



# BORNEO

**19 – 30 July 2022**

## Introduction

This was my third visit to this beautiful island. The third largest in the world.

I will not go very deep into the well known places I visited as everything has already been told about them, but I visited Danum valley, Kinabatangan river and Deramakot. primarily for the felines I'm missing. Sunda clouded leopard, Marbled cat, Flat-headed cat and the odd chance of Bay cat, but also of course for other rare creatures who would be a lifer for me.

This was a tour where I almost exclusively did only long nightdrives / night boat trips and slept/rest during the day. Around 7 hours nightdrives every night and 5 hours boat trip on Kinabatangan river. Around 70 hours was spending in the field at night.

For the first part , Danum Valley and Kinabatangan I booked with <https://www.stickyricetravel.com/>

I stayed 5 nights at INFAPRO Lodge in Danum valley. Basic but convenient. With 3 meals a day (I skipped the breakfast though), AC in the room and a perfect location along the main road in Danum valley where you can go on long nightdrives in both directions.

My guide Akmal and driver Shukardi was awesome. Never tired and always willing to put in the hours. Usually we left the lodge at around 21:00 and returned between 03:00 - 04:00 with a stop for coffe break somewhere in the middle.





*My room at INFAPRO Lodge*



*Breakfast/Lunch/dinner place at INFAPRO*

For Kinabatangan my latest experience a few years ago was really bad with a guide who didn't know the difference between a civet and a feline, let alone knew where to find Flat-headed cats...

This time I made sure with Stickyrice travel to have a proper guide for this mission. They recommended me to stay at <https://www.borneonaturelodge.com.my/>

A bit run down but nice and convenient lodge with AC and good food. But the best of all they had the guide Janu.

I had 3 private night boat trips with him and what a success! He did find me 3! different Flat-headed cats the first two nights. The last night we tried for Clouded leopard along the main river. He saw one there the week before I arrived.





*My boat at Kinabatangan river*

Janu don't speak very much English but who cares when he is awesome in finding this rare and elusive cats. He wanted to spotlight by himself until he find some eyeshine. Then you can turn on your torch if you have any for better look. This was just for concentrate and for him not being distracted about many spotlights (lights everywhere). This was a great strategy. Gliding in silence with only one torch to find this elusive cat.

Make sure you request Janu as a guide if you're goal is Flat-headed cat. If there is one around he will find it and he will go out with you almost as long as you want. I was the one who drag him back to the lodge and not the opposite 😊



*Perfect conditions for Flat-headed cat with very low water*

Last but not least I stayed at Deramakot for 3 nights and had the pleasure to have Mike as a guide.

I guess everything about him and Deramakot has already been told and no reason for me to repeat that but Mike is a really good company with a lot of great and fun stories and who showed me some great lifers!

Thanx also for the poncho... 😊

I did extended 7 hours nightdrives here and rested during the day. The last night we went out a bit earlier to finish earlier because my departure was next morning.

This was booked thru <https://www.adventurealternativeborneo.com/>

This was all about nightdrives and finding my missing cats and therefore my species list is a bit short.

