



Royle Safaris ran its Borneo's Rare Mammals Tour (with optional post tour extension to Tawau Hills National Park) once again in the summer of 2022. The first one since the covid-19 pandemic and we couldn't wait to get back. Borneo is a staple of our mammalwatching group tour calendar and over the years we have recorded 110 species of mammals, 208 species of birds, 54 species of reptiles, 29 species of amphibians and even 7 species of fish (across 4 separate trips); and we hoped for some more incredible success on our latest trip in August / September 2022.

Borneo is without a question one of the most biodiverse and wildlife rich locations in the world. From enigmatic orangutans to pygmy elephants and from huge salt-water crocodiles to well-endowed hornbills the tropical island has some of the world's best known species. However it is also home to animals that most people have never heard of, from the very elusive Borneo ground cuckoo to the curious looking proboscis monkey and from the secretive sun bear to the misleading flying lemur; Borneo has many species which are just down right strange.

This trip will focus on a small number of probably the most elusive, endearing and incredible mammals here. Often shy and elusive there is a wealth of life to be found after dark in the forests of Borneo. From the top predator on the forest the Sunda clouded leopard and its smaller cousins, Sunda Leopard Cat, Flat-headed Cat, Marbled Cat and the near mythical Bay Cat to the more commonly seen civet species, colugos and slow loris; this trip will aim to showcase the best of Borneo's mammals by both day and night.

There is a good probability we will not see all of our targets, that is the nature of things when looking for the rarest and most elusive. But it is very hard to spend considerable time in the forests of Borneo and not see an impressive number of species (mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians). To help us in our quest for the rarest species we have the expert help from local spotters (this tour was guided by Mike Gordon), incredibly experienced guides and even advice and information from the leading biologists in Borneo. All of this, some specialist equipment and a huge amount of luck would be needed in order to be successful. But if you do not try you will never be successful

So we set off with three different destinations in mind, firstly wonderful Tabin Wildlife Sanctuary; which has a very nice lodge and also a pretty good track record for Malayan sun bears. But its proximity to a palm oil plantation means that there is a good amount of rodents around and this brings in civets and leopard cats and we hoped for good sightings of these, even if the sun bears remained hard to see. Tabin is also the location of the last Sumatran rhino in Malaysia. One old was kept in a pen inside the forest, a sad reminder of how fragile the forests here are and even sadder when this animal died a couple of years ago, leaving Malaysia with no rhinos at all. We then would have a couple of nights looking for the semi aquatic flat-headed cat along the shores of the Kinabatangan River, before finishing in the wonderful and now famous sustainably logged reserve (low-impact logging) of Deramakot, which would produce Sunda leopard cat and hopefully either or both Sunda clouded leopard and marbled cat.

All of these forests have one thing in common. They may not be around (or their inhabitants as numerous) in the near future. These forests are some of the most under threat in the world, increasing human population, coupled with poaching and illegal logging are culminating in the forests and the animals they harbour becoming increasingly rare and endangered. But the single biggest threat here is the ceaseless conversion of forest to monotonous palm oil plantations. By driving around a good part of Sabah (one of the more wildlife and conservation focused parts of South East Asia) we will see first-hand the difference between pristine forest and monoculture plantations. We aim to showcase the wildlife and forests of Sabah as well as increasing awareness of the problems it is facing.

We will also have the guidance of passionate local guides and there are some fantastic conservation groups working tirelessly to increase sustainable ecotourism here and save as many acres and species as possible.

As many of our targeted species are nocturnal we will be spending a large proportion of our time in the dark, searching the forests and river banks with a spotlight; looking for the tell-tale eye shine of an animals eyes reflecting back the light from your torch. It is always very hard to predict what animals you may see when you embark on a safari, but one thing we know for sure with this trip to Sabah, Borneo: that is that we will see plenty and what we do see will either be endemic, endangered or elusive.

After the main trip one of our clients (Mark Langston) travelled on to explore the Tawau Hills National Park (as part of our optional post-tour extension) with the expert guidance of our guide Shavez. This was a week-long trip to this remote and seldom visited park and it was very successful. It can be hard to see wildlife here, the main trails are all on foot and it requires great luck and patience to stake out likely areas for wildlife to come to you. But a quick summary of some of the species seen include: **black flying squirrel**, **collared mongoose**, reticulated python, **banded civet**, **binturong**, helmeted hornbill, a full sightings log is below; not a bad end to the trip

Below is a run brief synopsis of the trip and then our species count in the following table and some pictures from the trip. The trip started in Lahad Datu with everyone's arrival and then transfer to the first wildlife watching location of Tabin Wildlife Sanctuary. Here the trip started with a bang (which is great to get some nice sightings out of the way early, but it can also lead to a trip feeling like it is all downhill from the start). In a few days here the highlights included **sun bear**, **moonrat**, **Sunda flying fox**, **Phillipine slow loris**, **western tarsier**, **north Borneo gibbon**, **oriental short-clawed otter**, **Sunda leopard cat**, **marbled cat**, **thick-spined porcupine**, **Asiatic elephant**, **Borneo Orangutan** along with many rodents and various civets; we even had a unusual sighting of a **proboscis monkey** in Tabin.

