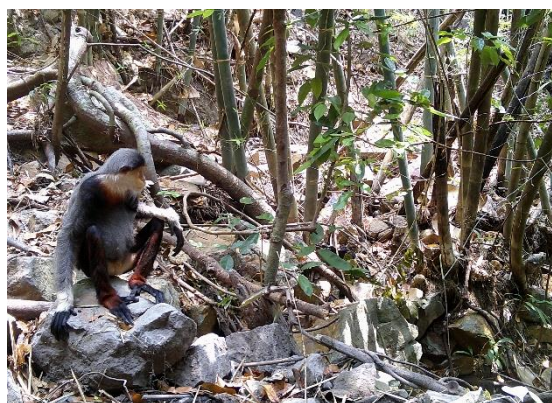
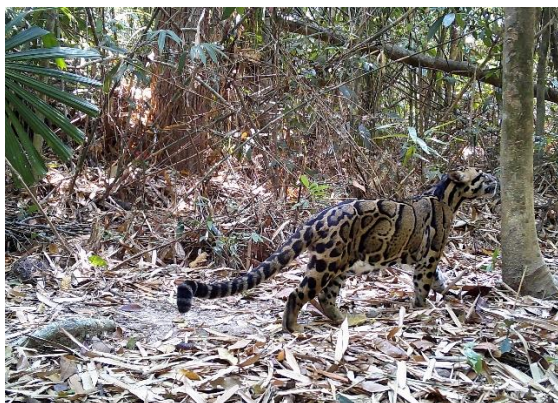


## Biodiversity survey reveals priority habitat for critically endangered large-antlered muntjac, among other species



A new camera-trap biodiversity survey in Virachey National Park, Cambodia, has revealed the most crucial habitat conservation areas for the critically endangered large-antlered muntjac, amongst other target species including the Sunda pangolin, red-shanked douc langur, sun bear, clouded leopard, green peafowl and Asian golden cat.

Virachey National Park harbours Cambodia's only known population of large-antlered muntjac, a species that was discovered as recently as 1994. The survey results indicate the densest locations of the species, which will now be prioritised for targeted studies to help better inform species population, range and connectivity needs.

The survey was led by the Cambodia team of international nature conservation charity, [Fauna & Flora](#), and Cambodia's Ministry of Environment, with support from the Ratanakiri and Steung Treng Provincial Departments of Environment and local communities.

A total of 66 cameras were deployed, recording a total of 2,494 separate encounters, comprising 36 mammals, 21 bird and two reptile species. Of the 59 species detected, 16 are categorised as threatened on the IUCN Red List: three Critically Endangered, two Endangered and 11 Vulnerable. A further three species are Near Threatened.

The aim of the survey was to maximise encounter rates with important biodiversity monitoring species, and better understand their distribution throughout Virachey National Park. As one of the southwesternmost areas of the Annamite Mountains range, the park is a key habitat for endemic flora and fauna not found in wider Cambodia and, despite high levels of historic logging, remains a key biodiversity refuge - but it is still relatively understudied.

Fauna & Flora is working with local partners and communities to strengthen the management of Virachey National Park, survey its biodiversity and support the livelihoods of local communities living near the park.

Vanny Lou, Programme Manager, Fauna & Flora in Cambodia, comments: "Virachey National Park is full of incredible species and habitats that are in vital need of protection. But, like any protected area, in order to have any positive impact for nature, people and the climate, Virachey needs to be effectively managed. This camera-trap survey has been essential for helping us to map the presence of target species across the park and will inform our conservation priorities going forward."

In July 2023, Virachey National Park was expanded from 332,500 ha to 405,766 ha, incorporating the biodiversity conservation corridor into the protected area. The survey looked at these two areas separately, and confirmed the biodiversity corridor still contains notable levels of nature despite its more

degraded state, and therefore has conservation value as an expanded area of the park. The biodiversity data has been used to inform the zonation of the whole park.

As well as helping to identify species, the survey has gone some way to outline the threats to biodiversity in the park, including the impact of domestic dogs and snaring. Through the camera traps, two threatened species were detected with missing limbs: an Asiatic black bear and a northern pig-tailed macaque.

The survey also provides indications of the value of the protected area to the local communities living closest to it. All camera records of people within the park showed them collecting non-timber forest products, such as high-valued malva nuts, suggesting that these areas may hold economic value for local communities in addition to biodiversity value, which should be considered when planning conservation actions.

Vanny Lou continues: “Indigenous Peoples and local communities are the most important stakeholders in our project planning and implementation. Given that local people have direct dependence on natural resources, their knowledge is essential to ensure effective biodiversity conservation outcomes, that are also sustainable, as they support people too. Particularly in the expanded conservation area of the park, outreach and livelihood activities will be key.

“Fauna & Flora, along with its key consortium partners, aims to further strengthen the park management and promote and diversify livelihoods of local people through identification and promotion of agricultural commodities and non-timber forest products that are conservation-friendly and locally beneficial, while also identifying sustainable markets for the products.”

For more information on Fauna & Flora’s work in Virachey National Park, please visit: <https://www.fauna-flora.org/projects/conserving-virachey-national-parks-forest-ecosystem/>

## **ENDS**

Full survey results available on request. Camera trap images available here:

**Image caption 1:** Clouded leopard © Fauna & Flora

**Image caption 2:** Red-shanked douc langur © Fauna & Flora

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### **About Fauna & Flora**

Fauna & Flora is a nature conservation charity protecting the diversity of life on Earth. For the survival of species and habitats, the planet and people.

As the world’s first international conservation charity, Fauna & Flora has been shaping best practice in community-focused conservation for over 120 years. Today, the charity works closely with local conservation partners in almost 50 countries to protect habitats, revive the ocean, reduce extinctions, stop illegal wildlife trade, combat climate change and influence global policy and corporate sustainability. [www.fauna-flora.org](http://www.fauna-flora.org)