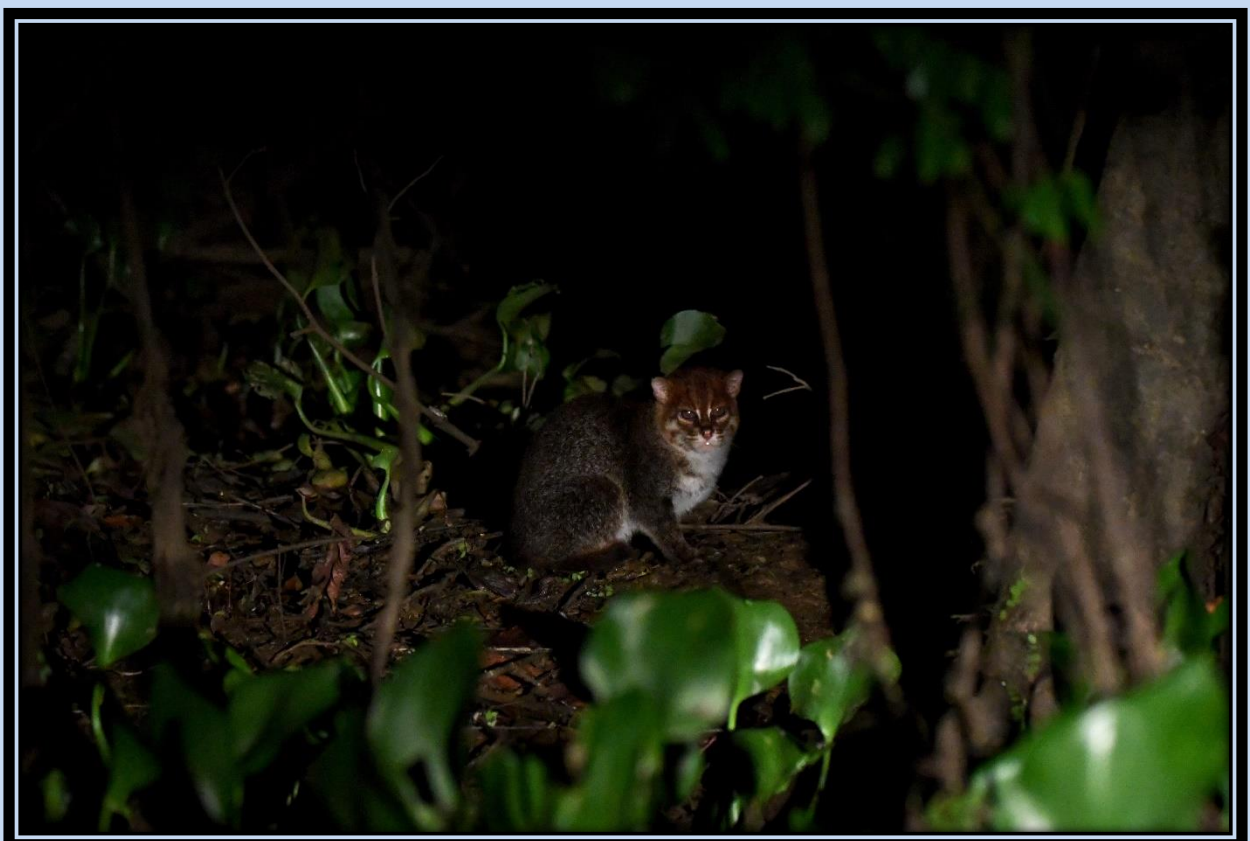
In the end I saw **31 species** of mammals of which **9 were lifers** and this is the story about them...

### **My species list**

**1. Flat-headed cat --- (Lifer)** Absolutely fantastic sighting of 3 different individuals where I could take photos of the first and third cat. First night we got two and the second night another one. All sightings along Menanggul river.

We also tried Tenegang river which for me looked even better but only mouse deer and Malay civet here. They do see “Flats” here so maybe it was just a coincidence that all our sightings was along the Menanggul river.

The cats was seen between 22:30 – 01:00. The standard tours also go out for a short night boat trip and it can be crowded the first 2 hours after dark but after that you are alone...







It was also absolutely perfect conditions with very low water levels and you could see far away inside the riverbanks. This is essential in finding them. With high water it is more or less impossible.

This was my 28<sup>th</sup> species of feline.





**2. Banded civet** --- 5 seen in Danum of this beautiful civet.



**3. Island palm civet** --- Uncountable number of this very common civet. Seen in all three places.





**4. Bornean striped palm civet** --- Also very common and many seen every night in both Danum and Deramakot.



**5. Malay civet** --- Seen every night in all three places. Many seen in total.



**6. Otter civet --- (Lifer)** Great lifer for me! But also something that gnaws at me as a missed photo opportunity. We had eyeshine in the long grass beside the road close to INFAPRO Lodge. After “one million” Civets I expected another Malay/Palm -civet. We watched this unknown civet for about one minute but still couldn’t see it. Only the eyeshine and the grass moving. Suddenly he popped his head up... OTTER CIVET!

