

PRIMATES OF VIETNAM **ON THE BRINK**

JAYAPRAKASH BOJAN OFFERS A UNIQUE LOOK AT SEVERAL HIGHLY ENDANGERED AND VERY RARELY OBSERVED MONKEYS OF INDOCHINA

*The Red shanked Douc
Langur *Pygathrix nemaeus*
is critically endangered
and found exclusively
in Central Vietnam on a
seaside mountain.*



■ *Delacour's Langur*
Trachypithecus delacouri - rarest of the rarest. Critically endangered and predominantly arboreal, this species occurs in a very restricted area of north-central Vietnam that totals about 6,000 sq/km. Population is approx 200 - 250.

TEXT AND PHOTOS
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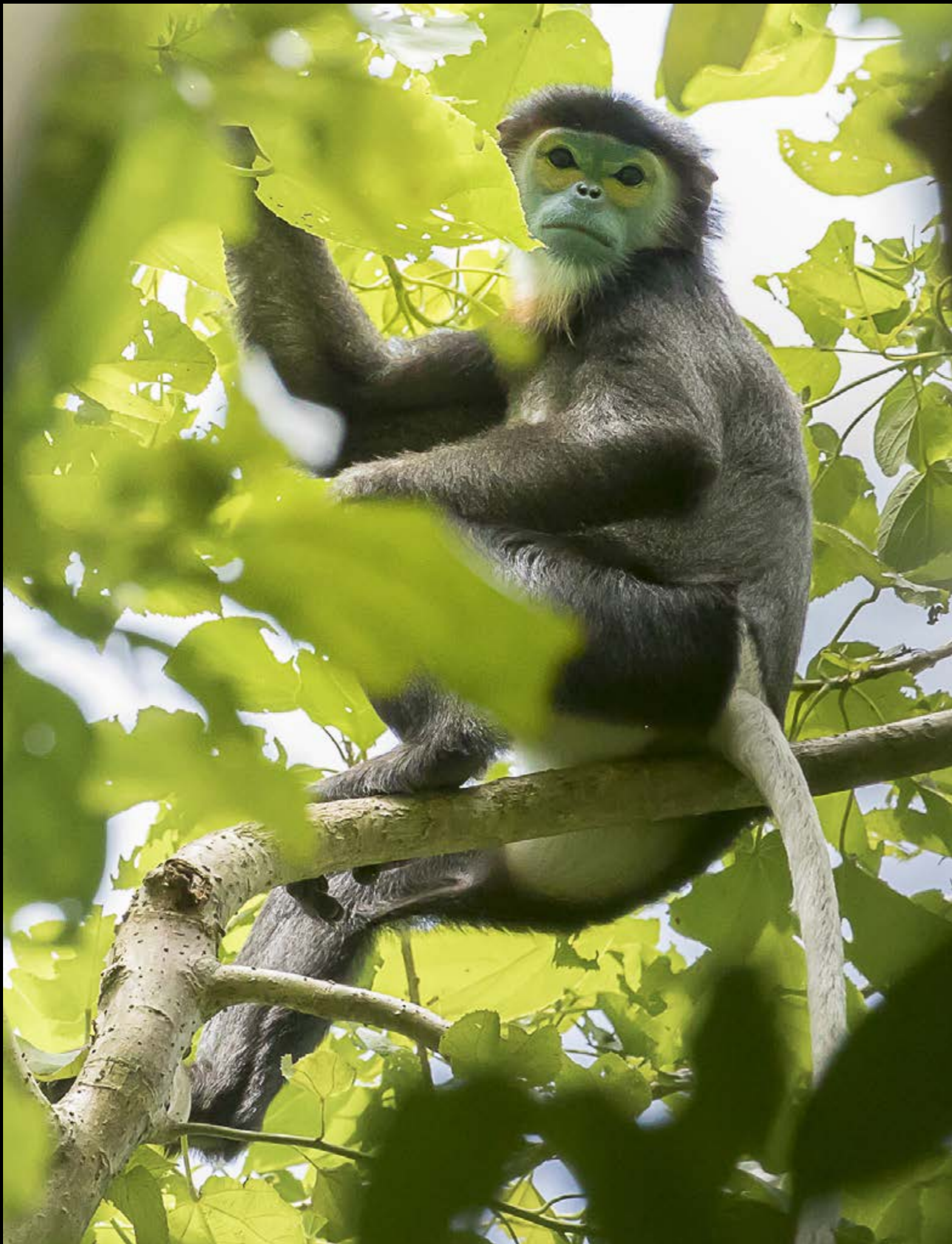
About a year ago I saw some of the most beautiful Old World primates in a Singapore zoo and I kept thinking if I would ever be able to see them in the wild some day. A year later I had the opportunity to visit Vietnam and travel across the country searching for some of these elusive, highly endangered primates. Indochina, between Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos is home to about 25 species of primates; unfortunately over the years we have lost a large population of these special creatures to poaching across Indochina, and that has made them endangered and very rare today. Vietnam is not your typical wildlife

watching location and wildlife tourism is almost non-existent except for a few birdwatchers who travel looking for birds. Vietnam has a very diverse landscape with mountains, plains, tropical rainforest & wetlands. I had to travel to south, central and northern Vietnam to try and see some of these primates because they are spread across different habitats and each of the primates is unique to a certain habitat. Not all species can be found in a single location. During my stay I met a few local conservationist and western NGO's who are working relentlessly with the local communities and government to save these species

from extinction. I am usually a lone traveller, and over the years every journey in the wilderness has made me realise how tiny and insignificant I am in the larger scheme of nature, and it has made me a better person and given me the ability to appreciate all creation. I sincerely hope enough is done to save these precious species for the future generations to come. I truly believe every species on earth is meant to be there and has a unique role to play in the ecosystem; with the loss of every species, the greater the imbalance to the ecosystem that directly impacts the survival of us "humans" eventually.



The Golden-cheeked gibbon *Nomascus gabriellae* is found across Indochina with a larger population in Cambodia and it is a highly endangered species as well. The author saw them in the wild at Katniem National park, Vietnam.



The Black shanked █
Douc Langur
Pygathrix nigripes is
critically endangered
and probably the
hardest one to see and
photograph, being
extremely shy and
predominantly arboreal.



■ Assamese macaque *Macaca assamensis* - a threatened species spread across forests of higher altitude across Asia, highly endangered in Vietnam. Right, Red shanked Douc Langur *Pygathrix nemaeus* - also named the "Mountain monkey" by US troops during the Vietnam war.





A rare look at two Red-shanked Douc Langur *Pygathrix nemaeus* clearly shows their exquisitely beautiful livery.



Red shanked Douc
Langur *Pygathrix
nemaeus*.