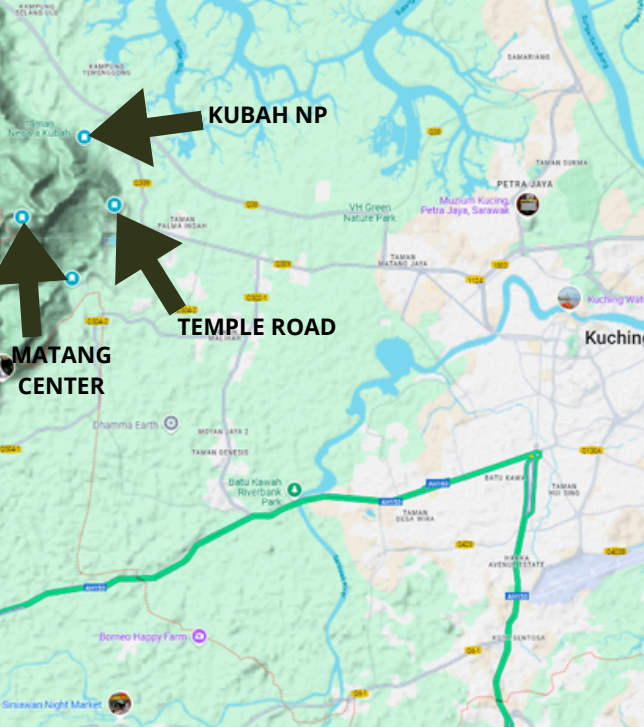


Borneo

Kuching

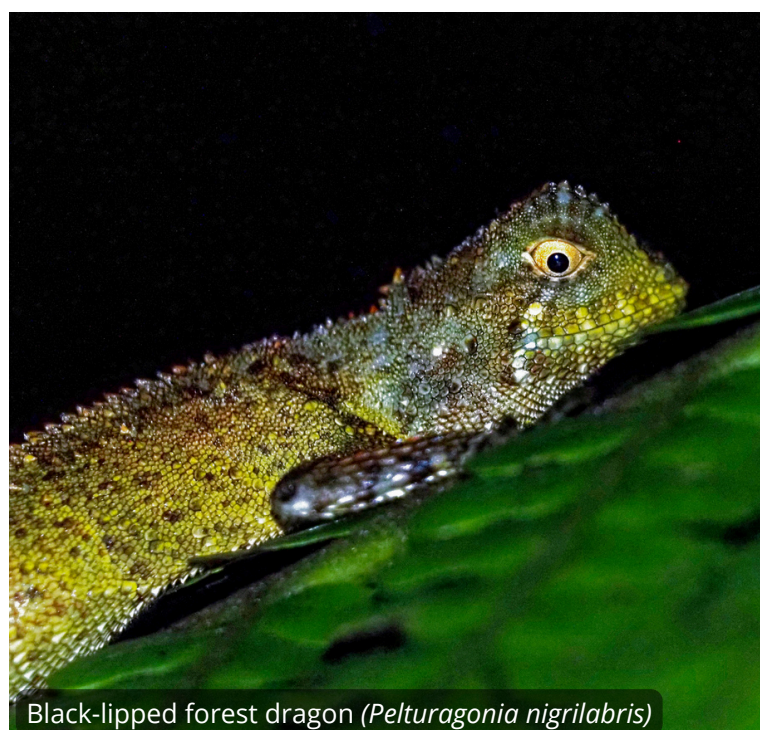


In **August 2024**, I had the fantastic opportunity to attend the World Congress of Herpetology in **Kuching, Borneo**. While the trip was primarily focused on herpetology, I still managed to spot a few mammals. The first week was quite hectic due to the ongoing conference, but I still found time for a night walk in **Kubah National Park**. Since many other conference attendees had the same idea, the forest was fairly busy, which didn't exactly create ideal conditions for spotting mammals. Apart from a brief glimpse of a **civet** that disappeared into the canopy, there was little else to see in terms of mammal sightings. But from a reptile-watching perspective, it was absolute paradise. With so many sharp-eyed herpetologists around, very little went unnoticed. In the span of just a short walk, we came across several individuals of **Sumatran pit viper** (*Trimeresurus sumatranus*), **Bornean keeled green pit viper** (*Tropidolaemus subannulatus*), **Bornean anglehead lizard** (*Gonocephalus borneensis*), **Giant forest dragon** (*Gonocephalus grandis*), and **Green crested lizard** (*Bronchocela cristatella*). And towards the end of the trail, we were even lucky enough to spot **Doria's anglehead lizard** (*Gonocephalus doriae*) and **Black-lipped forest dragon** (*Pelturagonia nigrilabris*).