From here the group went to the largest river in Malaysian Borneo, the Kinabatangan River. Water levels were high and so trying to spot a flat-headed cat were very difficult and we failed in this, but we did see the other major targets along the river including **proboscis monkey**, **Asiatic elephants**, **Island palm civet**, **Borneo striped civet**, **plain pygmy squirrel**, **Sundiac silvered langur** and **southern pig-tailed macaque**.

The third and final location was Deramakot, with a week here and many long night drives we were rewarded with sightings of various bat species, rodents, many **slow loris**, **maroon langurs**, **Borneo orangutans**, **north Borneo gibbons**, **Malayan porcupine**, **yellow-throated marten**, **Malayan stink badger**, various civets including great views of an **otter civet** and many more.

As well as mammals, below we have listed the birds, reptiles and amphibians seen on the trip.

We are Royle Safaris remains committed to trying to establish small-scale sustainable eco tourism centred around some of the world's rarest and little seen mammal species. So anyone who is interested in looking for such an animal (such as the elusive nocturnal wildlife of Borneo or any other animals) and cannot find a means of getting a trip together or is struggling to find like minded people to travel with; contact us (info@royle-safaris.co.uk) we have a network of local guides, researchers and conservationists around the world as well as a large following of clients and so are uniquely situated to put together pioneering mammalwatching trips and get small groups together for such trips. Or we can arrange private tours if you do not want to be in a small group. Any and all options are possible and we look forward to hearing from you and working on the next rare mammalwatching expedition.

We have just started offering our 2024 Borneo Rare Mammals Tour and optional post tour extension to Tawau Hills National Park if anyone is interested please get in touch. This tour will also be guided by Mike Gordon.

All of the pictures below are from Mark Langston and Mike Robinson with their permissions.

Species List

Borneo's Rare Mammals Tour & Tawau Hills Extension – Aug/Sep 2022

Mammals

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Black Flying Squirrel	<i>Aeromys tephromelas</i>
2	Thomas's Flying Squirrel	<i>Aeromys thomasi</i>
3	Oriental Small Clawed Otter	<i>Aonyx cinereus</i>

Key: Tabin Wildlife Sanctuary (TAB) Kinabatangan River (KIN) / Deramakot Forest Reserve (DER) / Tawau Hills National Park (TAU)			
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4	Binturong	<i>Arctictis binturong</i>
5	Bornean Striped Palm Civet	<i>Arctogalidia stigmatica</i>
6	Ear-spot Squirrel	<i>Callosciurus adamsi</i>
7	Plantain Squirrel	<i>Callosciurus notatus</i>
8	Prevosts Squirrel	<i>Callosciurus prevostii</i>
9	Western Tarsier	<i>Cephalopachus bancanus</i>
10	Sambar Deer	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>
11	Otter Civet	<i>Cynogale bennettii</i>
12	Greater Short Nosed Fruit Bat	<i>Cynopterus sphinx</i>
13	Moonrat	<i>Echinosorex gymnura</i>
14	Asiatic Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>
15	Plain Pygmy Squirrel	<i>Exilisciurus exilis</i>
16	Sunda colugo	<i>Galeopterus variegatus</i>
17	Ranee Mouse	<i>Haeromys margarettae</i>
18	Sun Bear	<i>Helarctos malayanus</i>
19	Banded Palm Civet	<i>Hemigalus derbyanus</i>
20	Diadem Roundleaf Bat	<i>Hipposideros diadema</i>
21	North Borneon Gibbon	<i>Hylobates funereus</i>
22	Malay Porcupine	<i>Hystrix brachyura</i>
23	Thick Spined Porcupine	<i>Hystrix crassispinis</i>
24	Long Tailed Macaque	<i>Macaca fascicularis</i>
25	Southern Pig Tailed Macaque	<i>Macaca nemestrina</i>
26	Yellow Throated Marten	<i>Martes flavigula</i>
27	Red Maxomys	<i>Maxomys surifer</i>
28	Borneo Yellow Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus atherodes</i>
29	Sunda Skunk	<i>Mydaus javanensis</i>
30	Proboscis Monkey	<i>Nasalis larvatus</i>
31	Sunda Clouded Leopards	<i>Neofelis nebulosa</i>
32	Dark-tailed Tree Niviventer	<i>Niviventer cremoriventer</i>
33	Phillipine Slow Loris	<i>Nycticebus menagensis</i>
34	Island Palm Civet	<i>Paradoxurus philippinensis</i>
35	Marbled Cat	<i>Pardofelis marmorata</i>
36	Red Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista petaurista</i>
37	Borneo Orangutan	<i>Pongo pygmaeus</i>
38	Maroon Langur	<i>Presbytis rubicunda</i>
39	Sunda Leopard Cat	<i>Prionailurus javanensis</i>
40	Island flying fox	<i>Pteropus hypomelanus</i>
41	Large flying fox	<i>Pteropus vampyrus</i>
42	Malaysian Field Rat	<i>Rattus tiomanicus</i>

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43	Cream-coloured Giant Squirrel	<i>Ratufa affinis</i>
44	Trefiol Horshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus trifoliatus</i>
45	Lows Squirrel	<i>Sundasciurus lowii</i>
46	Borneo Bearded Pig	<i>Sus barbatus</i>
47	Silvery Langur	<i>Trachypithecus cristatus</i>
48	Lesser Mouse Deer	<i>Tragulus kanchil</i>
49	Greater Mouse Deer	<i>Tragulus napu</i>
50	Lesser Treeshrew	<i>Tupaia minor</i>
51	Collared Mongoose	<i>Urva semitorquata</i>
52	Malay Civet	<i>Viverra zangalunga</i>

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Note: Some bats identified 100% at roosts or with good views. Others identified with spectrograms in combination with sightings (no spectrograms without visual confirmation are recorded as a sighting), behaviour and habitat – so not 100% but best educated guesses. For more information please email me.

