

# Your Biodiversity Guide to Thomson Nature Park

Home to the Raffles' Banded Langur, the 50-hectare Thomson Nature Park is the former site of a Hainan Village and rambutan plantations. It neighbours the Central Catchment Nature Reserve, with a single-lane road – Old Upper Thomson Road – separating the two.

Residents of the Hainan Village left in the 1980s, and remnant vegetation reclaimed the abandoned land. Many of the remaining fruit and fig trees serve as important food sources for forest inhabitants. Over time, secondary forest has regenerated in this area, facilitated by its proximity to the Central Catchment Nature Reserve.

Thomson Nature Park now acts as a green buffer for the Central Catchment Nature Reserve by providing extended habitats for our native biodiversity. The ecological connectivity between the park and reserve is enhanced to allow wildlife to safely pass between the two forests. As you venture on the trails and discover the park's rich history and biodiversity, remember to abide by the trail etiquette for a pleasant and memorable walk.



Photo credit: Jeanne Tan



**Difficulty level:**  
Easy to Moderate



**Terrain:**  
Some areas are undulating with steps. Wheelchair accessible only at the entrance node.



**Distance:**  
3.8 km



**Walking time:**  
1 – 2 hours



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**Main Entrance:** Upper Thomson Road  
**Entrance 2:** Old Upper Thomson Road (Macaque Trail)  
**Entrance 3:** Old Upper Thomson Road (Langur Trail)

**Nature Park Opening Hours:** 7 am – 7 pm daily  
(entering or staying in the park after 7 pm is not allowed)  
**Carpark Opening Hours:** 7 am – 7 pm daily (smoke-free 🚫)



# Thomson Nature Park

1 Rambutan Trail



2 Pavilion



3 Toilet Block



4 Majestic Roots



5 Langur Trail Entrance



6 Macaque Trail Entrance



## CONSERVING OUR BIODIVERSITY

To ensure the safety of all visitors and to protect the rich flora and fauna that are found in the nature park, please observe the following Trail Etiquette:

- Avoid carrying plastic bags as monkeys tend to associate plastic bags with food and may try to grab them.
- Do not feed the animals. There is sufficient food in the forest for wildlife and feeding them would disrupt their natural behaviour.
- Stay on designated trails for your own safety. Do not venture off the trails as you will risk disturbing and trampling on our flora and fauna.
- Take home nothing but fond memories. Do not remove any plants, flowers, or fruits as these are necessary for the park's ecosystem to thrive.
- Keep your volume low to hear the natural sounds of the park. Move quietly and carefully as noise may disturb our native animals.
- Keep your pets out of the forest as their scent can affect the movement and behaviour of wildlife in our forests.
- Do not release any pets or animals as they are unlikely to adapt to the environment and might disrupt the ecological balance.

## HOW TO GET TO THOMSON NATURE PARK:

**BY BUS**  
 138, 138A, 167, 169, 860, 980  
 Alight at Upper Thomson Road  
 (After Tagore Drive, Bus Stop ID: 56061)  
 138, 167, 169, 860, 980  
 Alight at Upper Thomson Road  
 (Before Tagore Drive, Bus Stop ID: 56069)

**BY TRAIN**  
 Lentor MRT Station  
 Walk 2.3 km via Yio Chu Kang Road and turn right into Upper Thomson Road (enter via park main entrance), or Old Upper Thomson Park Connector (enter via Macaque or Langur Trail)

**BY CAR**  
 Thomson Nature Park carpark is situated along Upper Thomson Road, about 200 m away from Bus Stop ID 56061 (After Tagore Drive)



# Rambutan Trail

The Rambutan Trail lets you explore the remnants of Han Wai Toon's Rambutan Garden, renowned during its heyday for its superior quality and abundance of rambutans that were cultivated using the grafting technique called inarching. Along this trail, you can also see Lim Mu Hue's painting of Han's Rambutan Garden, which captures the Garden in all its glory. Apart from learning about the rambutan grafting methods, you can find out more about the other fruit trees cultivated in the vicinity.

## What You May See on This Trail

### Rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum*)

The Rambutan is a native tropical fruit tree that belongs to the family Sapindaceae. Other tropical fruit trees like Lychee, Longan and Pulasan belong to the same family and are closely related to the Rambutan. The Rambutan's fruit has hairy protuberances on its bright red exterior. When peeled, a white juicy flesh with a woody seed is revealed. Rambutan trees are evergreen and mature trees can produce up to 90 kg of fruit per year. The critically endangered Raffles' Banded Langur (*Presbytis femoralis*) and the uncommon Long-tailed Parakeet (*Psittacula longicauda*) feed on the fruit.