There's also a small pond in this area that is said to be home to over 60 frog species. I only managed to spot a handful, including the **Copper-cheeked frog** (*Chalcorana raniceps*), **Dark-eared tree frog** (*Polypedates macrotis*), **Harlequin flying frog** (*Rhacophorus pardalis*), **Kajau flying frog** (*Feihyla kajau*), and the fascinating **Long-nosed horned frog** (*Pelobatrachus nasutus*).

The following day brought us to an equally incredible site along "**Temple Road**," where we encountered a fantastic range of species: **Malayan vine snake** (*Ahaetulla mycterizans*), **Banded Malaysian coral snake** (*Calliophis intestinalis*), **Borneo bow-fingered gecko** (*Cyrtodactylus consobrinus*), **Smooth-scaled bow-fingered gecko** (*Cyrtodactylus pubisulcus*), **Cat gecko** (*Aeluroscalabotes felinus*), **Green crested lizard** (*Bronchocela cristatella*), **Giant forest dragon** (*Gonocephalus grandis*), and **Bornean anglehead lizard** (*Gonocephalus borneensis*). Among mammals, we recorded just one species again – the tiny **Plain pygmy squirrel** (*Exilisciurus exilis*).

After the conference, I spent two nights at the **Matang centre**. Setting aside the rather odd zoo, it turned out to be a great spot overall – affordable accommodation in a cabin surrounded by forest trails. Right on the cabin's terrace, we observed **fruit bats** of the genus *Cynopterus* (*Cynopterus* sp.).



Silvered langurs (*Trachypithecus cristatus*)

Along the nearby trails, we came across a good number of **Dark-headed forest dragons** (*Gonocephalus liogaster*), **Dusky earless agamids** (*Aphaniotis fusca*), **Borneo bow-fingered geckos** (*Cyrtodactylus consobrinus*), **Kendall's rock geckos** (*Cnemaspis kendallii*), **White-banded bent-toed geckos** (*Gekko albofasciolatus*), **Brook's skinks** (*Tropidophorus brookei*), and the **Black-headed cat snake** (*Boiga nigriceps*).

The following day, we set off on a boat trip to **Santubong** with the hope of spotting proboscis monkeys and **Irrawaddy dolphins** (*Orcaella brevirostris*). Unfortunately, we weren't lucky enough to see any proboscis monkeys. And while we missed the proboscis monkeys, we did get a good look at a rather impressive **Saltwater crocodile** (*Crocodylus porosus*), which definitely made up for it. On our way back to the city, we made a stop at the Kampung Budaya Sarawak, where we had better luck. We spotted **Silvered langurs** (*Trachypithecus cristatus*), **Plantain squirrels** (*Callosciurus notatus*), and even a **Sunda colugo** (*Galeopterus variegatus*) resting surprisingly low in the trees.

Before heading off to our next destination, we naturally made a stop at the **Semenggoh Wildlife Centre**, where we had the chance to see several **orangutans** (*Pongo pygmaeus*) in their semi-wild habitat.

Irrawaddy dolphins (*Orcaella brevirostris*)fruit bats - genus *Cynopterus*Sunda colugo (*Galeopterus variegatus*)Dark-headed forest dragons (*Gonocephalus liogaster*)

Borneo

• Kota Kinabalu



Black-banded squirrel (*Callosciurus orestes*)



Sumatran pit viper (*Trimeresurus sumatranus*)



The rufous-collared kingfisher (*Actenoides concretus*)

After arriving in **Kota Kinabalu**, our main goal was to explore Kinabalu Park and to try and find the iconic **Kinabalu anglehead lizard** (*Hypsicalotes kinabaluensis*). Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, we weren't able to spot it. Still, we encountered several fascinating species in the area. Among them were the **Smooth-headed forest dragon** (*Pelturagonia cephalum*), the **Kinabalu bent-toed gecko** (*Cyrtodactylus baluensis*), and a real highlight – the **Malcolm's pit viper** (*Trimeresurus malcolmi*), an endemic species to this region. Right at the entrance to the summit trail, we also observed several **Black-banded squirrel** (*Callosciurus orestes*) running around begging for treats from tourists.