‡ - Animals where signs were seen but not the animal

Birds

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	White Crowned Hornbill	<i>Aceros comatus</i>
2	Wrinkled Hornbill	<i>Aceros corrugatus</i>
3	Wreathed Hornbill	<i>Aceros undulatus</i>
4	Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>
5	Common Mynah	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
6	Crimson Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>
7	Blue Eared Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo meninting</i>
8	Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
9	Bushy Crested Hornbill	<i>Anorrhinus galeritus</i>
10	Oriental Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros albirostris</i>
11	Asian Black Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros malayanus</i>
12	Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>
13	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
14	Great Argus	<i>Argusianus argus</i>
15	Jerdon's Baza	<i>Aviceda jerdoni</i>
16	Blythe's Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus affinis</i>
17	Javan Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus javensis</i>
18	Barred Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo sumatranus</i>
19	Rhinoceros Hornbill	<i>Buceros rhinoceros</i>

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20	Helmeted Hornbill	<i>Buceros vigil</i>
21	Brown Barbet	<i>Calorhamphus fuliginosus</i>
22	Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>
23	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
24	Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
25	Lesser Green Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis cyanopogon</i>
26	Greater Green Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis sonnerati</i>
27	Storm Stork	<i>Ciconia stormi</i>
28	Gossy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>
29	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
30	Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
31	White Crowned Shama	<i>Copsychus stricklandii</i>
32	Slender Billed Crow	<i>Corvus enca</i>
33	Red and Black Broadbill	<i>Cymbirhynchus macrorhynchus</i>
34	Bronzed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>
35	White Bellied Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus javensis</i>
36	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
37	Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>
38	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
39	Pacific Reef Egret	<i>Egretta sacra</i>
40	Yellow Breasted Flowerpecker	<i>Empidonax flaviventris</i>
41	White Crowned Forktail	<i>Enicurus leschenaulti</i>
42	Verditer Flycatcher	<i>Eumyias thalassina</i>
43	Black and Yellow Broadbill	<i>Eurylaimus ochromalus</i>
44	Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
45	Olive Backed Woodpecker	<i>Gecinulus rafflesii</i>
46	Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
47	Brahimy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
48	Diard's Trogon	<i>Harpactes diardii</i>
49	Black Winged Flycatcher Shrike	<i>Hemipus hirundinaceus</i>
50	Chestnut-bellied Hawk Eagle	<i>Hieraetus kienerii</i>
51	Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
52	Grey Headed Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>
53	Indian Black Eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i>
54	Grey Bellied Bulbul	<i>Ixodia cyaniventris</i>
55	Buffy Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa ketupu</i>
56	Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>
57	Chestnut Munia	<i>Lonchura atricapilla</i>
58	Dusky Munia	<i>Lonchura fuscans</i>

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59	Crested Fireback	<i>Lophura ignita</i>
60	Blue Crowned Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus galgulus</i>
61	Blue Eared Barbet	<i>Megalaima australis</i>
62	Philippine Megapode	<i>Megapodus cumingii</i>
63	Blue Throated Bee Eater	<i>Merops viridis</i>
64	Black Crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
65	Red Bearded Bee Eater	<i>Nyctyornis amictus</i>
66	Dark Necked Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus atrogularis</i>
67	Ashy Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus ruficeps</i>
68	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
69	Stork Billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
70	Fiery Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus igneus</i>
71	Oriental Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
72	Oriental Bay Owl	<i>Phodilus badius</i>
73	Yellow Bellied Prinia	<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>
74	Black-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus atriceps</i>
75	Asian Red Eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus brunneus</i>
76	Silver Rumped Spinetail	<i>Rhaphidura leucopygialis</i>
77	Raffles Malkhoha	<i>Rhinortha chlorophaea</i>
78	Malaysian Pied Fantail	<i>Rhipidura javanica</i>
79	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
80	Blyth's Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus alboniger</i>
81	Changeable Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>
82	Wallace's Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus nanus</i>
83	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>
84	Brown Wood Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>
85	Little Green Pigeon	<i>Treron olax</i>

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Seen on pre tour trip to offshore islands			
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Reptiles

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Blunt-headed snail-eating snake	<i>Aplopeltura boa</i>
2	Dark-necked snail-eating snake	<i>Asthenodipsas malaccanus</i>
3	Green Crested Lizard	<i>Bronchoccela cristatella</i>
4	Estuarine Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>
5	Taylor's bow-fingered gecko	<i>Cyrtodactylus quadrivirgatus</i>

