

Trip report Sabah, Borneo

'in search of clouded leopard'

24 August 2016 – 8 September 2016



I thought I completed my big cat list with snow leopard in Ladakh, India (2013). But an uncle of mine told me that puma and cheetah aren't officially big cats, to my surprise. Moreover the clouded-leopard is the sixth of the world's 6 big cats: 1 lion, 2 leopard, 3 tiger, 4 jaguar, 5 snow leopard so I had to go for number six. note: There are two species of clouded leopard. Bornean is different than the other Asian, to me seeing one would do. So a new trip had to be planned. Sabah Borneo was the place most sightings happen, so a new quest was born 😊

I found as usual some good reports on www.mammalwatching.com. So places to go in Sabah were easy to pick. <http://www.mammalwatching.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/RW-Sabah-2016.pdf> is one of the best helps with lots of info. Myself I joined a group of Belgians on a two and half week 'clouded leopard tour'. The itinerary was: Sepilok, Deramakot, Kinabatangan river (including Gomantong cave), Danum, Mount Kinabalu and Kota Kinabalu. For this trip there was contact with a local travel agency: Adventure Alternative Borneo ('Tom'). Logistic wise it was all organised well. On arrival the group (8 persons) I joined seemed to be of more interest in birds... That was a bit disappointing to me, since I expected people focussed on the cats and other good mammals, especially when the tour was named 'Clouded leopard tour'. After a bit difficult start about expectations we managed to have a good share in options to go for safaris, walks or boating and usually we split up in a part for mammal focus and others for birds. It wasn't that the others didn't have an interest in mammals but more that they wanted to see all bird species and spend more time on these. According to Michael Begbie Gordon (search on facebook) a very good local guide 'mammalists are not birders and the other way around', although the other way around is more common, but the focus of birders is usually so much more on all the birds so that limits time to focus on mammals. I think it is not the best combination. Michael Gordon is one of the best spotters I have met, he has a very sharp eye for Orang-utan, if you want to see a wild one contact him. He is also an expert on clouded leopards.

Accommodations and travel

All accommodation were basic-to good and clean. The transfers were safely driven by minivan or 4*4 and we had one internal flight to Kinabalu. Kinabalu is a normal town with all facilities and I felt safe there.

Safety

Malaysia is quit western and I felt safe everywhere. We haven't been much in towns or cities but to me people are friendly. Roads are good. Wifi isn't available but in larger hotels it was.

Photography

Since photography is my passion I will always try to make the most out of picture opportunities to get that one good picture of any mammal we spot during the trip. This trip I focussed specially on the orangutan and proboscis to get nice images of them. In case there is only just a glimpse of an animal, I'll try just for a 'proof' shot. Besides the wildlife I make a travel report of the full trip, so I also have a focus on the landscape and people where possible.

Report

I show just the animals I have seen since most other report write down well the places. I hope you will enjoy the photography, feel free to commend or ask questions! Specially I want to thank mammalwatching.com again for presenting such worth full trip reports. It was again of great use and guidance.

Best regards,

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Big male orang-utan, one of the local Bosses of Deramakot

Places Visited:

- **Sepilok (SEP)** go to forest interpretation centre and do (canopy) walks, good start for a trip!
- **Deramakot Forest Reserve (DFR)** best place to see most stuff, specially night drives
- **Kinabatangan (KB)** best place for proboscis monkeys
- **Gomantong Cave (GC)** bats and red langur
- **Danum Valley Field Centre (DV)** bearded pig, sambar, red langur, long-tailed macaque, nice environment but Deramakot has more night drive options
- **Kinabalu National Park (KNP)** only if you are interested in squirrels and cloud forest
- **Poring Hotsprings (PH)** squirrels and bats, I was lucky to see two mongoose here
- **Kota Kinabalu (KK)** citylife/shopping
- **Weston River Cruse (WRC)** in case you missed proboscis and silvered langur, you can see them here
- **Sapi Island (SI)** for some fun snorkelling and quit a list of very colourful fishes!

Mammals seen

Colugo (*Galeopterus variegatus*) Observed on 3 night drives at DFR and in daylight in KB

Philippine Slow Loris (*Nycticebus menagensis*) two seen in SEP and one in DFR both spotlighting.

Long-tailed Macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*) Observed at DFR @riverbanks, in KB in village/roadside and along riverside in DV

Southern Pig-tailed Macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*) one male in DFR and a group of 40 in KB crossing a creek on a 'monkey line' above the water.

Proboscis Monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*) a few groups KB and a group during the cruise last day WRC.

Maroon Langur (*Presbytis rubicunda*) two in DFR far in trees, a few @ GC and a group of 8 in DV near the diner.