We then continued on to **Poring**, which, besides its hot springs, is also home to the well-known herping spot Lupa Masa. Personally, I found it a bit underwhelming – we actually saw far more wildlife in the park surrounding the hot springs. In the evening, while walking along a stream, we came across a **Tuft-tailed rat** (*Trichus fasciculata*), but unfortunately, we weren't able to get a photo. At the botanical gardens, we spotted a small group of **Long-tailed macaques** (*Macaca fascicularis*) and a **Prevost's squirrel** (*Callosciurus prevostii*). During a guided walk through Lupa Masa, we came across a **Sumatran pit viper** (*Trimeresurus sumatranus*) and several **Giant forest dragons** (*Gonocephalus grandis*) and **Bornean anglehead lizards** (*Gonocephalus borneensis*). In the end, the herping turned out to be quite decent after all – right next to our accommodation, we spotted a **Equatorial spitting cobra** (*Naja sumatrana*) and a **Bornean keeled green pit viper** (*Tropidolaemus subannulatus*).



Prevost's squirrel (*Callosciurus prevostii*)

Borneo

• Brunei



Long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*)



Philippine slow loris (*Nycticebus menagensis*)



Proboscis monkeys (*Nasalis larvatus*)

To the end of our journey, we headed to **Brunei**, choosing the capital city, **Bandar Seri Begawan**, as our final destination. With no time left to visit a national park, we didn't have high hopes in terms of wildlife watching – but the city turned out to be a surprisingly rewarding stop. Early in the morning, we managed to arrange a water taxi at the harbour, which took us out into the mangroves in search of **Proboscis monkeys** (*Nasalis larvatus*). They were quite shy, vanishing into the canopy almost immediately, but we still managed to spot a few at last. The experience was so affordable compared to Kuching that we repeated the trip the next day.

Back at the harbour, we also observed **Long-tailed macaques** (*Macaca fascicularis*) resting in the trees.

That evening, we tried our luck at **Tasek Lama Recreational Park**, conveniently located within walking distance from our hostel. Besides several **Oriental garden lizards** (*Calotes versicolor*) and a single **Oriental whip snake** (*Ahaetulla prasina*), something shimmered in the treetops – to our surprise, it turned out to be a **Philippine slow loris** (*Nycticebus menagensis*). We definitely hadn't expected that! During the day, the park turned out to be full of **Water monitors** (*Varanus salvator*), many of them impressively large in size.

What I regretted most was not seeing any tarsiers, but at least that gives us a perfect reason to return to Borneo someday.



Water monitors (*Varanus salvator*)

Singapore



Sunda colugos (*Galeopterus variegatus*)



Lesser mouse-deer (*Tragulus kanchil*)



Common palm civet (*Paradoxurus musangus*)

To end the trip on a high note, I planned a three-day stopover in Singapore. Originally, it was meant to be just a one-day layover before my flight back to Europe, but after a bit of research into what the local parks had to offer, I decided to change my plans – and I'm so glad I did.

During my first afternoon and evening walk around **Upper Pierce Reservoir**, I encountered several **Lesser mouse-deer** (*Tragulus kanchil*), large groups of **Long-tailed macaques** (*Macaca fascicularis*), **Plantain squirrels** (*Callosciurus notatus*), **Horsfield's flying squirrels** (*Iomys horsfieldii*), **Slender squirrels** (*Sundasciurus tenuis*), and even a **Common palm civet** (*Paradoxurus musangus*).