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6	Striped Tree Skink	<i>Dasia vittatum</i>
7	Red Bearded Flying Dragon	<i>Draco haematopogon</i>
8	Saddlebacked dwarf treesnake	<i>Dryocalamus subannulatus</i>
9	Common sun-skink	<i>Eutropis multifasciata</i>
10	Smiths Giant Gecko	<i>Gekko smithii</i>
11	Giant Forest Lizard	<i>Gonocephalus grandis</i>
12	Brooke's house gecko	<i>Hemidactylus brookii</i>
13	Asian House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>
14	Rough mabuya	<i>Mabuya rudis</i>
15	Asian Giant Tortoise	<i>Manouria emys</i>
16	Mocquard's Eyebrow Lizard	<i>Phoxophrys cephalum</i>
17	Common mock viper	<i>Psammodynastes pulverulentus</i>
18	Barking Gecko	<i>Ptenopus garrulus</i>
19	Bornean Keeled Pit Viper	<i>Tropidolaemus subannulatus</i>
20	Asian Water Monitor	<i>Varanus salvator</i>

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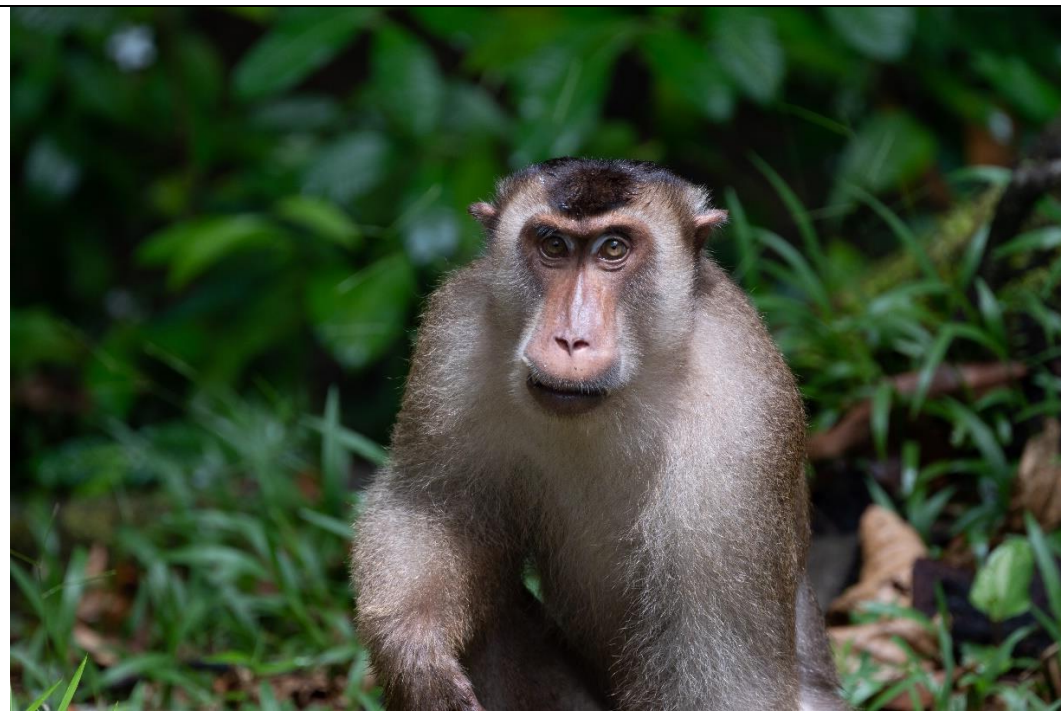
Amphibians

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Cricket Frog	<i>Amnirana nicobariensis</i>
2	Grass Frog	<i>Fejervarya limnocharis</i>
3	Rough Guardian Frog	<i>Limnonectes finchi</i>
4	Giant River Frog	<i>Limnonectes leoprinus</i>
5	Borneo treehole frog	<i>Metaphrynella sundana</i>
6	Cinnamon treefrog	<i>Nyctixalus pictus</i>
7	Four lined Tree Frog	<i>Polypedates leucomystax</i>
8	Dark Eared Tree Frog	<i>Polypedates macrotis</i>
9	File Eared Frog	<i>Polypedates otilophus</i>
10	Harlequin Flying Frog	<i>Rhacophorus pardalis</i>
11	Wallace's Flying Frog	<i>Rhacophorus nigropalmatus</i>

