



21 days Sichuan mammal watching tour report

Time: 21 Oct.-11 Nov. 2018

Participants: Jason, James & Tang Jun

Route:

Chengdu-Longcanggou-Labahe-Wolong-Ruoergai-
Tangjiahe-Foping-Xi'an-Chengdu

Reported by: Tang Jun



This is a recce tour for a UK based mammal watching tour company thus we keep the itinerary very flexible and stay little bit longer at each important site. Total we did this regular 15 days Sichuan mammal watching tour at 22 days and drove more than 5000km. At last we counted 38 species of mammals not include any bats.



21 Nov. The flight landed on time in early afternoon then we straight drive 3 hours to Longcanggou forest park and check in Hulin Hotel to take a rest. Right after the dinner inside the hotel, we drove into the forest park located just 5km away. About 6km after the main entrance of the park, we saw a big beautiful boar wandering around right in the middle of the road and stayed few minutes in front of our head light. We keep driving up slow to spot animals till the upper area of the park where we got a Masked Palm Civet stay in a tree right beside the road for a long time. Then we slowly drove back down hill and back

to hotel to rest.

22 Nov. We start at 0530am and it was raining and road was very mud and slip. But we were using a very good TOYOTA 4WD landcruiser so all no problem. Till the upper area of the park where is about 15km from the entrance, we saw a wet Red Panda across the road into the bamboo, but surprised us, he climbed up along a tree very soon and eating the red berries for about 20 minutes. Due to the bad weather, we decided to move to Labahe Nature Reserve where located about 3-4 hours drive. About 3 km before the inside hotel, we stop to scan the mountain at other side of the river, we saw 3 Sambar at the open area of the forest. After check in the hotel and after dinner, we try to drive into the core area of the park, but was stopped by the security guard. Thus we took the main road along the river down back to the main gate to scan the mammals and saw several Confucian Niviventers not far from the ticket gate where we saw many Tibetan Macaque in the afternoon when we drove in.



23 Nov We start at 0600 and try to drive into the core area where supposed be open at 0800 and should use park's shuttle bus, very lucky, the barrier of the entrance not down so we straight to drive inside and start our mission to look for the main target here: Red Panda. It was foggy and little bit raining. We walked the trail around the small lake at lower area and also the higher one, and drove up to the end (from barrier to the end one way is 9km) where is the station of the cable car and tried another dust road which is 2km.

At the watching platform (5km from entrance), we scoped several Tarkin walked uphill and a Red Panda was picking berries from the ground.

The upper loop trail, according to the lady who did daily sweeping, usually will can see 2-3 Red Panda running along the trail but we did not although we did the loop two times.

The other 2km dust road is good and at about 1.5km, we found a Red Panda feeding in a red berry tree for about 10 minutes then he down and disappeared in the bamboo.

We back to hotel later afternoon for a rest and after dinner we did a night drive along the 3km road till the last hotel and we saw Red and White & Complex-toothed Flying Squirrels.

24 Nov. We started at 0600am again and drive into the core area and the barrier still up. But this morning still foggy and we did not have that much to see except the Sambar beside the road. So we decided to carry on to the next destination to Wolong. Stay at local simple but clean hostel named Tianchen. We took a rest without night drive tonight.



25 Nov. WE stared at 0500am when still very dark and after 15km later, here we slow down and scan the riverside, hill slope area, where we saw Chinese Goral. When lights came out, we were at the K80 area, we scanned 5 Sambar in the mountain slopes. And upper area of the Balangshan area, we saw Siberian Weasel and Glover's Pika. We tried Blue Sheep at the regular site but it is too foggy and not succeed. We drove to the top where is 4500m but almost nothing up there. We came back to hotel later afternoon for a 2 hours rest and after dinner, we started again for the night drive. This was a great night drive and mainly between K56-K66 area, we saw several Chinese Gorals lying on the ground, a very good view of Chinese Serow feeding in the forest, a Red Panda feeding in a red berry tree very close to the road, we tried two times to look for the Leopard Cat which is supposed not that difficult at this area, but we did not succeed to see alive one but two dead ones killed by the vehicle.