Silvered Langur (*Trachypithecus cristatus*) a group of 5 @ KB, and a group of 6 in trees @ WRC.

North Bornean Gibbon (*Hylobates funerea*) three sightings in DFR, two groups and one individual, they were quite shy.

Bornean Orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) In SEP we found about 6 individuals of which one male showing itself nicely around the canopy walk. Also a mother and young more distant. In DFR we saw 6 true wild individuals (2 mother and young, a single female and a very big male), another one individual from the boat in KB high in trees.

Sunda Giant Squirrel (*Ratufa affinis*) In SEP two, in DFR 1

Black Flying Squirrel (*Aeromys tephromelas*) not sure if we saw one of these

Thomas's Flying Squirrel (*Aeromys thomasi*) We saw a few in DFR.

Red Giant Flying Squirrel (*Petaurista petaurista*) We saw many at DFR and also two in SEP from the canopy walk.

Plantain Squirrel (*Callosciurus notatus*) Seen from boat in KB

Prevost's Squirrel (*Callosciurus prevostii*) Seen in SEP and in DV

Bornean Mountain Ground Squirrel (*Dremomys evertti*) Observed once at KNP

Jentink's Squirrel (*Sundasciurus jentinki*) Common at KNP and CR.

Some mouse that looked like a sort of kangaroo rat Seen once on a night drive in DFR.

Big Rat unidentified in KB diner on the roof One on the roof of the diner, quite big animal.

Long-tailed Porcupine (*Trichys fasciculata*) one during nightdrive DV

Large Flying Fox (*Pteropus vampyrus*) one in DFR night drive

Fawn Roundleaf Bat (*Hipposideros cervinus*) Hundreds in the cave at Poring.

Leopard Cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) one or two during each night drive @ DFR but too quick to get good pictures, I really missed out on that one ☹️ also one @ DV again missed it...

Clouded Leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) one well seen on a nightdrive @DFR another just missed crossing the road while Gibbon were alarmed.

Binturong (*Arctictis binturong*) two in DFR of which one during three nights in the same tree.

Bornean Striped Civet (*Arctogalidia stigmatica*) Common at DFR.

Island Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus philippinensis*) Common DFR, one at DV.

Malayan Civet (*Viverra zibetha*) Common DFR, one at the DV.

Sun Bear (*Helarctos malayanus*) two on different nights, one running on the road and a second in bushes on the ground.

Smooth-coated Otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) two crossing the road on night drive.

Lesser Mousedeer (*Tragulus kanchil*) Common at DFR. (not sure if we also seen large one)

Sambar (*Rusa unicolor*) Common around the compound at DV. One crossing DFR.

Bearded Pig (*Sus barbatus*) one in DFR and a few in DV

Banded Civet (*Hemigalus derbyanus*) one KB creek

Pigmy squirrel (*Exilisciurus exilis*) one KB creek

Short-tailed mongoose (*Herpestes brachyurus*) two PH crossing trail to waterfall

Bornean pigmy Elephant (*Elaphas Maximux borneensis*) a few groups along the road in DFR

Red muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*) DFR one running across road

Yellow muntjac (*Muntiacus atherodes*) DFR around camp at night

And at least four more unidentified bats.



Colugo Kinabatangan

PHOTOGRAPHIC IMPRESSION OF THE MAMMALS SEEN



Red Giant flying squirrel (Sepilok)



Phillipine slow lori (Sepilok)



Giant squirrel (Sepilok)



Bearder Pig (Danum)



Sambar Danum



Binturong Deramakot



Small toothed palm civet Deramakot



Striped palm civet Deramakot (up) red giant flying squirrel (Sepilok)





Clouded Leopard Deramakot





Thomasson's flying squirrel up, Malay Civet down (Deramakot)