Photo credit: Ruth Foo



### Angsana (*Pterocarpus indicus*)

The Angsana is a large deciduous tree that is native to the southern part of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The tree was widely planted in Singapore during the 1960s and 1970s as it was considered an ideal shade tree for sunny Singapore due to its fast growth and dense crown. It produces faintly fragrant yellow flowers that only last for one day. They develop into wind-dispersed fruits which are disc-like pods with papery wings. One Angsana tree in Thomson Nature Park has a girth of 8 m!

### Durian (*Durio zibethinus*)

Durian trees can be found in Thomson Nature Park, and they sometimes produce fruit, thanks to the bats that help to pollinate them. The ripe or unripe durian fruits serve as an important food source for our wildlife such as the Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) and Long-tailed Macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*). So when you see the dropped fruits, do save them for our native biodiversity by not picking them up!



### Common Pulai (*Alstonia angustiloba*)

The Common Pulai is a native tree with a distinctive pagoda-shaped crown. It can be found in primary and secondary rainforests and freshwater swamp forests. Its fragrant white flowers, which develop in clusters of three to eight, attract nectar-feeding insects and sunbirds. It is also a caterpillar food plant for some species of moths. The Common Pulai can grow up to 40 m tall.



### Cicadas of the forest

More often heard than seen, cicadas are probably the first to welcome you to the forest with their continuous buzzing sounds, as they make the loudest of insect noises in the forest. They spend most of their lives underground as nymphs, and only emerge from the ground when mature to mate and reproduce. They are an important food source for birds and lizards.



Photo credit: Jeanne Tan



# Ruins and Figs Trail

## LOR PELITA

Explore this trail to spot vestiges of the Hainan Village such as remnants of old houses, foundations, wells, and stoves, and kampung vegetation that has become part of the forest. Along this trail, you can also witness majestic fig trees estimated to be more than 50 years old! Fig trees are regarded as keystone species in tropical rainforests as many of the forest's animals rely on fig trees for their survival, particularly during the seasonal shortage of fruits in the forests.

## What You May See on This Trail

### Malayan Banyan (*Ficus microcarpa*)

Also known as the Curtain Fig, the native Malayan Banyan has several distinctive features such as aerial roots hanging down from its branches and unique outlying roots. These aerial roots eventually develop into pillar roots when they reach and penetrate the ground. As they grow thicker, it becomes nearly impossible to tell the roots from the trunk. The figs, which ripen to a dark pink or deep purple, are eaten by various animals such as macaques, bats, and birds.



### Asian Glossy Starling (*Aplonis panayensis*)

Often mistaken as the Asian Koel (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*) because of its bright red eyes, the Asian Glossy Starling is, in fact, much smaller. It has a glossy green plumage and a black beak. This highly sociable bird is frequently seen as part of large flocks at fruiting trees and roosting sites.

Photo credit:  
Mendis Tan

### Straw-headed Bulbul (*Pycnonotus zeylanicus*)

The largest of the Southeast Asian bulbuls, this species is arboreal and omnivorous. It is observed to be very vocal especially at dawn and before dusk. Coveted for its rich and melodious song, the Straw-headed Bulbul is being hunted close to extinction across Southeast Asia. Singapore remains a stronghold for the Straw-headed Bulbul as its populations here has been observed to be stable compared to the populations in other parts of its distribution which are mostly in decline.



Photo credit: Shaun Spykerman

### Common Red-stem Fig (*Ficus variegata*)

A common species native to Singapore, the Common Red-stem Fig (*Ficus variegata*) can grow up to 40 m tall and has a conical crown when mature. It is supported by prominent buttresses developing from its trunk. The plant can be easily identified as its figs grow in dense clusters on the trunk and main branches. The Latin word *variegata* means irregularly coloured and refers to the ripening figs that are green with rose-red streaks. Macaques, squirrels, and birds have been spotted feasting on the figs.



Photo credit:  
Ang Wee Foong

### Common Bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris*)

Like other bamboo plants, the Common Bamboo has jointed stems that are segmented; each bamboo segment often serves as a home for fauna. The Bamboo Bat (*Tylonycteris* sp.) may be found roosting within the stem of the Common Bamboo. The Dryad Damselfly (*Pericnemis stictica*) and Black-spotted Sticky Frog (*Kalophrynus limbooliati*) lay eggs in the water that collects within bamboo stems. The different bamboo segments can also be used in several ways: bamboo culms for making fences and the split stems for making brooms and baskets.

