane dual carriageway, with one struck by a vehicle (Ang & Jabbar, 2022). In April 2021, a langur was sighted in Dairy Farm Nature Park, adjacent to BTNR (Khoo et al., 2021). In December 2022, two langurs were seen in Rifle Range Nature Park; one identified as a male while the other was of undetermined sex (Douay & Ang, 2023). Camera trap footage from the Eco-Link@BKE in October 2023 captured a langur using the bridge on two occasions, though it remains unclear whether the same individual was recorded and whether it successfully reached BTNR (Chong & Khairi, 2024).

Consequently, the observation herein featured represents the first photographic evidence of the species' return to this site in nearly 40 years, presumably via the Eco-Link@BKE or the Rifle Range Flyover. More field monitoring is needed to determine whether more than one langur now resides in BTNR, with the ultimate hope that additional langurs will recolonise the area and establish a viable breeding population there.

Literature cited:

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