Smooth coated fishotter Deramakot





Sun bear





Long tailed macaque (Kinabatangan & Elephant Deramakot





Unknown squirrel, maybe earspotted



Trevos squirrel



Some bat



Giant squirrel



Pig tailed macaque



Thomassons flying squirrel



Proboscis monkey

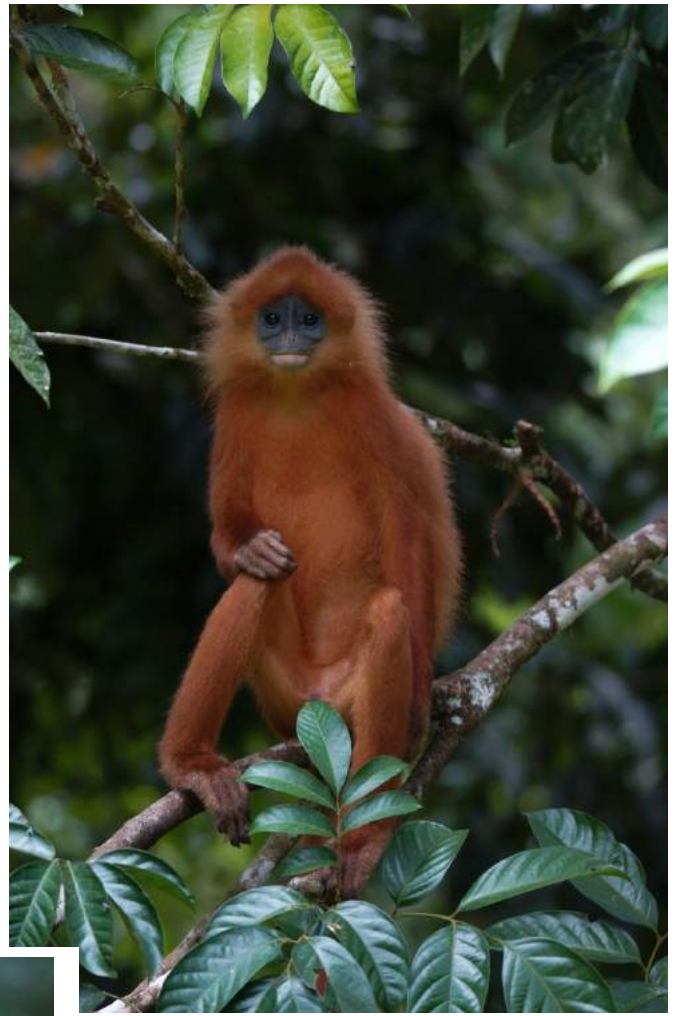




**Pig-tailed macaque + Silvered langur
(kinabatangan)**



Red langur





Plantain squirrel + least pigmy squirrel





Danum morning view