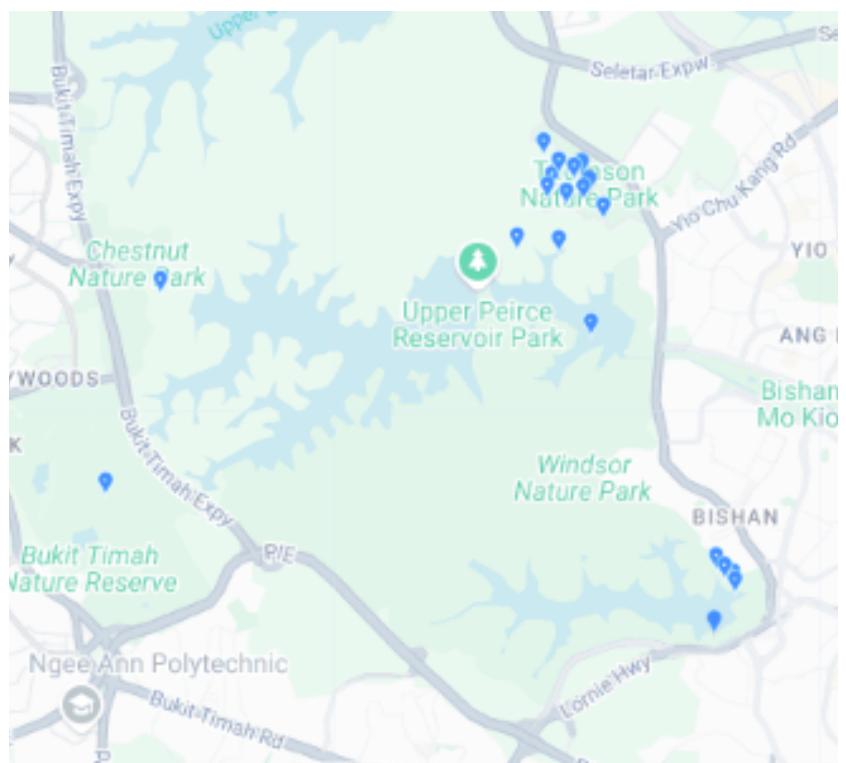
On my second night, I went on a night walk through **Thomson Nature Park**, and the number of animals I saw was absolutely unmatched. I came across several **Lesser mouse-deer** (*Tragulus kanchil*), multiple **Sunda colugos** (*Galeopterus variegatus*), and a **Common palm civet** (*Paradoxurus musangus*). From a herpetological perspective, the area was full of life. Perched right on the railing were not just one, but several **Wagler's pit vipers** (*Tropidolaemus wagleri*), as well as multiple **Oriental whip snakes** (*Ahaetulla prasina*) and several sleeping **Green crested lizards** (*Bronchocela cristatella*). Among the birds, I also spotted a **Brown hawk-owl** (*Ninox scutulata*).

During my visit to the Singapore Zoo, I even spotted a **Lesser short-nosed fruit bat** (*Cynopterus brachyotis*) resting in a pavilion. While walking through the Botanic Gardens, I saw more **Plantain squirrels** (*Callosciurus notatus*), **Slender squirrels** (*Sundasciurus tenuis*), and a lively **Common treeshrew** (*Tupaia glis*).

Even in the final few hours before my departure, when I simply went to relax in **Pasir Ris Park**, a tip from a group of birders led me to a roosting pair of **Spotted wood owls** (*Strix seloputo*).

I was slightly disappointed not to have seen a Oriental pied hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*) or the local smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*), but that was more than made up for by an encounter I had barely dared to hope for.

I had heard it was possible to see a **Sunda pangolin** (*Manis javanica*) in Singapore, and thanks to a local wildlife enthusiast who shared a few secret tips, I managed to find one. I promised not to share the exact location – and so I won't – but it was one of best meetings I ever had.





Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*)



Plantain squirrels (*Callosciurus notatus*)



The spotted wood owl (*Strix seloputo*)



Common Treeshrew (*Tupaia glis*)



Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat (*Cynopterus brachyotis*)





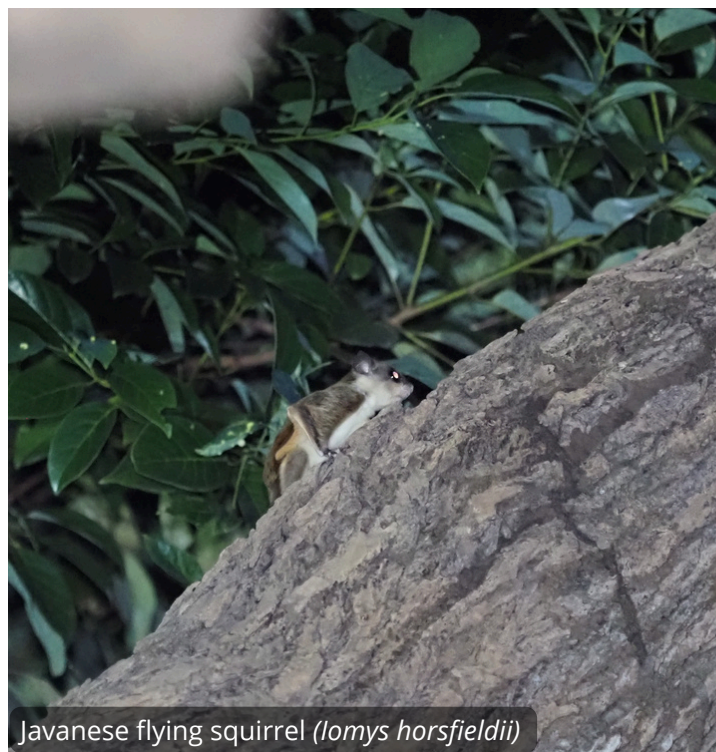
Wagler's pit viper (*Tropidolaemus wagleri*)



Brown anole (*Anolis sagrei*)



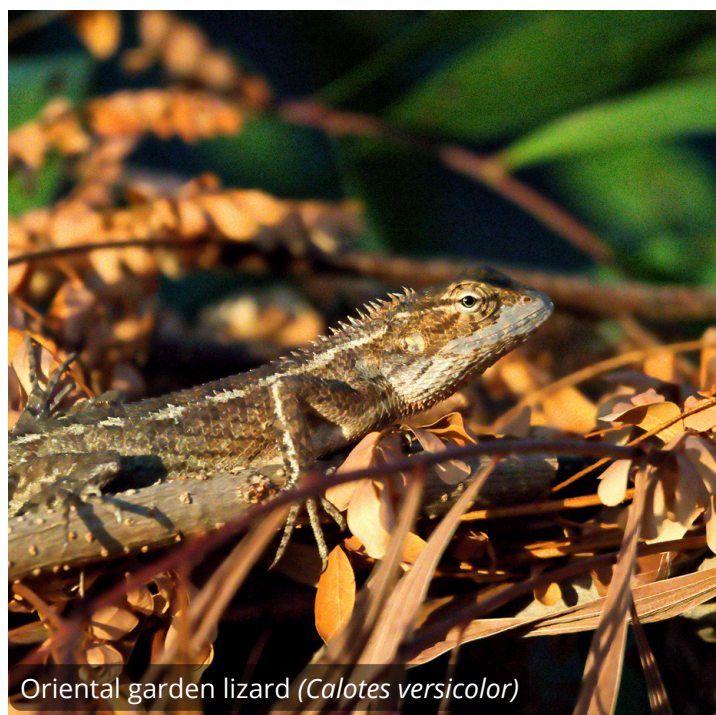
Plantain squirrels (*Callosciurus notatus*)



Javanese flying squirrel (*Iomys horsfieldii*)



The red-breasted parakeet (*Psittacula alexandri*)



Oriental garden lizard (*Calotes versicolor*)