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Binturong



Southern Pig-tailed Macaque



Bornean Striped Palm Civet



Large Flying Fox



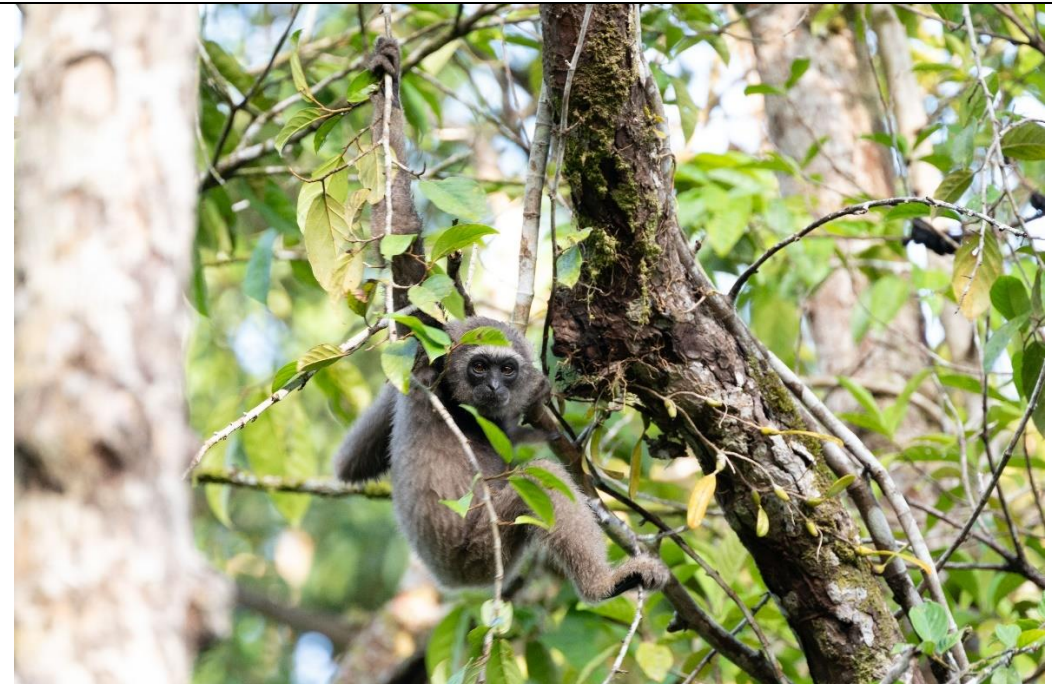
Lesser Oriental Mouse-deer



Island Palm Civet



Marbled Cat



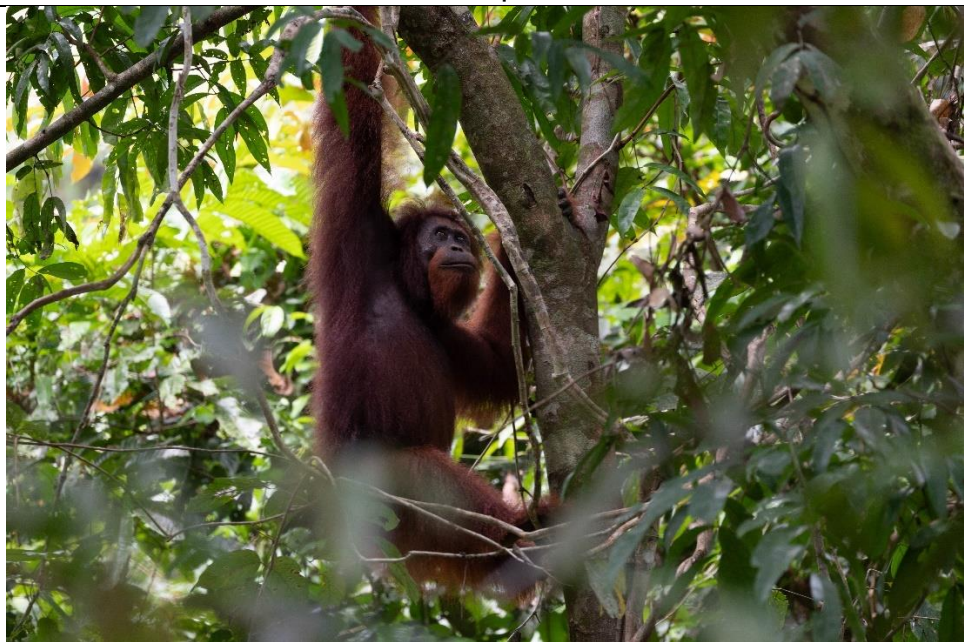
Northern Bornean Gibbon



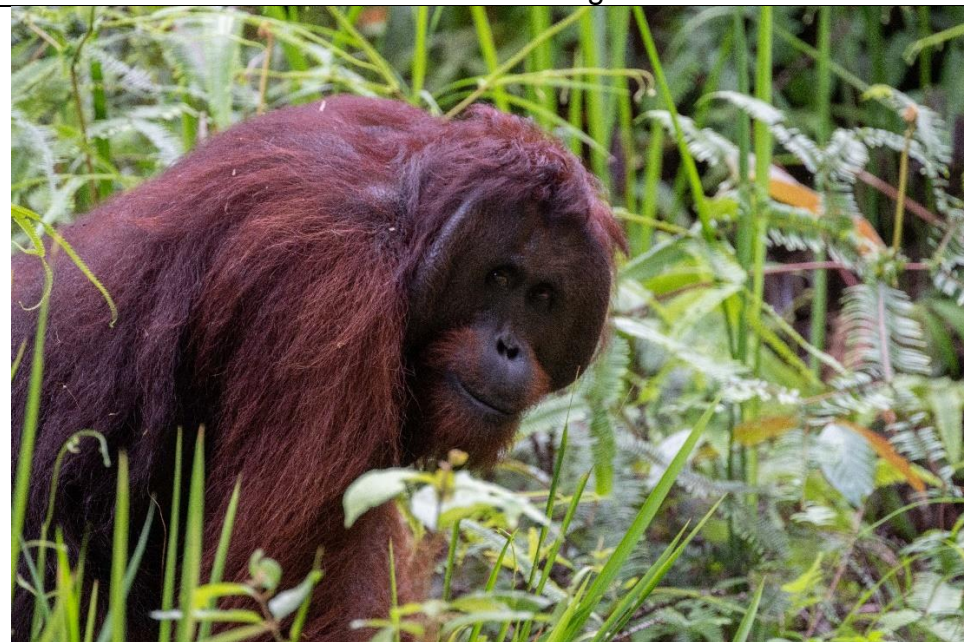
Sunda Leopard Cat



Sunda Stink Badger



Bornean Orangutan



Bornean Orangutan



Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat



Thick-spined Porcupine