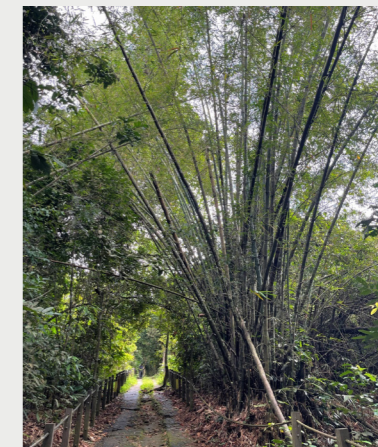


Photo credit:  
Fadzleen Arriffin



# Stream and Ferns Trail

## What You May See on This Trail

### Starfruit (*Averrhoa carambola* L.)

Starfruit trees are part of the remnants of vegetation that were grown by villagers for their fruits. The fruits are now a source of food for the fauna around Thomson Nature Park. The critically endangered Blue-rumped Parrot (*Psittinus cyanurus*) has been spotted feasting on the ripe fruits. It often perches high up in tree canopies and only occasionally descends to feed on the fruits.



Photo credit: Jeanne Tan

### Frogs in the Stream

Several native frogs such as the Spotted Tree Frog (*Nyctixalus pictus*), Copper-cheeked Frog (*Hylarana labialis*) and Malayan Giant Frog (*Limnonectes blythii*, pictured below) resides in the stream. Frogs play a key role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and are regarded as freshwater bio-indicators because they are highly sensitive to the presence of pollutants. They are critically important within the food web as both predator and prey.



Photo credit: Shaun Spykerman

### Tree Fern (*Alsophila latebrosa*)

Along the stream, tree ferns are aplenty, and one species that grows abundantly in Thomson Nature Park is *Alsophila latebrosa*, a beautiful, palm-like fern. The largest native fern in Singapore, it grows well up to 4 m tall in semi-shaded forest patches and along the edge of freshwater streams.



Photo credit: Low Wei Teng

### Telephone Sylvan (*Copera octogesima*)

The Telephone Sylvan is one of various species of damselflies that you may spot near the stream. It gets its unique name from the distinctive blue markings shaped like telephone handsets on its dorsal (or upper) side of its thorax. Despite its small size, it is known to be a fierce hunter of other insects.



Photo credit: Robin Ngiam

### Elephant Fern (*Angiopteris evecta*)

The Elephant Fern is naturally found near many freshwater streams. The leaves of this fern are edible, and its roots and rhizomes have been used to make traditional medicines.



Photo credit: Chenny Li

### Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*)

The Wild Boar is the largest resident land mammal in Singapore with a lifespan of over 20 years. Each female boar can produce up to six piglets a year, and it is known to be protective of its young. If you see piglets on the trails, remember to keep a safe distance, and avoid approaching or feeding them.



Photo credit: Jerome Pang

This trail gives you a chance to appreciate the freshwater habitats in Thomson Nature Park and to observe the great diversity of ferns present. You may also be able to spot our native freshwater creatures such as the Malayan Box Terrapin (*Cuora amboinensis*), as well as various species of dragonflies and damselflies near the stream.



# Langur Trail

An extension of the former Hainan Village Road Network, the Langur Trail makes reference to the critically endangered Raffles' Banded Langur, as Thomson Nature Park is a vital conservation site for this species.

## What You May See on This Trail

### Raffles' Banded Langur (*Presbytis femoralis*)

Enrichment planting efforts have been carried out to enhance the habitat of the Raffles' Banded Langur, whose current population is estimated to be about 60 individuals. Thomson Nature Park was sensitively enhanced with the planting of more than 1,000 native trees, including food plant species for the Raffles' Banded Langur such as *Radermachera pinnata* and *Nothaphoebe umbelliflora*. This elusive mammal is generally shy in nature and moves primarily by leaping or walking on all fours. It mostly eats new leaves, forest fruits and seeds.

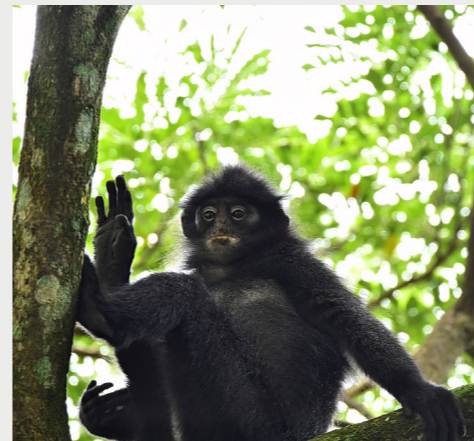


Photo credit: Jeanne Tan



### Indian Rubber Tree (*Ficus elastica*)

This non-native tree was once an economic plant highly sought after for its latex, which was processed into gutta rambong, a type of rubber of inferior quality. The planting of the Indian Rubber Tree was phased out after the introduction of Pará Rubber Trees (*Hevea brasiliensis*). The evergreen Indian Rubber Tree can grow up to 30 m and produces syconia (hollow, fleshy receptacles) that animals feed on.

