

An Attack on Humans by Francois Langur (*Trachypithecus francoisi*) in the Wild

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Abstract : We documented a case of a young male Francois langur attacking humans near Lenglei village near Longgang Nature Reserve, Guangxi, on August 17, 2002. Shortly after we parked our car and sounded its horn, a young male Francois langur rushed out of the forest into the road-side trees. It appeared excited or annoyed, incessantly charging back and forth between the trees to a rocky area, from the rocks to the car. Nearby villages were frightened, and stayed far away; one person was seen to be attacked. Data collected from interviews showed there had been 15 persons and 2 dogs attacked since early 2001.

Key words : Francois langur (*Trachypithecus francoisi*); Attacking human behavior

野外黑叶猴对人类的攻击行为

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摘要: 2002年8月17日, 对在广西弄岗国家级自然保护区附近楞垒自然屯发生的黑叶猴攻击人的事件进行实地考察。当小车发出鸣笛后, 一只亚成体雄性黑叶猴从保护区边缘的丛林中冲出来。十分冲动或激怒地冲到了汽车旁, 后来在路边的树上、石头、矮墙上不停地跳来跳去。围观群众躲到很远的地方观望, 其中一人被扑到身上, 幸好逃得及时而没有被咬伤。据访问了解, 这只亚成体公猴从2001年初开始在保护区边界村庄附近已连续伤害了15个人和2只狗。分析和探讨这种攻击人类行为的形成是十分有意义的。

关键词: 黑叶猴; 攻击人类行为

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Attacks on humans is an extreme behavior among primates. Most reports have involved humans offering food to primates, although for Rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*) there have also been reports of attacks on tourists unconnected to human food (Anonymous, 1999; Berman and Li, 2002). The Francois langur (*Trachypithecus francoisi*), also known as the black langur, is a rare primate distributed in Vietnam, Laos and China (World conservation monitoring center, 1994). It is also rare in China and only distributed in portions of karst regions of Guangxi, Guizhou, and Chongqing. In the wild, Francois langurs live in karst hills far from human habitation

(Zhou and Huang, 2001). They are easily frightened by people, and typically avoid interactions with humans. Even in captivity, there have not previously been documented attacks on humans by Francois langurs.

1 Study site and method

Set up in 1980, Longgang National Nature Reserve is located in Longzhou and Ningming Counties at 106°42'28" - 107°05'54" E and 22°13'56" - 22°33'09" N in Guangxi, adjacent to Vietnam, and has a total area of 10 077.5 ha. Longgang National Nature Reserve is composed of three sections named Longhu, Longgang and

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Loangshan. The Longgang Protection Station is located in Lenglei village, (population 168) adjacent to Longgang National Nature Reserve. A subadult male Francois langur was known to inhabit the environs.

On-site observations were conducted on August 17, 2002. We recorded the whole process of the young male Francois langur (Figure 1) rushing out from the forest into the village, attacked the people and re-entering the forest. The whole process lasted 2 hours. Both villagers and staff from Longgang National Nature Reserve were interviewed. We also documented earlier reports of cases of langurs attacking people in the area.



Fig. 1 The attacking human young male Francois langur and stander-by from the village

2 Result

After we parked our car in the village and sounded

the car's horn, we observed a young male Francois langur rushing out of the forest into the trees near the village. It seemed extremely excited or annoyed. It ran from the trees to rocks, from ground to the car and staying on there for more than 15 minutes, biting the tire and knocking the car window, as villagers crowded around to observe (Figure 1). Suddenly, the langur charged toward the crowd of people, frightening them. The langur swatted at one of the people, striking him. However, he was able to escape quickly, and thus avoid being bitten.

Supplementary data from interviews indicated that this young male had stayed around the village for more than six months, attacking 15 people and 2 dogs (Table 1). Of the attacks documented in Table 1, 4 people were observing it in a group when it rushed at them from out of the forest and 6 people had been riding motorcycles at the time of attack, and suddenly rushed and bitten by a langur.

3 Discussion

Attacks on humans are very unusual in primates. Such instances have been documented in the case of captive male pigtailed macaques (*Macaca nemestrina*) (Bellanca and Crockett, 2001), in chimpanzee and rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*), (Hook *et al.*, 2002; Kaufman *et al.*, 2002), and in baboons (Brent *et al.*, 2001).

Most often, such instances of primates attacking hu-

Table 1 Ten records of Francois langur attacking human in Longgang National Nature Reserve

Date	Name of people	Wounded part	Note
June, 2002	Huang Xin (from village)	Leg	Drove motorcycle through Lenglei village
July, 2002	Huang Hanhong (from village)	Waist	Drove motorcycle through Lenglei village
July, 2002	Azheng (from village)	Waist	Observation in crowd
July, 2002	Meng (from township government)	Thigh	Drove motorcycle through Lenglei village
July, 2002	He Risheng (from village)	Thigh	Drove motorcycle through Lenglei village
July, 2002	Nong (from provincial agriculture department)	Waist	Observation in crowd
August, 2002	A student from Lozhou high school	Waist	Observation in crowd
August, 2002	One person from Banlong village	Waist	Drove motorcycle through Lenglei village
August, 2002	One person from Payuan village	Waist	Drove motorcycle through Lenglei village
August, 2002	One person from Xiaan village	Waist	Observation in crowd

man have been associated with the human getting too close to the primate, and the animal losing its the fear of humans. It often happens in semi-domestic primate populations, developed as a project for tourism, in which tourists feed primates for entertainment. When the primate does not get the food, it will be annoyed, and then attack the tourist. Having experienced 144 cases of monkey harassments in 2001, the Hong Kong government has decided to prohibit tourists from feeding monkeys (Anonymous, 1999). Berman and Li (2002) also reported negative impacts of human feeding on *Macaca thibetana*.

Data available from interviews indicted that more than 3 individual Francois langurs ranged near the village in early 2001; villagers often heard their shouting and saw their fighting. However, for about half a year, only the subadult male had been seen near the village; the other 2 animals had not been observed. Francois langurs have a polygynous mating system (Zhou and Huang, 2001), and adult males come from non-natal group through fighting. Before the young males fight, they sometimes get together and form all male groups. White-headed langurs have also been observed to have all-male groups (Huang, 2002). Fighting between the individuals is certain, however, what kinds of fighting are unclear. Both fighting between this young male and the adult males in the group, or between this young male and the other males in all male group were possible. It is also possible that the subadult male which attacked humans had been defeated by more dominant males, and had stayed near the village.

We still do not know exactly how villagers treated this langur, but we are certain that it left the forest upon hearing the sounds of cars or motorcycles, and, seemingly excited or annoyed, began attacking people. It is a inter-

esting case which deserves further study.

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