Black Flying Squirrel



Philippine Slow Loris



Asiatic Elephant



Sunda Silvered Langur



Proboscis Monkey



Plain Pygmy Squirrel



Sunda Colugo



Trefoil Horseshoe Bat



Thomas's Flying Squirrel



Otter Civet



Banded Civet



Plantain Squirrel



Maroon Langur



Western Tarsier



Rane Mouse



Rhinoceros Hornbill



Wrinkled Hornbill



White-crowned Hornbill



Helmeted Hornbill



Wreathed Hornbill



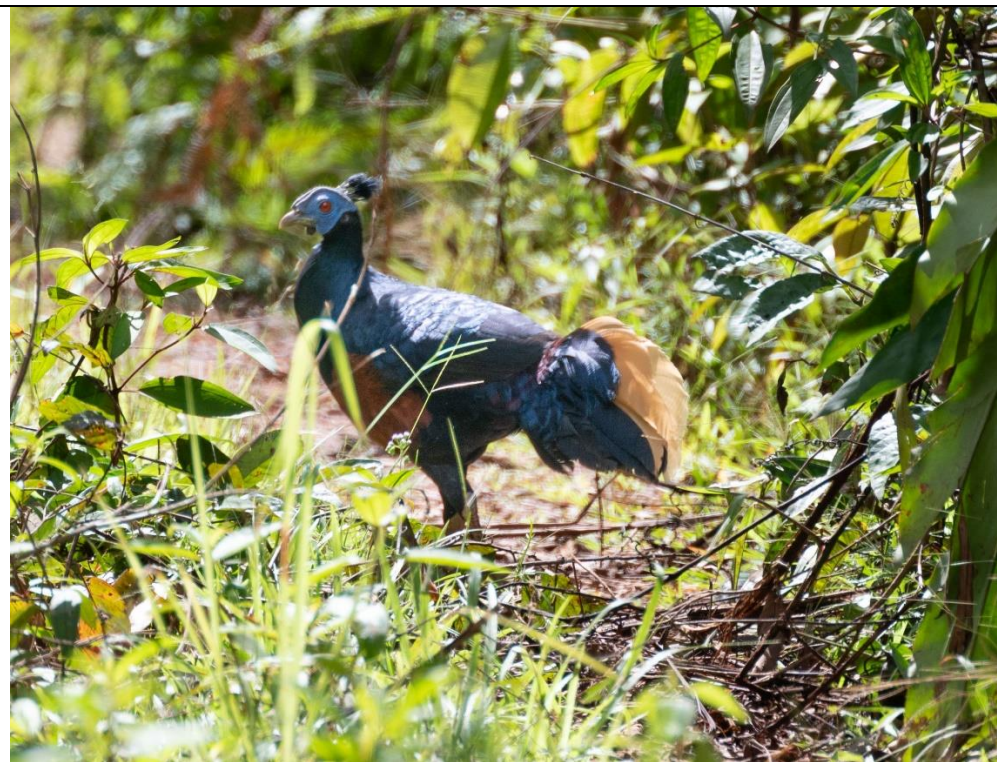
Black Hornbill



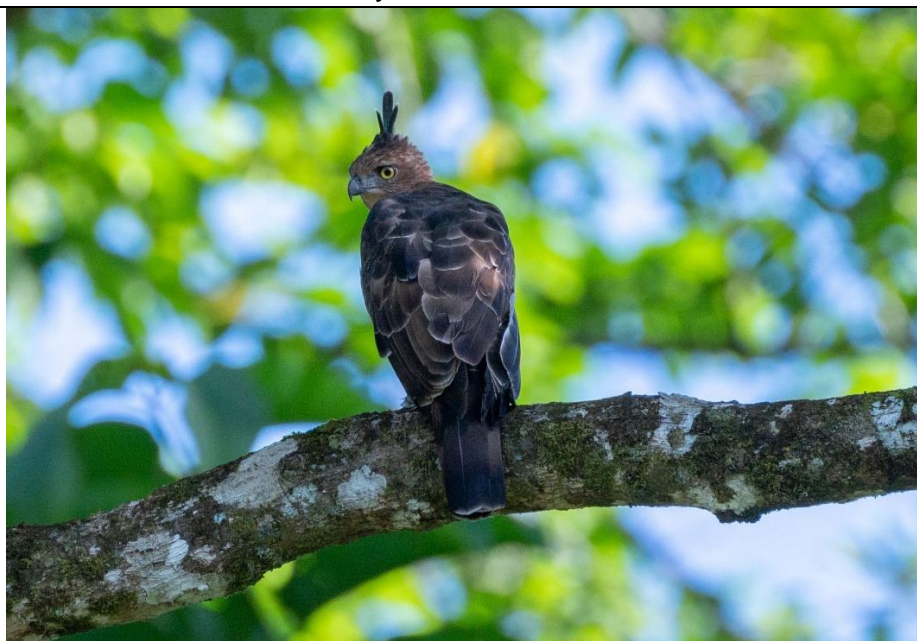
