

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

Unusual aggressive behaviour of Hatinh langurs (*Trachypithecus hatinhensis*)

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A 3 to 4 ha forest area on karst in Huong Hoa District, Quang Tri Province, Vietnam was protected by the villagers for ritual reasons. It is surrounded by fields and has no direct contact with more distant karst forest areas. According to the villagers, a group of Hatinhlangurs (*Trachypithecus hatinhensis*) settled there 8 years ago, apparently over a long distance through fields.

The group, consisting of one male and 2 to 3 females, lives mainly in an area of about 1 ha in the forest, near a concrete road leading to a village.

Since July 2020 the male has been behaving extremely aggressively. Since then, the group has been staying mostly near the road and as soon as pedestrians or moped riders pass the spot, the male often jumps from a lurking position on a tree near the road onto the passing or driving person and tries to bite (Fig. 1, 2). In several cases there have been bite wounds, some of which had to be treated by sewing the wounds.



Fig.1. A Hatinhlangur male lurks on a tree along the road for passers-by. Photo: Hoang Tao.



Fig.2. A ranger from the forest protection department is piloting a motorcycle passed the aggressive Hatinhlangur. Photo: Hoang Tao.

Volunteers from the villages along the road were available to try to drive the aggressive animal into the woods at this section of the road, which is 500 to 600 m long (Fig. 3). The command of the border troops stationed near the border to Laos was requested to secure the road section with dogs. Banners were erected to warn the people (Fig. 4).

Human-primate conflicts are relatively low in Vietnam and especially concern crop-raiding by macaques. Aggressive behavior of macaques is also known from several tourist sites, due to the misconduct of tourists to feed the macaques. Langurs are usually shy because of the high hunting pressure and as leaf-eating primates they are not attracted by feeding, with a subsequent aggressiveness.

The cause of the behavior of the Hatinhlangur is unclear, but could possibly have been triggered by an aggressive behavior of humans towards a Hatinhlangur female. The catch of a young, or even the killing of a female and the associated removal of a young may be a trigger. In the Hatinhlangur groups at the Endangered Primate Rescue Center, which are kept as captive breeding population for reintroduction projects, the males often show a very aggressive behavior when a female is harassed with young.

It is hoped that this problem can be solved without harm to the people and the langurs.



Fig.3. Border guards, rangers and villagers protect passers-by from the Hatinhlangur's aggressiveness. Photo: Hoang Tao.



Fig.4. Banners warn passers-by on the road section of the Hatinhlangur's aggressiveness. Photo: Hoang Tao.