

# Rare deer species snapped by camera traps in central Vietnam

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**Female large-antlered muntjac camera-trapped in the Lang Biang Biosphere Reserve. Photo by the Southern Institute of Ecology and the Saola Working Group.**

The endangered deer has been spotted in only three places across Vietnam over the past decade.

Conservationists have captured images of the critically endangered giant muntjac, or large-antlered muntjac, in the Lang Biang Biosphere Reserve in Vietnam's Central Highlands province of Lam Dong.

This is only the third site in Vietnam where this barking deer has been photographed in the last decade, environmental site *Mongabay* reported.

"There have been tens of thousands of 'camera-trap days' of effort in the Annamite Range in Vietnam, and we've only seen a few photos of the large-antlered muntjac in the last 15 years," R. J. Timmins, a member of Saola Working Group (SWG) that was involved in the survey, said in a statement quoted by *Mongabay*.

"It's really exciting to get photos of this very rare species with only 14 cameras and little over a month of effort. It suggests the site maybe the best chance for conserving the species in Vietnam," Timmins said.

From December last year to February this year, the Southern Institute of Ecology (SIE), a research institute based in Ho Chi Minh City, conducted a camera trap survey in Lang Biang with technical support from Global Wildlife Conservation, SWG and Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research, according to Global Wildlife Conservation.

The giant muntjac is the largest species of barking deer. It lives in the remote rainforests of the Annamite Mountain range, a chain of mountains running along the border of Vietnam and Laos. The range is home to some of the world's most recent mammal discoveries, including the giant muntjac that was first recorded there in 1994.

Hunting and habitat loss has wiped out the muntjac from across most of its previous range. While there is insufficient data to estimate a current population, the species probably lives in small groups of very low densities, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Last year, the IUCN up-graded the species from endangered to critically endangered, said *Mongabay*. Also in 2016, camera traps set in Pu Hu Nature Reserve in the central province of Thanh Hoa captured pictures of two giant muntjacs, a male and a female.

In 2013, a snapshot of one giant muntjac was taken in Saola Nature Reserve in Thua Thien Hue Province, also in the central region.

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