Oriental Pied Hornbill



Bushy-crested Hornbill



Bornean Crested Fireback



Wallace's Hawk-eagle



Barred Eagle Owl



Oriental Bay Owl



Crested Serpent Eagle



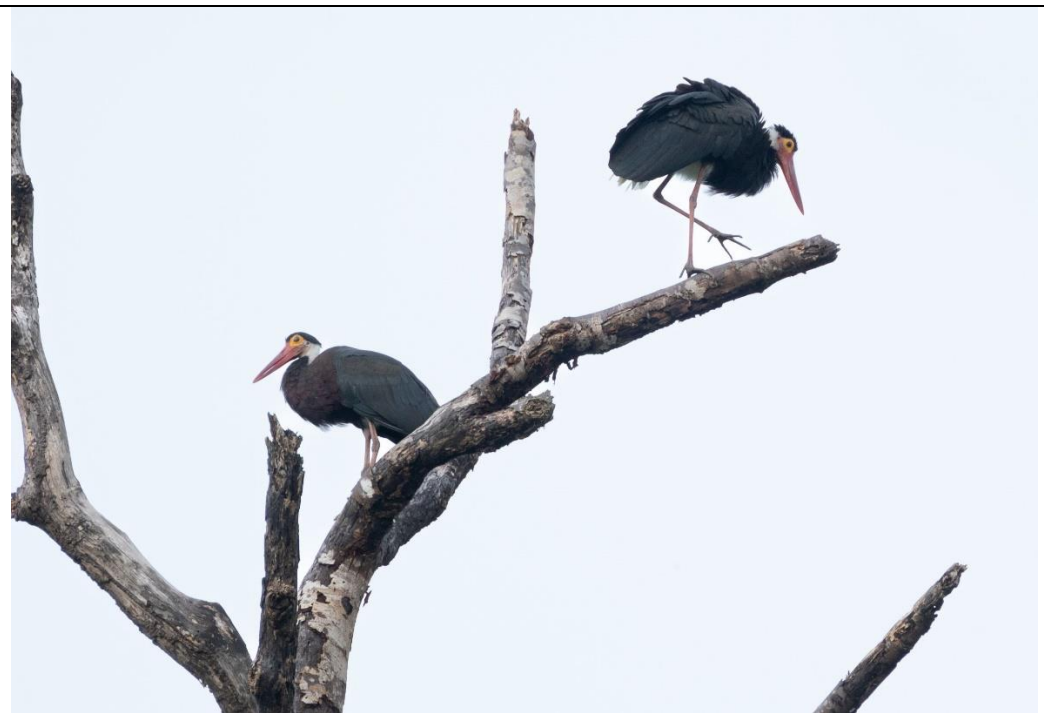
Borneo Wood Owl



Buffy Fish Owl



Grey-headed Fish Eagle



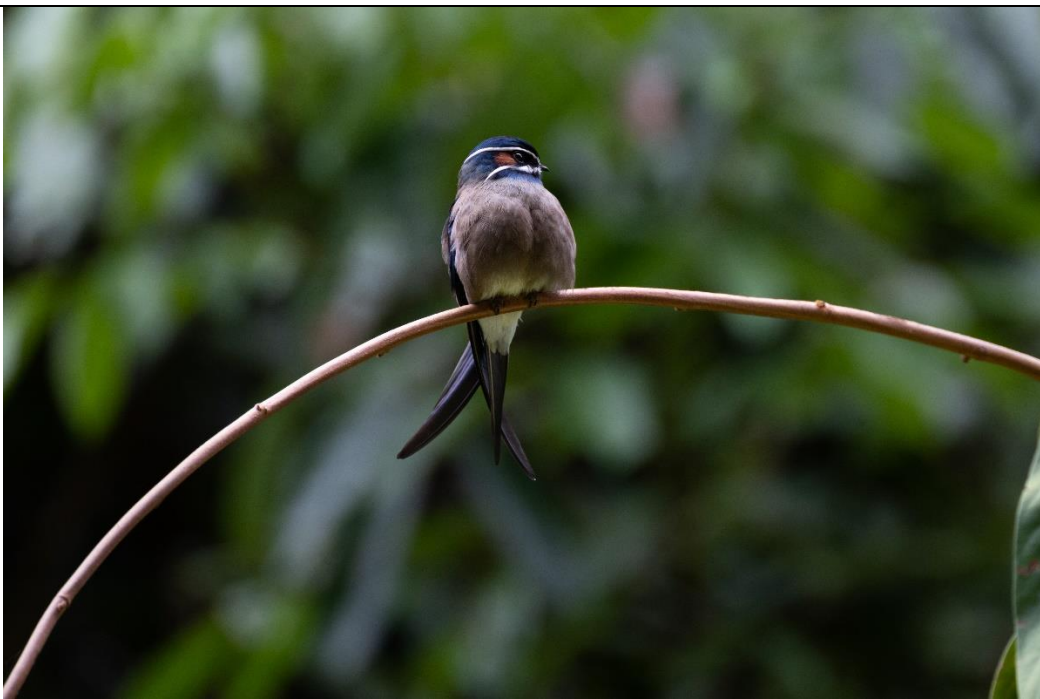
Storm's Stork



Stork-billed Kingfisher



Black-crowned Night Heron



Whiskered Treeswift



Blyth's Frogmouth



Black-and-yellow Broadbill



Striped Tree Skink



Estuarine Crocodile



Bornean Keeled Pit Viper



