

Fiona Reid's Wildlife Encounters

Borneo

October 24 - November 8, 2022

This 16-day, 15 night trip to Borneo has a strong emphasis on mammals and much of our prowls will be at night in order to look for elusive pangolin, clouded leopard and many other rare mammals. However the bird life is also stunning and diverse, as are insects, plants, frogs and just about everything on this island archipelago, so we will make the most of our time, perhaps slipping in the occasional siesta at midday to make up for many late nights and early mornings! Please do join me on this grand adventure.

October 24

Arrival into Kota Kinabalu

We will meet in Kota Kinabalu and transfer to the Hotel 63 for overnight. You may want to arrive a day or so early to adjust to the time difference.

October 25-27

Mount Kinabalu

We travel into the mountains, and find ourselves climbing toward the Crocker Ranges and the impressive massif of Mount Kinabalu. Soon we are enjoying the cooler air, as we start to look for endemic highland birds such as Mountain, Gold-whiskered and Bornean Barbets, and perhaps a Mountain Blackeye. Mount Kinabalu is a World Heritage Site, and the highest mountain in the Malay Archipelago. It is renowned for its botanical and biological species diversity, with over 5,000 species of plants identified. Numerous pitcher plants, slipper orchids and even the parasitic Rafflesia, with the world's largest flower, occur here. We will be on the lookout for this spectacular plant in flower during our stay. We can set up a light for moths one night, as the diversity of species is terrific and some of the most spectacular moths are found here. During our visit we will look for a variety of highland mammals, mostly smaller species such as Mountain and Lesser Treeshrews, Jentink's, Bornean Black-banded and Mountain Ground Squirrel. If lucky we may see Whitehead's Pygmy Squirrel. At night we hope to see Spotted Giant Flying Squirrel, among other species. If we are very lucky, we may see a Linsang (as we did on my last tour in 2017). Many of the primates, deer and other large mammals occur in the region but are more easily seen elsewhere. We will also look for endemic mammals including Bornean Ferret-badger (found between 1100-3000 m) and black shrew. Birding is excellent, and from our lodge we can spy a good variety of birds. We may also find the Montane Horned Frog and other herps of interest.

We stay three nights at Mt Kinabalu HQ in Peak Lodge (private rooms with one bathroom per 2 rooms)

October 28 to November 1

Deramakot Forest Reserve

We head to Deramakot for a **five-night** stay. This forest reserve is one of the richest areas for mammals in Borneo. It is a mixed dipterocarp forest where "reduced impact logging" is

permitted. As one of Sabah's flagship projects, a large portion of the reserve has been set aside for conservation. This is one of the best places in Borneo to see cats, including the elusive Clouded Leopard. Projects in Deramakot include a study of mammals visiting natural salt licks, where Bearded Pig, Sambar Deer, Lesser Mouse Deer Malay Badger and Orangutan are commonly recorded, and other mammals (three species of porcupine, Moonrat, Sun Bear, 5 civet species, Sunda Pangolin, and Leopard Cat and Clouded Leopard among others) have been recorded on camera traps at these sites. We will spend our days out early in the morning and afternoon, with a break for a siesta, then going out after dinner by vehicle and on foot to spotlight nocturnal mammals. Night drives can be outstanding for mammals here, so we will stay out late most nights (most night drives will be about 4 hours). High on our list will be Sunda Pangolin, Slow Loris, Marbled Cat, Bornean Gibbon, Stink Badger, and numerous small to medium-sized mammals, some of which we will encounter by day, along with a very diverse range of birds and herps. On our last trip we found several rare mammals including Otter Covey and Banded Palm Civet, Marbled Cat, Orangutan, Maroon Langur, Colugo and many others. Of the herpetiles, Wallace's Flying Frog and Reticulated Python were two highlights. Our guide, Mike Gordon, is a whirling dervish with a spotlight and a strong preference for mammals and herps, but he will stop for hornbills, owls, and other birds of interest too.

We stay 5 nights in park chalets that are fairly basic, with ensuite, AC, and black-out curtains

November 2 to 3

Sukau and the Lower Kinabatang River

We leave after breakfast for Sukau, with a stop en route at the famous Gomatong Caves. This huge limestone cavern is home to millions of swiftlets and bats. The swiftlet nests have been harvested sustainably for hundreds of years, and it is impressive to see the flimsy ladders used to climb the sheer walls of the cave. Bats are very abundant but difficult to identify due to the height of the ceiling, but using a scope we should have some luck with IDs. We may choose to climb "guano mountain" to see more bats, or stay outside enjoying habituated orangutans and close views of langurs. We continue to the floodplain of the river, which contains patches of forest with oil palm plantations, scattered oxbow lakes and limestone outcrops. These forests are full of kingfishers, bulbuls, hornbills, broadbills and much more. Here we hope to see Proboscis Monkeys, Orangutan and other primates such as Long-tailed Macaques and Silvered Langurs. Bornean Pygmy Elephant can be encountered, and if very lucky we may see Flat-headed Cat or even Clouded Leopard here. In addition to the diverse and abundant bird life, butterflies and dragonflies are very plentiful, as are moths and other spectacular insects. A night trip will allow us a chance to see various civets and other small to medium-sized mammals, as well as Buffy Fish Owls and other nocturnal fauna. We have two nights and a full day to explore this area by boat and on foot, while we are based at a remote and very comfortable lodge.

We stay 2 nights at Kinabatangan Wetlands Resort, an exclusive nature retreat.

November 4 to 7

Tabin Wildlife Reserve

After a final trip on the river, we will transfer by road to Tabin Wildlife Reserve, one of the best places to see an array of mammals up close, even from your own room. During our time at Tabin, we will walk in to visit a mud volcano, where mammals often come to lick the mineral-rich mud. Pygmy Elephants, Sambar and Bornean Yellow Muntjak, Bearded Pigs and other mammals can be seen here. At night we will explore on foot and by safari vehicle (or pick-up

truck) and can expect to see a good variety of mammals such as muntjac (2 species), mouse deer (2 species), and with luck Binturong, Giant Flying Squirrel, Colugo, Slow Loris, and with luck a Malay Stink Badger, Thick-spined Porcupine or the elusive Sun Bear. The night drives here can be excellent, with many species seen moving from forest to oil palm plantations, either to feed on the rich fruits or to prey on rodents attracted to the palms. Leopard Cats are especially dense here, and there is a chance of Bornean Clouded Leopard here too. In the daytime we will try to find Orangutan, Pygmy Elephant, numerous squirrels and tree-shrews, and a good variety of birds. Several species of hornbill occur here, along with babblers, flowerpeckers, woodpeckers, sunbirds and many Bornean specialties. We will also be on the lookout for Hose's Langur, and we can expect great views of Borneo Gibbons. Asian Short-clawed Otters can be seen near the lodge.

We spend 4 nights at Tabin Wildlife Resort, in comfortable private rooms with en-suite

November 8

Heading home

Today we make our way to the coast at Lahad Datu where we board a 4:30 p.m. flight to Kota Kinabalu. Our trip ends this evening, as many flights depart at night and we hope to arrive in time for those departures. If you need to stay another night, we can help arrange this (the cost is not included).

Cost, not including local and international flights, double occupancy: \$5,950.00 US
Single supplement: \$ 985.00 US