I could see the head very clear. Weird looking face with white long whiskers. If I had the camera pointed at the moving grass I should have a great photo of his head. But that’s how it goes when you think it’s another “common civet”.

There is a small stream close to the road here and it was seen late 02:00 at night.

**7. Leopard cat ---** Many seen in all three places but a nightmare to photograph. Always stay one second to short or just walk away at first sight. As usually most common after rains when they come out on the road. For example, in Danum we only had rain one of five nights and this night we got 3 Leopard cats and the other 4 nights nothing. More common in Deramakot.

But the only photo I got is from Kinabatangan river.



**8. Moonrat ---** 2 seen in Deramakot. One was next to a Leopard cat and they formed an odd group of friends.



**9. Banded linsang --- (Lifer)** Another great lifer! Seen in Deramakot towards the gate (not the river).

Only the second time Mike seen this beautiful mammal. Unfortunately it didn't hang around for long and the tail is all I got as a proof shot, but it's still a Banded linsang tail!



**10. Sambar deer ---** Seen almost every nightdrive in Danum and Deramakot.





**11. Greater mouse deer ---** In total +20 Mousedeeers seen. Both greater and Lesser mousedeer.  
Didn't stop for Id them.



**12. Lesser mousedeer ---** In total +20 Mousedeeers seen. Both greater and Lesser mousedeer. Didn't  
stop for Id them.





**13. Crab-eating macaque** --- Everywhere in Kinabatangan. Also seen close to the Lodge in Deramakot.





**14. Southern pig-tailed macaque** --- Everywhere in Kinabatangan. Also seen in Danum.



**15. Proboscis monkey** --- Everywhere in Kinabatangan.





**16. Silvery lutung (Silver leaf monkey) --- Seen two afternoons in Kinabatangan.**



**17. Maroon langur (Red leaf monkey) --- Seen on our only afternoon drive in Danum.**





**18. Colugo** --- One seen in Danum. Hanging around doing nothing.



**19. Red giant flying squirrel** --- Seen on every nightdrive in Danum and Deramakot.





**20. Thomas flying squirrel** --- Seen on every nightdrive in Danum and Deramakot.



**21. Plantain squirrel** --- Only in Kinabatangan during one afternoon boat trip. Common squirrel but as I didn't look for squirrels during daytime, only one sighting.





**22. Prevost squirrel** --- They were in the lodge area in Kinabatangan and INFAPRO Lodge – Danum.  
Common and really photogenic squirrel.





**23. Cream-colored giant squirrel --- (Lifer)** One seen in Kinabatangan lodge area and two seen in Deramakot Lodge area. When I got home it turned out to be a lifer for me which I didn't know at the time. But the last sighting for me of this fairly common squirrel was in Way Kambas – Sumatra and only seen by my guide and not me.



**24. Borneo elephant ---** One seen in Danum. Lonely female.





25. Lesser ranee mouse --- (Lifer) 2 individuals seen on the same place. Adorable rodent. Well spotted by Mike along the road in Deramakot.



26. Gray tree rat (*Lenothrix canus*) --- (Lifer) Another well spotted rodent in Deramakot by Mike. Unfortunately I couldn't see the tip of the tail as this rodent is easily identified by it's white tip. But the size, color, habitat and comparison with other photos rules out more or less every other option.





**27. Rajah spiny rat (*Raja maxomys*) --- (Lifer)** A couple of rodents ran around in the dried out riverbanks along Menanggul river – Kinabatangan. Seemed to have hole in the ground where they went in and out. Size, habitat , color and a bi-colored tail makes it either Red-spiny Maxomys or Rajah Maxomys. After measuring the tail I lean towards the latter as the tail is shorter than the body.

Red-Spiny Maxomys has a slightly longer tail than body. Also the color is more towards the brownish than the reddish. All of this makes the Rajah spiny rat the most likely according to me.