Giant Forest Lizard



Saddle-backed Dwarf Treesnake



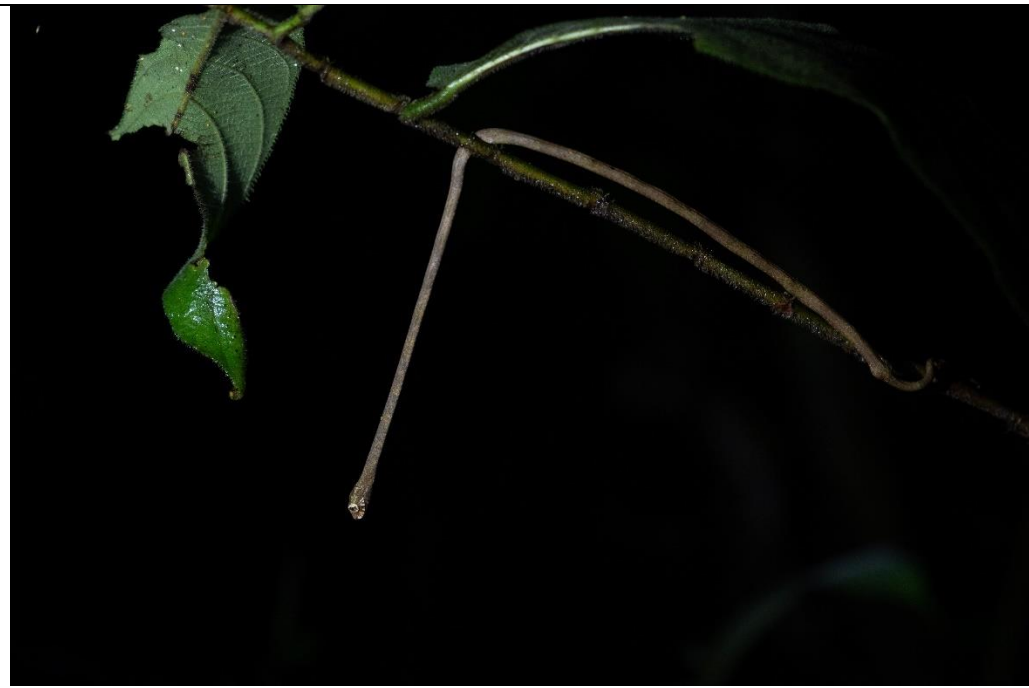
Dark-necked Snail-eating Snake



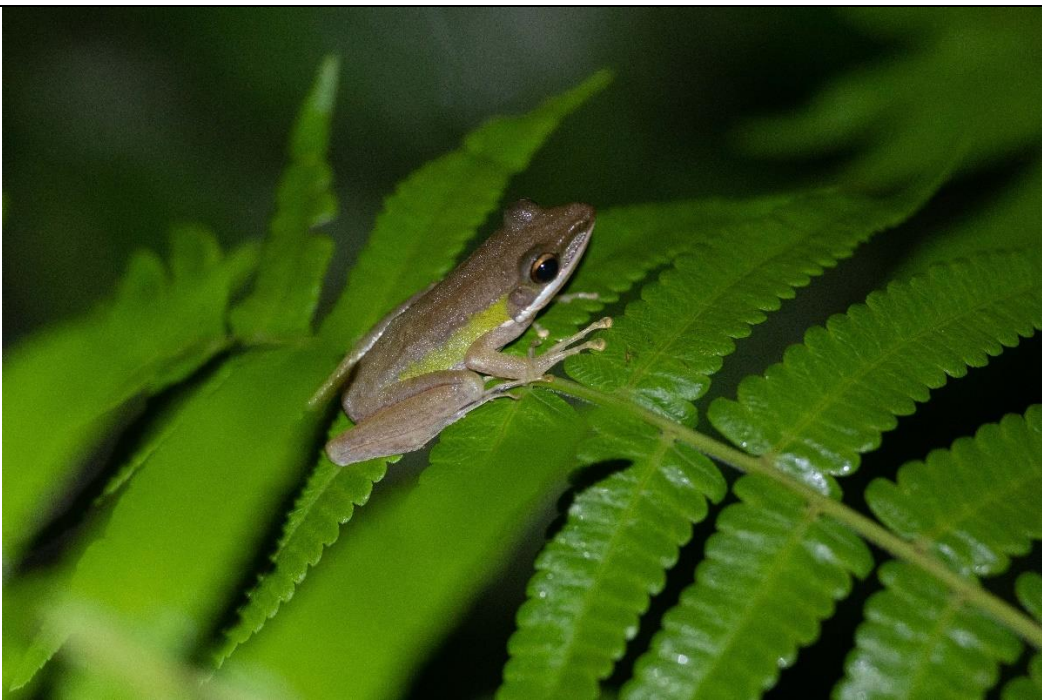
Brooke's House Gecko



Common Mock Viper



Blunt-headed Snail-eating Snake



Cricket Frog



Wallace's Flying Frogs



Halequin Tree Frog



Cinnamon Tree Frog



Borneo Tree-hole Frog



Rajah Brooks' Birdwing



Tailed Jay



Red Millipede



Thorny Stick Insect



Phormingochilus sp.



Orthonectrosia keatsooni



Borneo – What A Place!

