

**Malayan Tapir trip
Taman Negara National Park, Malaysia:
7-8 June, 2018**



A work trip brought me back to Taman Negara, and although I had tried and failed to see Malayan Tapir at the same location a couple of years ago, as the opportunity presented itself, I had to try again.

We only had a window of one night to visit the hide and so we booked a boat to pick us up from the Mutiara resort and arrived at the hide at dusk. Kumbang hide overlooks a small clearing in the forest which appears to be a mineral lick and watering hole. The hide itself is a concrete structure 6 meters off the ground with a good viewing window over the clearing. There are wooden bunks but you need to bring your own mosquito net and sleeping bag (and sleeping mat).

Just after dusk a gaur appeared and stayed most of the night feeding on the vegetation and seemed completely unconcerned with our presence. This was a good start but by 10.30 pm no other mammals had appeared so we decided to take hour shifts throughout the night divided amongst the 4 of us. At a little after 11pm, my colleague Nick, woke us to the joyous news that a tapir was at the lick. It was a male and again seemed unconcerned with our presence. The tapir came and went throughout the night with some visits lasting an hour or more and spent most of its time drinking/feeding. At around 1am, a

second smaller tapir appeared (possibly female) but it was chased off by the male before I could get a picture. It also reappeared throughout the night.

If the tapir is on your bucket list of large S.E. Asian tropical mammals, I would say that at the moment, spotting a tapir at the Kumbang hide is definitely *twitchable* and worth trying. I don't know of any other site in the region where these unique animals can be seen.

We booked the Kumbang Hide through Andrew Sebastian (who offers very good rates and is very helpful). Andrew is a guide and is a nature enthusiast who I strongly recommend. Although he didn't guide on this occasion he made sure the boat, the bookings were all taken care of. Andrew's contact details are below:

- ajsebastian@hotmail.com

Itinerary

Travel to Taman Negara from KL takes 4-5 hours. Most visitors stay at the Mutiara resort on the edge of the park and accessible by a short boat ride.

7 June Left the Mutiara resort by boat at 5.30pm and arrived at a ranger station 45 minutes later (upstream from the resort). You need to show your hide booking form and park permit to the rangers. Walked to the hide which takes an hour (be prepared to sweat- so take a change of clothes).

8 June Left the hide in the early morning and caught the boat back to the resort.

9 June 5 hour drive back to Kuala Lumpur.

MAMMALS SEEN

1	Malayan tapir <i>Tapirus indicus</i>	One male stayed around the Kumbang hide most of the night with a second animal arriving at around 1am. They were both seen regularly from 11pm to 6 am. Fantastic!
2	Gaur <i>Bos gaurus</i>	One male seen most of the night at Kumbang hide.
3	Gray-Bellied squirrel <i>Calloscurius caniceps</i>	Commonly seen around the resort
4	Low's squirrel <i>Sundaciurus lowii</i>	One animal seen on the forest floor on the boardwalk on the way to the canopy walkway.
5	Sunda slow loris <i>Nycticebus coucang</i>	One animal seen on a night drive outside the park

Check out this short clip of the tapir:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcjKkgvrqOA&feature=youtu.be>

