

Spotted Linsang *Prionodon pardicolor* at Nam Et - Phou Louey National Biodiversity Conservation Area, Laos

Marcus A. H. CHUA & Kelvin K. P. LIM
nhmchua@nus.edu.sg (Chua), nhmlimkp@nus.edu.sg (Lim)

Observers: Marcus A. H. Chua, Kelvin K. P. Lim, Ng Bee Choo and others.

Photographs by: Marcus A. H. Chua.

Subject identified by: Marcus A. H. Chua, Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location: Bank of Nam Neun River upstream of Ban Sonkhoua, Nam Et - Phou Louey National Biodiversity Conservation Area, Houaphan Province, Laos.

Elevation: About 550 metres.

Habitat: Secondary vegetation dominated by banana stands, and interspersed with wooden huts (the area was formerly a village).

Date and time: 8 January 2017, 22:00 hrs.

Identity of subject: Spotted Linsang, *Prionodon pardicolor* (Mammalia: Carnivora: Prionodontidae).

Description of record: A lone Spotted Linsang, with an estimated head-body length of 30 centimetres, was spotlighted resting in thick vegetation about 1.7 metres above the ground (Fig. 1). After about five minutes of quiet observation, the animal then moved away from this perch and then rested at an open intersection of a branch (Fig. 2). In both cases it was seated with its tail curved in front of its body. It then climbed with a fluid, slinky movement to a spot about 2.5 metres above the ground, where it remained undisturbed for at least an hour. The animal responded to lip-smacking sounds made by local guides by rapidly twisting and jerking its head and body each time such sounds were made. No vocalization by the linsang was heard throughout the observation, and it moved without much disturbance to surrounding vegetation.

Approximately an hour later, the same individual (recognized from markings and a tick on the left ear in photographs) was seen moving along the top of the midrib of a banana leaf about 30 metres from the initial sighting location (Fig. 3). When viewed with a white LED headlamp from a distance of about 10 metres it had a yellow eyeshine which was dim compared to a common palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) that was also seen in the vicinity about 10 metres away. However, the eyeshine of the animal was not apparent when viewed close up at a distance of less than 5 metres.



Fig. 1. Original sighting location. © Marcus A. H. Chua



Fig. 2. Second resting position. © Marcus A. H. Chua

Remarks: Despite a broad geographic distribution the Spotted Linsang is typically rarely recorded by conventional mammal survey methods (Johnson et al., 2009; Gaubert, 2009). Its range includes Nepal, Bhutan, northeast India, southern China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar, and it is documented at elevations of up to 3308 metres (Duckworth et al. 2016). It occurs in a variety of habitats, from lowland evergreen to montane forest, and mosaic forest comprising grassland, scrub or bamboo, and it is noted to be tolerant of habitat disturbance. It is listed as a species of Least Concern in the IUCN Red List (Duckworth et al. 2016).

In Laos, there are published records in Xe Sap National Protected Area in southern Laos, Nakai-Nam Theun National Protected Area in central-eastern Laos, and the Nam Et - Phou Louey National Biodiversity Conservation Area in the north (Duckworth 1997, Johnson et al. 2006, Coudrat et al. 2014, Gray et al. 2014), with unpublished records from about 12 other areas (J. W. Duckworth *in litt.* 2017). A local guide, who works in Nam Et - Phou Louey National Biodiversity Conservation Area, remarked that the species is commonly seen.



Fig. 3. Moving along the midrib of a banana leaf.

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