

# A Walk in the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve

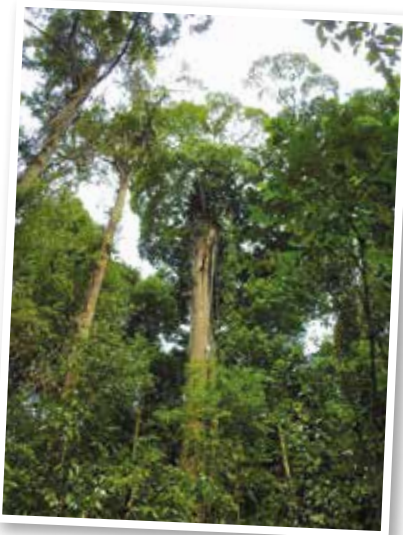
By Anne Pinto-Rodrigues



The Rock Path is a hiker's delight



The highest point in Singapore, the Bukit Timah Summit (163.63 metres), lies within the nature reserve



The verdant canopy of the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve

Nature lovers in Singapore don't have to go very far to enjoy a stroll in the woods. Barely 12 kilometres from the busy city centre lies the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve (BTNR), a 400-acre tract of lush primary rainforest. After nearly two years of trail repairs and slope stabilisation work, the reserve reopened to the public on 22 October 2016.

One of the first forest reserves to be established in Singapore, the BTNR is a biodiversity hotspot, housing nearly 40% of Singapore's indigenous flora and fauna. It was initially earmarked as a reserve in 1883, on the recommendation of Nathaniel Cantley, the then Superintendent of the Singapore Botanic Gardens (1880–1888).

Today, native mammals such as the long-tailed macaques and the tree-hugging Malayan Colugo, as well as a variety of bird, reptile and insect species, thrive in this largest surviving piece of primary rainforest.

The recent closure of the reserve has allowed the tropical forest to rejuvenate without the disturbance of the 400,000 people that visit each year. Species such as the Malayan porcupine and the slow loris, rarely seen in Singapore, were observed by researchers in the BTNR for the first time, an indicator of the forest's health and vitality.

The remarkable flora of the reserve is believed to include more tree species than the entire continent of North America. On 18 October 2011, the BTNR was declared Singapore's second ASEAN Heritage Park (Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve being the first).

A walk in the BTNR is always full of surprises, thanks to its incredibly rich plant and animal life.

---

**Anne Pinto-Rodrigues** is a nature enthusiast who writes about her various nature experiences on her blog *No Roads Barred* (<https://noroadbarred.wordpress.com>).

---

*Photos by the author*



A Banded Woodpecker (*Chrysophlegma miniaceum*) busy at work in the reserve. This medium-sized woodpecker is identifiable by its distinctive crest, red wings and upper body.



Greater Racket-tailed Drongo (*Dicrurus paradiseus*) spotted in the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve. This bird is identifiable by its long, racket-shaped outer tail feathers.