**28. Sunda short-nosed fruit bat --- (Lifer)** *Cynopterus* sp. Either *C.minutus* or *C.brachyotis*. The latter seems more common on Borneo but could be either one.





**29. Thick-spined porcupine --- (Lifer)** Another great lifer for me. One of this endemics crossed the road in Danum on our fourth nightdrive. Brief but good sighting.

**30. Philippine slow loris ---** Only one seen in Danum. Quickly hiding in the bush. Mike also found eyeshine from one in Deramakot.

**31. Sunda stink badger ---** Seen by Mike only in Deramakot.

Just to give you an idea what I saw in total during all this hours of spotlighting I have counted together my sightings in the different places. Remember that this is only approximately numbers and that we didn't stopped and ID everything.

***Danum Valley 5 nights***

*Malay civet 11*

*Island/Bornean palm civet 39*

*Lesser/Greater Mouse deer 20*

*Sambar deer 18*

*Red giant/Thomas flying squirrel 12*

*Banded civet 5*

*Slow loris 1*

*Leopard cat 3*

*Thick-spined porcupine 1*

*Otter civet 1*

*Bornean elephant 1*

*Colugo 1*

*Unknown rodent 1*

***Deramakot 3 nights***

*Malay civet 5*

*Island/Bornean palm civet 13*

*Lesser/Greater Mouse deer 2*

*Sambar deer 3*

*Red giant/Thomas flying squirrel 11*

*Leopard cat 5*

*Moonrat 2*

*Lesser ranee mouse 2*

*Banded linsang 1*

*Gray tree rat 1*

*Short-nosed fruit bat 1*

*Sunda stink badger 1*

***Kinabatangan 3 nights***

*Island/Bornean palm civet 9*

*Malay civet 5*

*Flat headed cat 3*

*Rajah Spiny rat 2*

*Lesser/Greater Mouse deer 1*

*Leopard cat 1*



## Stuff I missed

Of my targets the most notable miss was Marbled cat and Sunda clouded leopard.

Marbled cats was seen in Deramakot several times during my 11 nights on Borneo and Clouded leopard was seen in Kinabatangan the week before I arrived. Also both Danum and Deramakot had recent Clouded leopard sightings.

Strangely more and more Bay cat sightings coming in from Borneo. Joh Hall's group saw one in Deramakot just a week before me and also sightings (and even photos) coming from Danum Valley of this elusive cat.