List of mammals

Plantain squirrel	<i>Callosciurus notatus</i>	Santubong / Kampung Budaya, Singapore
Black-banded squirrel	<i>Callosciurus orestes</i>	Gunung Kinabalu, Poring
Prevost's squirrel	<i>Callosciurus prevostii</i>	Poring
Lesser short-nosed fruit bat	<i>Cynopterus brachyotis</i>	Singapore
Plain pygmy fruit bat	<i>Cynopterus sp.</i>	Matang Centre
Greater nectar bat	<i>Eonycteris major</i>	Matang Centre
Plain pygmy squirrel	<i>Exilisciurus exilis</i>	Temple Road
Sunda colugo	<i>Galeopterus variegatus</i>	Singapore, Santubong / Kampung Budaya
Horsfield's flying squirrel	<i>Iomys horsfieldii</i>	Singapore
Long-tailed macaque	<i>Macaca fascicularis</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan, Singapore
Pig-tailed macaque	<i>Macaca nemestrina</i>	Poring
Proboscis monkey	<i>Nasalis larvatus</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan
Philippine slow loris	<i>Nycticebus menagensis</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan
Palm civet	<i>Paradoxus musangus</i>	Singapore
Asian house rat	<i>Rattus tanezumi</i>	Singapore
Slender squirrel	<i>Sundasciurus tenuis</i>	Singapore
Lesser mouse-deer	<i>Tragulus kanchil</i>	Singapore
Tuft-tailed rat	<i>Trichus fasciculata</i>	Poring
Common treeshrew	<i>Tupaia glis</i>	Singapore

List of birds

Javan myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>	Singapore
Common myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan
White-breasted waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	Singapore
Brown-throated sunbird	<i>Anthreptes malacensis</i>	Singapore
Asian glossy starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Singapore
Striated heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan
Greater coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan
Ornate sunbird	<i>Cinnyris ornatus</i>	Singapore
Oriental magpie-robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	Singapore
Bornean whistling thrush	<i>Dendrocitta cinerascens</i>	Gunung Kinabalu
Ashy drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>	Gunung Kinabalu
Greater racket-tailed drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	Singapore
Red junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	Singapore
Zebra dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan
White-throated kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	Singapore
Pacific swallow	<i>Hirundo javanica</i>	Gunung Kinabalu
Sunbird (family)	<i>Nectariniidae</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan
Brown hawk-owl	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>	Singapore
Black-naped oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>	Singapore
Tailorbird (genus)	<i>Orthotomus sp.</i>	Singapore
Stork-billed kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>	Singapore
Sumatran ground cuckoo	<i>Phoenicophaeus sumatranus</i>	Singapore
Alexandrine parakeet	<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>	Singapore
Chestnut-crested yuhina	<i>Pterorhinus treacheri</i>	Gunung Kinabalu
Yellow-vented bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan, Singapore
Olive-winged bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus plumosus</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan, Singapore
Malaysian pied fantail	<i>Rhipidura javanica</i>	Singapore
Spotted dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>	Singapore
Grey-headed babbler	<i>Stachyris nigriceps</i>	Gunung Kinabalu, Bandar Seri Begawan
Spotted wood owl	<i>Strix selaputo</i>	Singapore
Collared kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>	Singapore

