

ADVISORY ON CIVETS

What are they? Commonly called civet cats, civets are not cats. In fact, they are more closely related to mongooses than they are to cats. In Singapore, the Common Palm Civet is one of the species of civet that can be seen. Civets are commonly known as 'Musang' in the Malay Language.

They are usually found living in the forests, parks, mangroves and even roof spaces of buildings in urban areas. They are nocturnal by nature and like to stay in trees and high places.

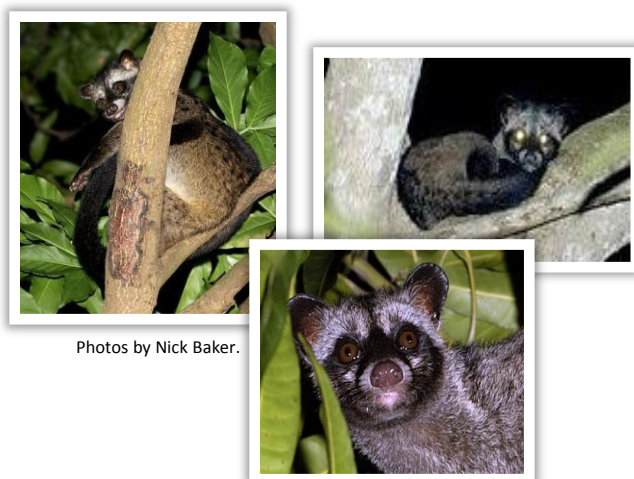
How does a Common Palm Civet look like?

It has a long sleek body with short limbs and a long tail, a long muzzle and small ears. The body is dark greyish brown with three dark stripes along the back and black spots on the sides. They are also identified by the black 'mask' across the face.

What do civets eat? In Singapore, they frequently eat the fruits of the Fishtail Palm and seed pods of the Rain Tree. Being omnivorous, they also like fruits such as mangoes, bananas and chikus and will eat small snakes, small birds, insects and rats.

Do you know? In neighbouring countries like Vietnam, Philippines and Indonesia, coffee beans eaten and passed out by civets are highly valued. This gourmet coffee has various names, including 'kopi luwak' in Indonesia, 'kape alamid' in the Philippines and weasel coffee in Vietnam. It is believed that civets have the ability to select and eat the best coffee beans at the optimal stage of ripeness. It is also said that the special taste of these coffee is due to the fermentation process when the civets digest the beans.

If you have further queries, please contact AVA at 1800-476-1600 or through our online feedback form at <https://www.ifaq.gov.sg/ava/apps/feedback.aspx>.



Photos by Nick Baker.

What to do when I encounter a civet?

- ✓ **Do not be alarmed.** Like most wild animals, civets are shy and will stay out of sight. You are advised to leave the civets alone. It is fine to observe them from afar but do not try to corner or chase them, as that may provoke them to attack in order to protect themselves.
- ✓ **Civets may eat leftover cat food that is left out in the open.** If you do not want them to come to your property, please ensure that cat or dog food is kept indoors.
- ✓ **If you find baby civets in your property, leave them alone and do not attempt to pick them up.** If people swarm around the baby civets, this prevents the mother from picking them up and the mother may end up abandoning them. If the mother is nearby, she will respond to their cries and attend to them.
- ✓ **If the civet happens to give birth in your property, leave it alone.** The baby civets will start venturing out within two or three months after birth. After that, they will follow their mother to forage and will move out of your property eventually.