### Fishtail Palm (*Caryota mitis*)

The most distinctive of the many palm species that can be found in Southeast Asia, the Fishtail Palm is easily recognisable by its fishtail-like leaflets. Commonly found in disturbed secondary forests, it is easily spotted on the outskirts of the trails. The leaves of this palm can be used as thatching for huts and lacing materials. The Long-tailed Macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*), Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) and the Asian Glossy Starling (*Alphonis panayensis*) are some animals that feed on the fruits of the Fishtail Palm.



Photo credit: Fadzleen Arriffin

### Ruffled Fan Palm (*Licuala grandis*)

This common non-native ornamental plant is well-established in Thomson Nature Park. An understory rainforest palm, it prefers to grow in lightly shaded or full shade area. The leaves of the Ruffled Fan Palm are distinctively pleated, undivided, and circular with jagged tips. In comparison, the native Spiny Licuala Palm (*Licuala spinosa*) has leaves with multi-ribbed segments, forming a broken circle with squared-off ends.

### Red-crowned Barbet (*Psilopogon rafflesia*)

This strikingly colourful bird is the only forest-dwelling barbet in Singapore and is confined to the Bukit Timah and Central Catchment Nature Reserves. It creates its nest by using its powerful bills to excavate cavities in trees. The Red-crowned Barbet is an important seed disperser as it feeds primarily on the fruits of forest trees that are too large to be eaten by smaller birds.



Photo credit: Cherry Goh



# Macaque Trail

The short 0.35 km Macaque Trail, which branches off from the Ruins and Figs Trail, gets its name from the Long-tailed Macaques that are often spotted along the path. You may see them foraging for food or playing in the trees. However, it is important to note that the macaques are wild animals, so please maintain a safe distance and avoid feeding them. Aside from the macaques, wildlife such as birds, butterflies, and squirrels can also be seen here.

## What You May See on This Trail

### Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*)

The Weeping Fig is a strangler fig that grows on other trees. Its seedling is first deposited into a cavity of the host tree. Aerial roots then grow and descend to reach the forest floor, and the Weeping Fig gradually forms a 'lattice-work' that wraps around the host's trunk. Eventually, the host tree is 'strangled' to death, leaving behind a hollow trunk. The bright red figs from the Weeping Fig often attract a diverse range of birds, such as the Pink-necked Green Pigeon (*Treron vernans*) and Olive-winged Bulbul (*Pycnonotus plumosus*).



Photo credit: Jeanne Tan

### Sunda Pangolin (*Manis javanica*)

The Sunda Pangolin or Scaly Anteater feeds mainly on ants and termites, which it locates using its strong sense of smell. It uses its thick, powerful claws to dig into the soil in search of ant nests or tear into termite mounds. It is critically endangered worldwide, as it is the most trafficked mammal in the international illegal wildlife trade.



Photo credit: Bryan Lim

### Greater Racket-tailed Drongo (*Dicrurus paradiseus*)

The Greater Racket-tailed Drongo is a resident forest bird commonly seen and easily identified by the two long racket-shaped feathers on its tail. It can make metallic noises and mimic a variety of calls. Previously restricted to the nature reserves, this bird can now be found in other green spaces as well, thanks to habitat enhancement efforts across Singapore.

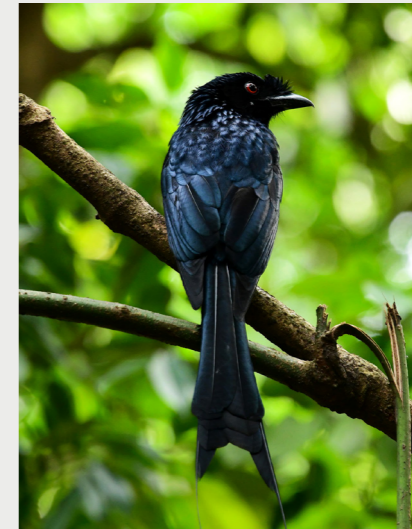


Photo credit: Shaun Spykerman



# End of Trail

As you come to the end of your walk, you may exit via the main entrance of Thomson Nature Park at Upper Thomson Road, or the entrances for the Macaque and Langur Trails located along Old Upper Thomson Road.

We hope you have enjoyed your walk at Thomson Nature Park. If you wish to explore more of the Central Nature Park Network, do consider exploring Dairy Farm Nature Park, Springleaf Nature Park, or Windsor Nature Park.

[www.nparks.gov.sg/eguides](http://www.nparks.gov.sg/eguides)

