

[REPORT] INSTALIVE INTERVIEW

MONKEY BUSINESS

GUEST: LEE KHAI XIAN, BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (ECOLOGY & BIODIVERSITY)

MODERATOR: SYUHADA SAPNO

8 MAY 2020, 2-3PM

Khai Xian is an ecology and biodiversity undergraduate from University of Malaya who is also an active volunteer for Langur Project Penang (LPP). His final year project is on the activity budget and diet composition of the long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*) in University of Malaya, which he took interest in studying through his volunteering experience with LPP.

From his research, he managed to identify around 5 to 10 species of plants that the macaques feed on, with many more species still in the process of being identified. Some examples of these plants are simpoh air, starfruit, ketapang, jackfruit, sea apple, figs, and some palm trees (e.g. *Licuala grandis*). Interestingly, the part of the plant long-tailed macaques choose to feed on differs from one plant to another as can be seen below:

- Simpoh air (*Dillenia suffruticosa*) - flower
- Starfruit (*Averrhoa carambola*) - fruit
- Sea almond/Ketapang (*Terminalia catappa*) - fruit
- Sea apple (*Syzygium grande*) - fruit
- Figs (*Ficus* sp.) - fruit

Khai Xian's fieldwork involves him following the macaque groups movements - wherever they go, Khai Xian will be there to observe. He shared some of the challenges he went through during fieldwork, such as facing difficulty to follow the macaques when they climb high areas like rooftops and his movements being limited due to the buildings surrounding him. In cases like this, he overcomes it by going up the rooftops of other buildings which enables him to observe the macaques from a distance, though in this situation he would face challenges as well as there is limited access to most building rooftops. He mentions that at all times throughout fieldwork, he is aware to keep a safe distance from the macaques as a sign of respect for them and also for his own safety.



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Here are some more questions answered by Khai Xian

Where do monkeys sleep?

"Interesting question! I guess most people will be curious where they sleep right? Monkeys are arboreal animals, which means animals that live in the canopy of the trees. They spend most of their time on the trees, but they do come to ground sometimes. When the sun is almost setting, they will return to their home which is located in the canopy of a tree, which we call a sleeping tree for the monkeys. One more interesting fact! The monkeys usually sleep at the same tree and they might have a few sleeping trees also!"

Should people feed monkeys?

"No. We should not feed the monkeys. This is because human food, which is mostly high energy, is not suitable for their digestive system. Try to imagine this scenario. If you eat high energy food, where does your energy go if you do not use all of it? It turns into your fat. And excess fats will cause obesity and some heart problems. So, do you wish our monkey friends to get health problems like this? No, right? So please do not feed the monkey. Besides that, feeding monkeys or any wildlife will increase the transmission rate of diseases also. Some germs or pathogens might not be harmful to humans, but they will be harmful to the wildlife. So if a person that is infected or sick feeds the monkey, the monkey will get the germs from that human and bring them back to its family. And the germs spread in its family and everyone gets the disease and eventually everyone dies."

How to co-exist with the macaques in campus?

"Good question! Whenever you see macaques hanging around in the campus, just leave them alone. Walk away from them. If you really need to go over to the other side but they are blocking the path, maintain your speed, don't run, and most importantly do not make eye contact with them. And also, keep any food or plastic bag in your bag, to prevent them from seeing it, or else they might attack you to get the food."

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Khai Xian ended the session with words of advice on how to react if you happen to encounter a macaque. He states that we must not hurt or disturb them - be it by throwing things or by shouting - and to simply walk away while making sure to avoid eye contact. We should keep our belongings - food or anything wrapped in plastic - from them as it is a trigger for the macaques to snatch it, thinking that it is food. He also states that no matter how sympathetic or empathetic one is towards the macaques, we must never feed them as this act encourages them to get closer to humans which would create a human-macaque interface. For individuals who are interested in taking photos of these animals or would like to appreciate them, it is important to do so from a safe distance in order to ensure safety.



◀ ***Long-tailed macaque drinking from a can, an act caused by human-wildlife interface***

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[REPORT] INSTALIVE INTERVIEW SERIES 2 8.05.2020 - 10.05.2020

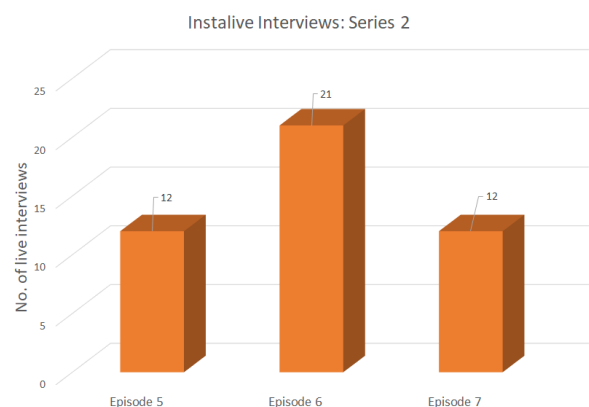


Instalive Interview is a conversation series discussing on various topics ranging from urban garden, environmental education, urban wildlife, volunteer enhancement/support and art. There are two series of these live streams. Here in the second series we had three invited guests, each of them has their own unique ways and experiences of conserving nature in the city.

Interaction with viewers where we addressed their questions in realtime allowed greater engagement as they became active participants that are directly involved in the discussion. The recorded Instalives were then uploaded to The Rimba Project's YouTube page. Time stamps with topic of discussion was added in the description for viewers to jump straight to their preferred topics of interest. The series was a success as this form of networking has increased the audience for The Rimba Project on the social media platforms, especially on Instagram.

('Monkey Business' video is not available due to technical error)

Bar graph shows the total highest number of viewers whom participated in the interactive interviews throughout all three sessions



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