Conservation

Banded langurs make “coughing” sounds (“whuh whuh”), which are alarm calls when sensing danger nearby.

Andie Ang writes on the first collaboration between Singapore and Malaysia to conserve the Asian colobine monkey that Sir Stamford Raffles discovered in 1822.

Photos by Nick Baker
The Banded Langur (Presbytis femoralis) is a species of Asian colobine monkey (family Cercopithecidae: subfamily Colobinae) which is characterised by having a ruminant-like stomach, much like that of a cow. Colobine monkeys also have molars that are adapted for shearing tough food like leaves. Thus they exhibit an enhanced ability to consume foliage, but they also take in significant amounts of other plant parts such as fruits and flowers. They are day-active and arboreal, rarely descending to the ground. The Banded Langur is distributed in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, and Indonesia. Its other common names include Banded Leaf Monkey and Banded Surili. Three subspecies are currently recognised: Raffles’ Banded Langur (P. f. femoralis), Robinson’s Banded Langur (P. f. robinsoni), and East Sumatran Banded Langur (P. f. percura).

The Raffles’ Banded Langur was first discovered by Sir Stamford Raffles in Singapore in 1822, making Singapore its type locality. It is also found in Johor and Pahang states in Malaysia. As a subspecies, it is listed as endangered due to habitat loss, severely fragmented populations, and a restricted distribution. The population size in Malaysia is unknown, but assumed to be larger than the Singapore population because of its wider distribution in Malaysia.

In Singapore, it is listed as critically endangered and is only found in the Central Catchment Nature Reserve with an estimated population size of at least 40 individuals. At least six infants were observed from 2008-2010, with birth seasons observed in June-July for three consecutive years. Despite an apparent increase in the number of individuals, the population in Singapore shows low mitochondrial genetic variability, indicating a risk of inbreeding.

At a workshop held at the Singapore Zoo from 1-2 August 2016, 31 partners from 15 organisations came together to develop a Species Action Plan for the Raffles’ Banded Langur. They included representatives from Nature Society Singapore (NSS), Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS), National Parks Board (NParks), Jane Goodall Institute Singapore (JGIS), National University of Singapore (NUS), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) Primate Specialist Group, Malaysian Nature Society Johor, Department of Infants are born white in colour with black fur across the shoulders and from the back of the head to the tail.

As the infant grows, the black bands envelop the body, leaving the tummy and insides of the thighs white. Photo: Andie Ang

**F A C T S H E E T**

**SPECIES NAME**
Presbytis femoralis femoralis

**COMMON NAMES**
Raffles’ Banded Langur, Banded Leaf Monkey, Banded Surili

**BODY MASS**
6 kg

**BODY LENGTH WITHOUT TAIL**
up to 59 cm

**T A I L L E N G T H**
up to 84 cm

**ESTIMATED GROUP SIZE**
5-12

**ESTIMATED HOME RANGE**
20 hectares

As the infant grows, the black bands envelop the body, leaving the tummy and insides of the thighs white. Photo: Andie Ang

Infants are born white in colour with black fur across the shoulders and from the back of the head to the tail.
In Singapore, it is listed as critically endangered and is only found in the Central Catchment Nature Reserve with an estimated population size of at least 40 individuals.