26 Nov we start at about 0600 and drove back to K56-66 area try the Leopard Cat in the dawn but we still can not find it but several Chinese Goral and Chinese Serow. After discussed together, we decide to carry on rather than stay at Wolong for another night. So we back to hotel and had something in the restaurant, we drove toward to Qinghai/Tibet Plateau. We stopped at a small town named Shuama Lukou for overnight, and here has a disused road leads uphill to a high pass and worth to try for a night drive. Yes, we were right and we saw our first Asian Badger running in front

of us for about 20 seconds and then he decided to turn right and down hill into the forest.

27 Nov Actually I wanted to try the disused road again in early morning before we drive toward Ruoergai, but at last we agreed to carry on and later depart from the simple hotel. We saw 2 pair of Red Deer at different mountain slopes around K230 (about 100k before Hongyuan and 230k before Ruoergai) and at K55, we drove into the grassland along a dirt road and 2 kilometers later we were at a small pass here we saw 3 Siberian Roe Deer and at K30 (30k before Ruoergai) here we saw our second Asian Badger in the night. At last check in Ruoergai hotel and rest.

28 Nov - 1 Dec. Total we stayed at Ruoergai for 5 nights and did a lot researching and re-visit many time of the regular sites for mammals during the day time and night time.

Quarries:

There are two quarries located northwest of Ruoergai. One located at 30k and another one 45km.



Both are good for the Chinese Mountain Cat and Pallas's Cat. But at the moment, the undergoing railway between Chengdu and Lanzhou will cross the 30k quarry area and there are some workers camping/working nearby already and this is the reason we did not see the Mountain Cat at the 30k quarry but only the Pallas' Cat seen two times. The 45k Quarry looks even better and worth to try and we tried many times and no seen of the Mountain Cat but the Pallas's Cat.

The third Quarry located just about 6km east of Ruoergai town and here is the only site where we saw the Chinese Mountain Cat during the night. But here we did not see the Pallas's Cat.

The other site around Ruoergai still include:

Baxi Forest which is located at about 25k east of Ruoergai; 30k south of Ruoergai and take the dirt road drive into the grassland if the barrier is up;



During the stay at Ruoergai, we saw mammals as follows:

Pallas's Cat 3 times, Chinese Mountain Cat 2 times, Asian Budger 2 times, Chinese Serow 1 time, Red & Roe & Sika Deer several times, Marbled Polecat 2 times, Wolf 2 times, Tibetan & Red Fox a lot, Boar 2 times, Woolly Hare a lot, many Plateau Pikas, Tibetan Gazzelle 1 time.



2 Nov At last we decided to move from Ruoergai to Tangjiahe, another main area for some quality mammals. So we leave Ruoergai in the morning after the last check at the third quarry where we had an excellent view of a wolf then we drove about 8 hours total 380km into Tangjiahe Nature Reserve and stay inside good hotel for another 6 nights.(2-7 Nov)



The sites where to look for mammals is use the hotel as basecamp.

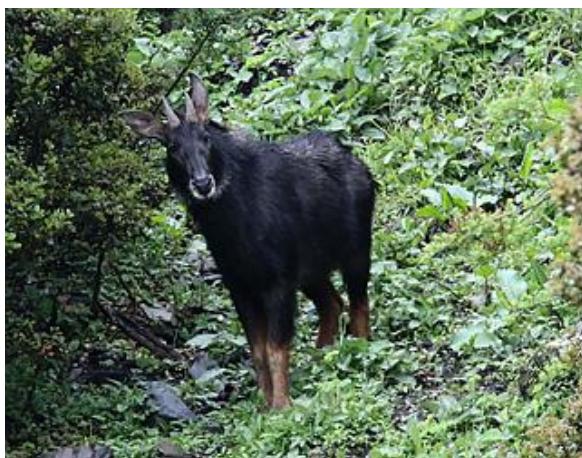
Loop boardwalk beside the hotel (total 2.5km long) and we did at least 5 times, this normally before early depart or before back to room to sleep.

