

The background is a vibrant illustration of a city scene with orange buildings and a large orange sun. Civets are depicted in various locations: one in a nest of yellow berries on a large green leaf in the top left; one peeking from behind a tree with yellow fruit in the top right; one in a tree with brown fruit on the middle left; and one climbing a tree with yellow fruit on the bottom right. The title 'CIVET EXCLUSION TOOLKIT' is centered in large, bold, brown letters.

CIVET EXCLUSION TOOLKIT

A guide for property
owners and managers

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Photo credit:
Yong Lin Tan

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever seen a bandit-faced, cat-like creature in your neighbourhood at night? Or perhaps you have read about civets in urban areas and want to learn more? This guide will answer your questions about these nocturnal animals, whether you are dealing with civet-related issues or simply curious about them. Discover more about civets, learn how to handle encounters, and find practical tips to keep them away from your home.

WHAT ARE THEY?

Despite being called civet cats, civets are not felines but are more closely related to mongooses. Civets are commonly known as 'Musang' in Malay; '果子狸' in Mandarin; and 'மீட்டர்' in Tamil.

Civets are native to Singapore and five different species of civets were recorded:

- Sumatran Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus musangus*)
- Malay Civet (*Viverra zibetha*)
- Masked Palm Civet (*Paguma larvata*)
- Large Indian Civet (*Viverra zibetha*) - not spotted locally for the past 30 years
- Small-toothed Palm Civet (*Arctogalidia trivirgata*) - critically endangered locally

The Sumatran Palm Civet is Singapore's most common species, found in both urban and forested areas. The other remaining species primarily inhabit deep forests like the Central Catchment Nature Reserve. Unlike their rarer counterparts, the Sumatran Palm Civet has adapted to thrive in our urban city.

Civets inhabit diverse habitats including forests, parklands, mangroves, and even roof spaces of buildings in urban areas. These nocturnal animals prefer trees and high places. Agile and nimble, they easily move from place to place by climbing pipes, moving along wall dividers, walking from roof to roof, and jumping from tree to tree.

Sumatran Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus musangus*)

Adult civets are slightly larger than domestic cats, with longer tails. They typically measure 53 cm in body length, have a 48 cm tail, and weigh between 2 and 5 kg.

The Sumatran Palm Civet's long, sleek body is covered in coarse, greyish and black hair with irregular spots and three distinct stripes along the back. It has a black mask across its face, white spots on each side of its nose and its forehead, and a narrow dark line between its eyes. Its muzzle, rounded ears, lower legs, and distal half of the tail are black in colour.



Photo credit: Yong Lin Tan

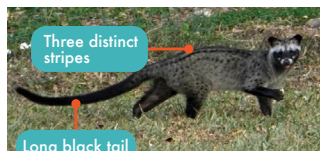


Photo credit: Xu Wei Ting

Did you know? #1

The most expensive coffee – Kopi Luwak, actually comes from the faeces of a civet. Unfortunately, the rising demand and profitability of the product has led to the inhumane capture and captivity of civets in small unkempt cages, where they are fed an unhealthy diet of exclusively coffee berries, compromising the welfare of these wild animals.

GENERAL ECOLOGY AND BEHAVIOUR

Due to their nocturnal lifestyle, you can find civets foraging from late evening until dawn and sleeping during the day in trees or in buildings. Civets are mostly solitary creatures, except for brief periods during mating and after a female gives birth. They are typically silent and stealthy, rarely communicating vocally unless threatened. They use their scent glands as their primary means of communication.

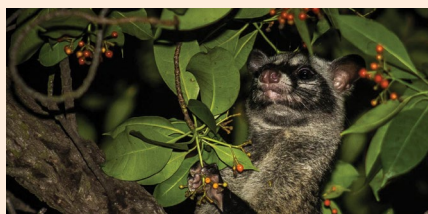


Photo credit: Bryan Lim



Photo credit: Yong Lin Tan

Did you know? #2

Civets promote seed dispersal by swallowing seeds whole while eating fruits and defecating them, helping to maintain and improve the health of Singapore's forests.

Did you know? #3

The secretions from a civet's scent glands have been likened to the aroma of pandan.

WHY ARE CIVETS IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

Availability of food

The civet's main diet consists of fruits, supplemented by smaller mammals, birds, reptiles, and invertebrates. Civets are attracted to places with readily available fruits such as mangoes, papayas, bananas, chikus, starfruit, and fishtail palm.

Papaya



Photo credit: Pauline Tay, NParks Flora & Fauna Web

Chiku



Photo credit: NParks Flora & Fauna Web

Mango



Photo credit: Goh Gan Khing, NParks Flora & Fauna Web

Fishtail Palm

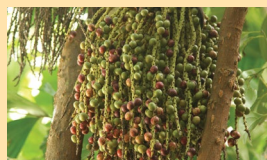


Photo credit: Ang Wee Foong, NParks Flora & Fauna Web



Photo credit: Yong Lin Tan

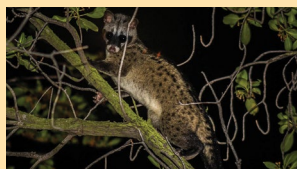


Photo credit: Bryan Lim

Looking for shelter

Civets living in forested environments typically look for cavities in trees or overgrown thick vines and dense bushes to rest in. In urban areas, lush trees and empty roof spaces of homes provide a similar environment with suitable shelter, shade, and a dry and quiet space away from the weather elements. Civets can climb through existing gaps to nest and rest in roof spaces, or above ceiling boards and pipes.