Red giant flying squirrel



Jentinck's squirrel





Orang-utan



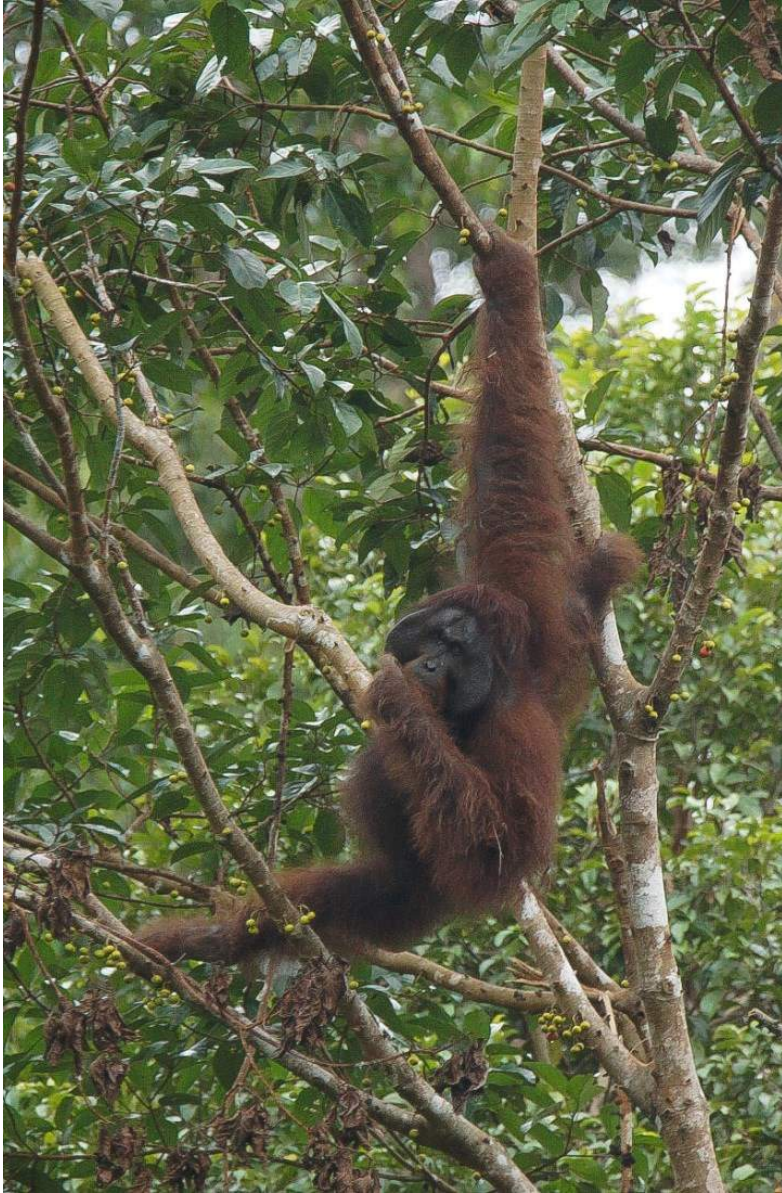




Red langur



snake



Local big orang-utan man Deramakot





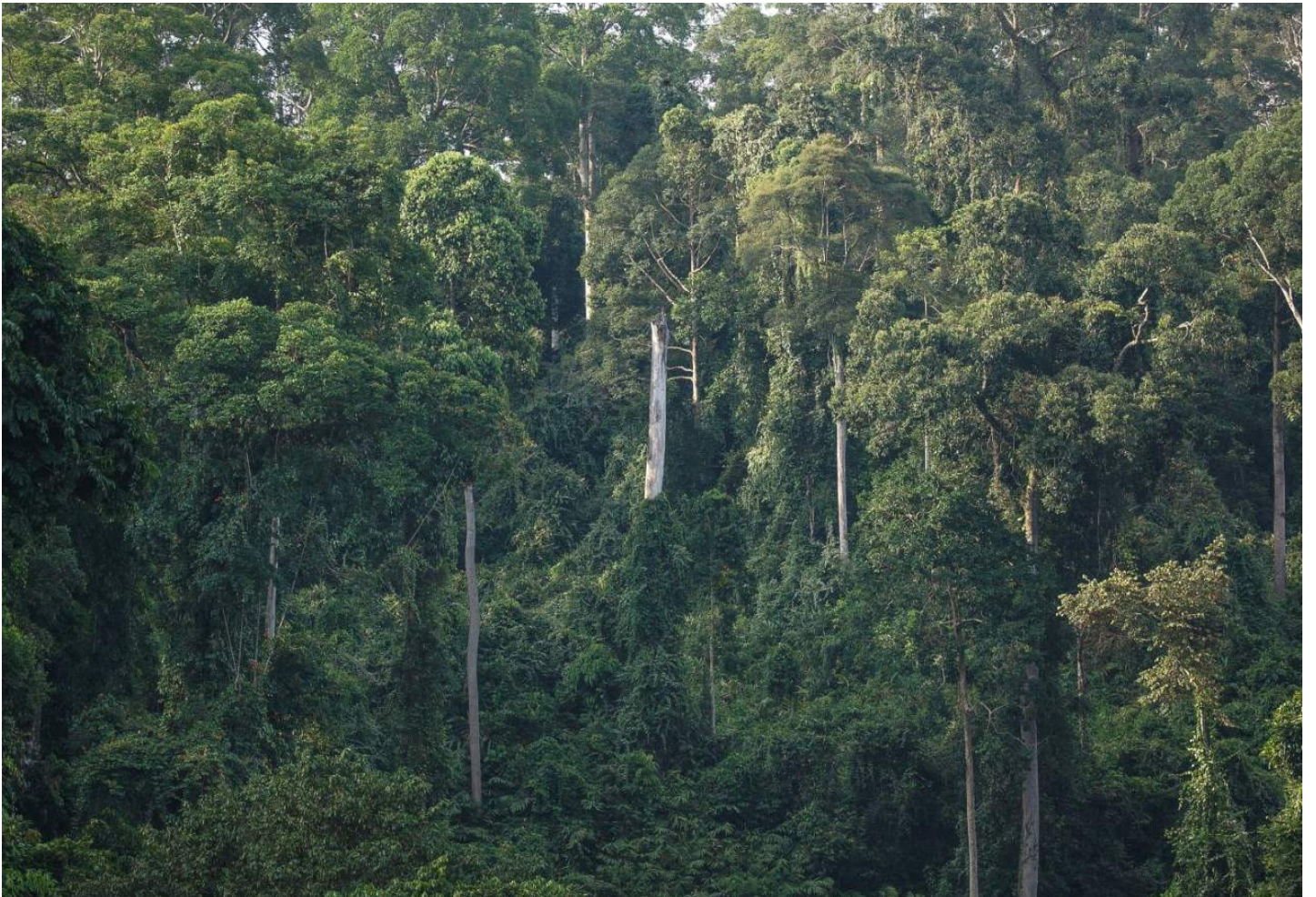
Black giant bee



hornbill



Danum views





Kinabatangan river and creek





crocodile



Proboscis male



Proboscis monkey female



Gomantong Cave bats flying out



Bat Hawk hunting @ Gomantong cave



Rafflesia flower



Weston River Cruise