Down from hotel till the bridge total about 10km, we did many many times for night drive;

8km after hotel we did 3 times, we take the shuttle bus up

there and walked down along the road.

Another valley by means of shuttle bus to Motianling station, we did 2 times; This is a very good



section but not allowed by walk and drive during the night time. Also this area not allowed to drive inside by our own vehicle. We all agreed this will be an excellent part if can do night drive for this 12km. I know local ranger saw Golden Cat here.

Here list out the mammals we saw during the stay at Tangjiahe NR:

Golden Snub-nosed Monkey 1 time, Ferret Badger for 3 times; Hog Badger many times, Malayan Porcupine 1 time for 4 adults, lots of Tarkin every drive and walk, Chinese Serow 3 times, Chinese

Goral 5 times, Leopard Cat 1 time for 2 cats, Tufted Deer 2 time and one with good photo chance, Reeve's Muntjac a lot every night, Yellow-throated Marten 2 times, Masked Palm Civet at about 3 times every night drive, Boar several times, Pere David's Rock Squirrel few times, Complex-toothed Flying Squirrel 2 times. Tibetan Macaque many times.

8 Nov Today was a travelling day as about 420km drive from Tangjiahe to Foping, another main habitat for Giant Panda. We off the main road and only 5 minutes get a view for the Crested Ibis for James then back to the main road arrive at Panda Hotel at Foping. After dinner we did the night drive uphill into the famous Qinling Mountain, but be honest, we did not see anything but one Complex-toothed Flying Squirrel.



9 Nov then next morning we had a later start as the place where we go for the Golden Monkey is opened at 0830. We spent about 1 hour with the monkeys and then drive around for the Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel which we had a good photo chance. After that we move to Xi'an and check in hotel and rest.



10 Nov culture visiting of the warriors then start drive back toward Chengdu.

11 Nov drove to Chengdu airport and Jason & James jump into the airplane fly back to UK

"Thanks for these Tang Jun and thank you for a wonderful trip. We really appreciated all of your hard work and are looking forward to travelling with you again. Please let us know if you are ever able to arrange a giant panda trip and I will contact you as soon as I have guests for a mammal tour. Thanks again and best wishes to you and your family. Jason"

Here is the full list of the 38 mammals we saw during the trip which looks is a good number but we do missed Rhesus Macaque,Blue Sheep,Asian Black Bear ,Siberian Weasel and Forest Musk Deer.

Labahe & Longcanggou: L Wolong: W Ruoergai: R Tangjiahe: T Foping: F

Top ten mammal in BLUE

Name	Site	Name	Site
Pallas's Cat	R	Tibetan Gazelle	R
Chinese Mountain Cat	R	Takin	LT
Leopard Cat	WT	Chinese Serow	WRT
Grey Wolf	R	Chinese Goral	T
Tibetan Fox	R	Wild Boar	LRT
Red Fox	R	Golden Snub-nosed Monkey	TF
Red Panda	LW	Tibetan Macaque	LT
Yellow-throated Marten	T	Plateau Pika	R
Mountain Weasel	W	Glover's Pika	W
Marbled Polecat	R	Malayan Poccupine	T
Masked Palm Civet	LWTF	Palllas' Squirrel	L
Greater Hog Badger	T	Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel	F
Small-toothed Ferret Badger	T	Swinhoe's Striped Squirrel	T
Asian Badger	R	Red & White Flying Squirrel	L
Red Deer	R	Complex-toothed Flying Squirrel	LT
Sika Deer	R	Confucian Niviventer	L
Siberian Roe Deer	R	Chinese Zokor	R
Sambar	LW		
Tufted Deer	WT		
Reeves' Muntjac	T		

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