Just passing through

Civets are arboreal creatures and can look for new places to forage and explore. They are seen on trees, overhanging cables, pipes, fences, divider walls, and rooftops. They can occasionally be spotted on the ground, crossing from one foraging area to another.

Civet signs to look out for

- 🐾 Paw prints, especially in places such as pipes, other climbing structures, or on top of your awning
- 🐾 Civet scat
- 🐾 Sounds on your roof, in your false ceiling, or civet calls at night
- 🐾 Evidence of fruits eaten
- 🐾 Strong pandan scent



Photo credit: Victoria Chew



Did you know? #4

When identifying wildlife presence through eaten fruit, consider these key points:

- Monkeys and squirrels forage in the morning
- Civets forage at night
- Civets leave larger bite marks than bats and squirrels

WHAT TO DO WHEN ENCOUNTERING CIVETS?

If you spot a civet in the open:

- 1 Stay calm - the civet is likely more scared of you than you are of it. It is likely passing through the area.
- 2 Do not chase, corner, or disturb the civet.
- 3 Do not feed it, as feeding will alter its natural foraging behaviour and make it reliant on humans for food.
- 4 Always observe from a safe distance, giving space for it to retreat.



If you see a civet within your home:

- 1 Stay calm, observe the civet from a safe distance and open a window or door to allow it to leave.
- 2 Do not provoke the civet, or attempt to capture it yourself.
- 3 Try using loud noises (e.g. whistle, shout, clap) to guide them towards the closest exit (open door or window).
- 4 Call NParks' 24-hour Animal Response Centre at 1800-476-1600 for assistance if:
 - Civet is trapped in your house.
 - Civet appears to be injured.
 - You require further advice on civet-related issues.



Civet on/in your roof:

Civets may run along your roof to get from one place to another, which may sometimes result in thumping sounds from your roof. To reduce this, prune overhanging trees and branches to restrict access.

EXCLUSION AND DETERRENT MEASURES

Civets occasionally nest in roof spaces, with females sometimes raising young on your property. Do not touch, approach, or attempt to remove the young civets. They are guarded by their mother and will leave on their own after a few months.

To prevent this from occurring, seal off roof entrances after making sure no civets are left inside.

You may wish to contact a company to help you construct exclusion barriers, or you can also do it yourself. The following are some exclusion measures and deterrents you may apply at places civets frequent the most.

1

Seal up gaps and entry points
(e.g. windows, gaps in roof)



Photo credit: JK Wildlife

2

Prevent civets from climbing
up pipes

Apply lubricants

Applying lubricants like oil or petroleum jelly to pipes reduces grip, deterring civets from climbing.

Wrap areas of pipe using smooth materials such as metal sheets

This will reduce the grip of the surface and help deter civets from climbing.

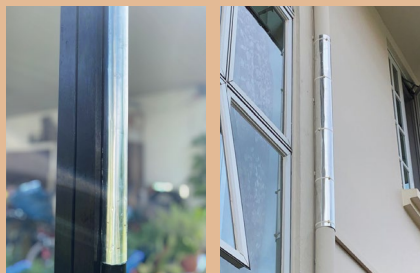


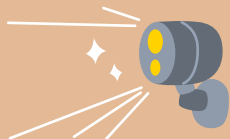
Photo credit: JK Wildlife



3 Install motion sensor spotlight in your roof or yard

Motion sensor spotlight

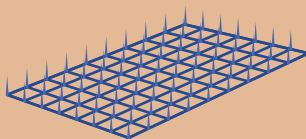
This encourages civets to move off, as civets dislike harsh lighting.



4 Install barriers along divider walls

Rubber cat spikes

To prevent civets from walking across.



5 Apply deterrent compounds

Moth balls/vinegar solution

Place in container with ventilation holes, or hang in cloth pouches. Civets seem to dislike the smell of mothballs and will tend to avoid these areas.



6 Prune your fruit trees and wrap up any fruits

Wrap any ripening fruits with an opaque cloth or bag to prevent them from being eaten. Harvest your fruits as soon as they are ripe to prevent attracting any civets to your garden.

Prune your fruit trees regularly to prevent civets from using the branches as an access point to your home.



Photo credit: Victoria Chew

Other useful tips:

- Do not leave food exposed, including pet food
- Keep food in cupboards or in closed containers
- Close windows at night, especially in places where food may be visible, such as your kitchen
- Keep pet birds out of sight by covering bird cages at night with a breathable opaque fabric

Did you know? #5

Natural pest control – Civets help to control pest populations in your neighbourhood as they also feed on rodents and insects.



USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

For urgent assistance or feedback involving civets or other wildlife, you can contact
NParks' 24-hour Animal Response Centre at 1800-476-1600.

To learn more about civets and other wildlife:

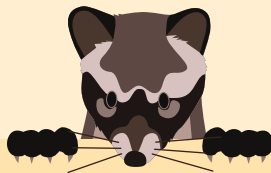
Living With Nature Handbook

For more information about other wildlife in Singapore



Our Wildlife Neighbours

Information on how you can live with wildlife
www.ourwildneighbours.sg



Wildlife-proofing contacts:

JK Wildlife Pte Ltd

General: 8118 8058
joe@jkwildlife.sg

Mastermark Pte Ltd

General: 6741 6880
info@mastermark.com.sg

Wildlife Studies & Control

General: 8282 7093
wsc_singapore@outlook.com



You can find the full list of animal management companies on NParks' public registry of certified animal management specialists online.



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