List of reptiles

Cat gecko	<i>Aeluroscalabotes felinus</i>	Temple Road
Malayan vine snake	<i>Ahaetulla mycterizans</i>	Temple Road, Singapore, Santubong / Kampung Budaya
Oriental whip snake	<i>Ahaetulla prasina</i>	Santubong, Bandar Seri Begawan, Singapore, Bandar Seri Begawan
Brown anole	<i>Anolis sagrei</i>	Singapore
Dusky earless agamid	<i>Aphaniotis fusca</i>	Matang Centre
Black-headed cat snake	<i>Boiga nigriceps</i>	Matang Centre
Green crested lizard	<i>Bronchocela cristatella</i>	Kubah National Park, Temple Road, Santubong, Singapore
Banded Malaysian coral snake	<i>Calliophis intestinalis</i>	Temple Road
Changeable lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan, Singapore
Kendall's rock gecko	<i>Cnemaspis kendallii</i>	Matang Centre, Santubong / Kampung Budaya
Kinabalu bent-toed gecko	<i>Cyrtodactylus baluensis</i>	Gunung Kinabalu
Borneo bow-fingered gecko	<i>Cyrtodactylus consobrinus</i>	Temple Road, Matang Centre
Smooth-scaled bow-fingered gecko	<i>Cyrtodactylus pubisulcus</i>	Temple Road, Matang Centre
Bronze grass skink	<i>Dendrelaphis pictus</i>	Singapore
East Asian mabouya	<i>Eutropis multifasciata</i>	Singapore
Skink	<i>Eutropis sp.</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan
Four-clawed house gecko	<i>Gehyra mutilata</i>	Matang Centre
White-banded bent-toed gecko	<i>Gekko albofasciolatus</i>	Matang Centre
Brown's gecko	<i>Gekko browni</i>	Santubong
Four-lined flying gecko	<i>Gekko monarchus</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan
Bornean anglehead lizard	<i>Gonocephalus bornensis</i>	Kubah National Park, Temple Road, Poring
Doria's anglehead lizard	<i>Gonocephalus doriae</i>	Kubah National Park
Giant forest dragon	<i>Gonocephalus grandis</i>	Kubah National Park, Temple Road, Poring
Dark-headed forest dragon	<i>Gonocephalus liogaster</i>	Matang Centre, Santubong / Kampung Budaya
Common house gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>	Matang Centre, Bandar Seri Begawan, Singapore
Flat-tailed house gecko	<i>Hemidactylus platyurus</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan, Matang Centre, Poring
Reticulated python	<i>Malayopython reticulatus</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan
Bornean brown frog	<i>Meristogenys jerboa</i>	Poring
Equatorial spitting cobra	<i>Naja sumatrana</i>	Poring
Long-nosed horned frog	<i>Pelobatrachus nasutus</i>	Kubah National Park
Smooth-headed forest dragon	<i>Pelturagonia cephalum</i>	Gunung Kinabalu
Black-lipped forest dragon	<i>Pelturagonia nigrilabris</i>	Kubah National Park
Kinabalu forest skink	<i>Sphenomorphus kinabaluensis</i>	Gunung Kinabalu
Red-eared slider	<i>Trachemys scripta</i>	Singapore
Malcolm's pit viper	<i>Trimeresurus malcolmi</i>	Gunung Kinabalu
Sumatran pit viper	<i>Trimeresurus sumatranus</i>	Kubah National Park
Bornean keeled green pit viper	<i>Tropidolaemus subannulatus</i>	Kubah National Park, Poring, Santubong
Wagler's pit viper	<i>Tropidolaemus wagleri</i>	Singapore
Beccari's Keeled Skink	<i>Tropidophorus beccarii</i>	Poring
Brook's skink	<i>Tropidophorus brookei</i>	Matang Centre
Clouded monitor	<i>Varanus nebulosus</i>	Singapore
Water monitor	<i>Varanus salvator</i>	Bandar Seri Begawan, Singapore, Kota Kinabalu

List of amphibians

Green slender toad	<i>Ansonia hanitschi</i>	Gunung Kinabalu
Toad (Bufonidae)	<i>Bufonidae sp.</i>	Santubong / Kampung Budaya
Southern Asian toad	<i>Duttaphrynus melanostictus</i>	Singapore
Planirostris rain frog	<i>Eleutherodactylus planirostris</i>	Singapore
Kajau flying frog	<i>Feihyla kajau</i>	Kubah National Park
Copper-cheeked frog	<i>Chalcorana raniceps</i>	Santubong / Kampung Budaya, Kubah NP, Matang Centre
White-thighed frog	<i>Leptobrachium hendricksoni</i>	Poring
Brown marsh frog	<i>Limnonectes ibanorum</i>	Poring
Giant river frog	<i>Limnonectes leporinus</i>	Matang Centre
Fanged frog (genus)	<i>Limnonectes sp.</i>	Singapore
American bullfrog	<i>Lithobates catesbeianus</i>	Singapore
Philautus frog	<i>Philautus macroscelis</i>	Gunung Kinabalu
Dark-eared tree frog	<i>Polypedates macrotis</i>	Kubah National Park, Matang Centre, Poring
File-eared Tree Frog	<i>Polypedates otlophus</i>	Temple Road
Baram river frog	<i>Pulchrana baramica</i>	Matang Centre
Rough-sided rock frog	<i>Pulchrana glandulosa</i>	Poring
Spotted Stream Frog	<i>Pulchrana picturata</i>	Temple Road
Harlequin tree frog	<i>Pulchrana signata</i>	Matang, Santubong
Harlequin flying frog	<i>Rhacophorus pardalis</i>	Kubah National Park
Mahachai flying frog	<i>Rhacophorus reinwardtii</i>	Poring