

For as long as I can remember, I've always wanted to see orangutans! I find these large apes amazing with incredible human expressions. A friend of mine gave me some information about a location in South Borneo where we could apparently easily see them: the Tanjung Puting National Park in Kalimantan. This is a park that is less known and crowded with tourists compared to the famous parks in the Sabah province in North Borneo in Malaysia.

We booked this short trip (7 days only) with Isy, a local guy who owns a small tour agency called www.borneotour.org. He has his own boat, a 16-meter-long boat designed by an American journalist who used it to spend a year on the river with her son. It has a picnic table with sturdy wooden chairs on the main deck where a large mosquito net can be put up around the roof transforming the deck into a Balinese-styled bedroom. Isy is a very nice person, running his business very well and he is also a good guide very knowledgeable of the area. We visited the park using his boat: the idea being to sail at very low speed along the rivers within the park and look at the forest and wildlife from the boat. This is a very nice and calm experience. We ate and slept in the boat and spent the majority of the day resting on the main deck looking for what nature could offer us: both mammals and birds. At a few locations along the rivers however, we stopped to do some hikes deep inside the forest with the main target to search for orangutans. To be honest, the best places where we could see them in big numbers were at the 3 feeding stations located inside the park and handled by the park rangers. They are great for observations and pictures but not so "wild". Having said that, we could also see several orangutans (obviously in lower numbers) from the boat while sailing along the river. These individuals were roaming freely and completely wild, another great experience!

All in all, I found this trip to be memorable and although we did not see so many different mammals: only 8 different species (but many birds), it is a trip I would recommend to others if your primary target is orangutans... and if you are ok to live on a small boat for several days ☺ Indeed, to avoid any surprise or disappointment, it is good to know that the boat was very comfortable but small and not luxurious. The bed is outside of the cabins used by the captain, guide and cook (the food was plentiful and excellent and guide) and the toilets / shower are very basic. I found it great to sleep within the park with all the insect and animal noises at night and under the stars... when it doesn't rain!! This was actually the most and only painful aspect of the trip for me: the high level of humidity. We were there in April, which is not the wettest season in Borneo, but we had rain everyday however (not all day long luckily!) and it was very hot so as a consequence, I was sweating constantly, even right after taking a shower. It is a feeling I don't really appreciate.

Below is the list of mammals we saw:

Mammals with photos or well seen				
Species	Espèces	Latin Name	Where seen	Pic
Orangutan	Orang-Outan de Bornéo	Pongo pygmaeus	Many at feeding stations / 6 along river	X
Proboscis monkey	Nasique	Nasalis larvatus	2 groups along the river	X
Agile gibbon	Gibbon agile	Hylobates agilis	3 only in a tall tree far from the river	X
Silvered langur	Semnopithèque argenté	Trachypithecus cristatus	5-6 in trees near the river bank	X
Crab-eating macaque	Macaque crabier	Macaca fascicularis	Common and everywhere	X
Black-striped squirrel	Ecureuil arboricole à bandes noires	Callosciurus nigrovittatus	3 near feeding stations	X
Prevost's squirrel	Ecureuil arboricole de Prévost	Callosciurus prevostii	2 near feeding stations	X
Bornean bearded pig	Sanglier à moustaches	Sus barbatus	4 near feeding stations	X
Total Species Recorded = 8				

I'm adding to this report a few pictures of some of the iconic species we observed during that trip or that were new to me.



Orangutan



Crab-eating macaque



Proboscis monkey



Silvered langur



Black-striped squirrel



Bornean bearded pig



Agile gibbon



Prevost's squirrel