

## Yellow-throated Marten *Martes flavigula* observed hunting Small Indian Civet and chickens in Vietnam

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### Abstract

This note presents observations of Yellow-throated Martens *Martes flavigula* hunting at two localities in Vietnam. In Cat Tien National Park Martens were photographed capturing a Small Indian Civet *Viverricula indica*. In Bach Ma National Park, Martens were documented attempting to steal chickens from a restaurant's kitchen, on the top of Bach Ma mountain.

**Keywords:** Yellow-throated Marten, hunting behaviour, predator-prey, mustelid, Small Indian Civet, intraguild predation

### Ghi nhận loài cầy hòng vàng *Martes flavigula* săn cầy hương và gà nhà tại Việt Nam

Bài báo ghi nhận tập tính săn mồi của loài cầy hòng vàng *Martes flavigula* ở hai địa điểm khác nhau ở Việt Nam. Tại vườn quốc gia Cát Tiên, chúng tôi đã chụp ảnh được hai cá thể cầy hòng vàng săn và bắt một cá thể cầy hương *Viverricula indica*. Trong khi đó, tại vườn quốc gia Bạch Mã, chúng tôi cũng quan sát được hai cá thể cầy hòng vàng đang cố gắng bắt trộm gà của nhà hàng trên đỉnh Bạch Mã.

## Introduction

Yellow-throated Marten *Martes flavigula*, listed as Least Concern in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, has a wide range in tropical, sub-tropical and temperate South, South-east and East Asia (Corbet 1978, Corbet & Hill 1992, Chutipong et al. 2016). The species's varied diet includes fruits, insects, birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, honey bees and eggs (Pocock 1941, Grassman et al. 2005, Parr & Duckworth 2007, Zhou et al. 2011, 2008). In Vietnam, the species inhabits the entire country except, perhaps, the Mekong Delta and the Red River Delta (Robertson 2007). However, the species has received little recent research or conservation attention in Vietnam; Yellow-throated Marten is mainly mentioned in location-specific mammal lists resulting from camera-trap and other surveys (Robertson 2007, Willcox et al. 2015). This paper presents observations of Yellow-throated Marten hunting behaviour in the wild, made by two of the authors (T.A.P. and H.N.P.) while photographing wildlife.

## Observations

In Cat Tien National Park (11°24'23.04"N, 107°23'9.96"E, 116 m asl), right next to the Dong Nai river and not far from the village of Tran Le Xuan, Tan Phu commune, Dong Nai province, Vietnam), at 16h32 on 23 July 2018, T.A.P observed and photographed a Small Indian Civet *Viverricula indica* emerging from grass and onto a dirt path. A few seconds later, two Martens appeared on the path and followed the Civet. One Marten chased the Civet from behind while the other ran on the left side of the civet. The Marten on the left caught the Civet with a strong bite on the neck, which did not seem to kill the Civet (Fig. 1). The Martens – one carrying the Civet in its mouth – went into the grass and out of sight of the observer; the Civet's fate is unknown. The habitat is grassland, with cultivated land on one side and secondary semi-evergreen forest on the other side.



**Fig. 1.** Yellow-throated Marten *Martes flavigulas* hunting a Small Indian Civet *Viverricula indica* in Cat Tien National Park, southern Vietnam. (Photo: Tang A Pau.)

Possible predation by Yellow-throated Marten on Small Indian Civet was recorded by camera-trap in Nepal (Lamichhane *et al.* 2014), but it was unclear whether the Marten had killed or merely scavenged the Civet.



**Fig. 2.** Two Yellow-throated Martens behind the Do Quyen restaurant in Bach Ma National Park, Thua Thien Hue Province, central Vietnam. (Photo: Hoang Nhu Phuong.)

In Bach Ma National Park, Thua Thien Hue Province, central Vietnam, at 11h21 on 27 December, two Martens were observed in the landfill area behind the kitchen of the Do Quyen restaurant (16°11'40.39"N, 107°51'12.53"E, 1280 m asl; Fig. 2). As observed by H.N.P, the Martens came inside the restaurant and approached a steel, locked cage containing two live chickens. The commotion made by the chickens and the Martens alerted the restaurant staff, who chased the Martens away. However, the Martens re-entered the restaurant and attempted to force open the chicken cage several times before they gave up and left. The Martens came back a few more times during the following days to try to steal the chickens from the cage, without success.

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