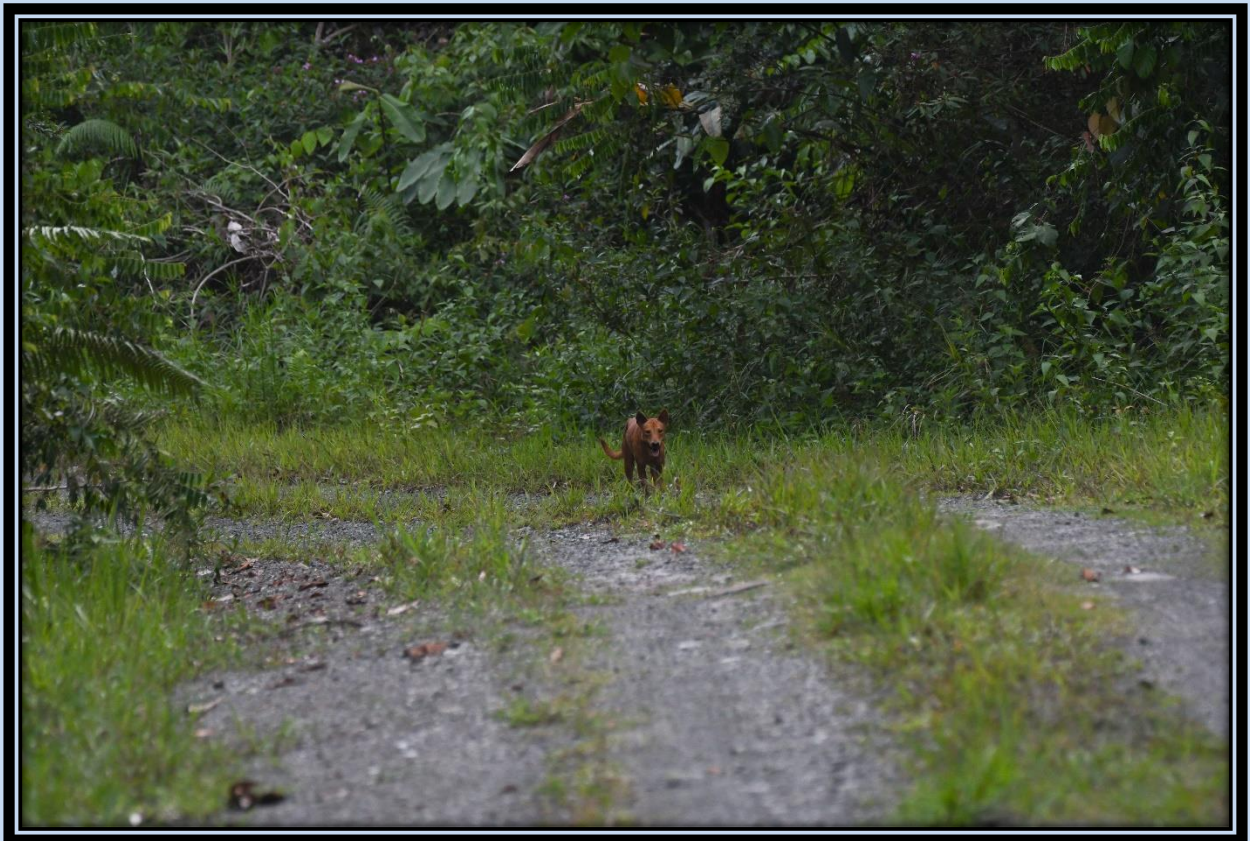
Yellow throated marten of course still eludes me. My big boogey animal. Okey, I know I focused only on nightdrives this time but I had a couple of morning walks in Deramakot, hoping to bump into them and also transport in and out of the forests in prime "Marten time". But nothing, have to continue looking for them 😊

We also looked for Black giant flying squirrel which would be a lifer for me but failed on them.

Sun bear was seen in Deramakot a week before me and would be a great lifer but no luck this time.

All in all some great lifers for me with peak sightings of **Flat-headed cat, Banded linsang, Otter civet and Thick-spined porcupine.**

## Random photos from my time in Borneo



*My heart jumped out of the body for a couple of seconds when this beast stepped out of the forest some 6km from the river in Deramakot. For 2 seconds it was a Bay cat!*

*Now I know how it feels to see one at least. For next time 😊*





*Sleepy Island palm civet – Kinabatangan*



*Even more sleepy Black crowned pitta – Danum valley*





*Sickest snake ever! Reticulated python. 6-7 meters long. As big as they get. Never seen such a huge snake – Danum Valley.*



*Reticulated python – Danum valley*





*Green crested lizard – Danum valley*



*Asian water monitor lizard – Kinabatangan*





*Wallace's flying frog a little lost on the road. The camouflage don't really work here... - Deramakot*



*Brown wood owl – Danum valley*





*Dark-eared tree frog (Polypedates macrotis) – Danum valley*



*Saltwater crocodile – Kinabatangan*





*Blue-eared kingfisher – Kinabatangan*



*Rhinoceros hornbill sleeping at night – Danum valley*



Thanx a lot to Charles Ryan at Stickyrice travel for putting together the Danum valley and Kinabatangan part and also big thanx to my guide Akmal and driver Shukardi in Danum.

Thank you Janu (my guide in Kinabatangan) for my 28<sup>th</sup> species of feline!

Last but not least thank you Mike for 3 great nights in Deramakot. It was not enough for Clouded leopards or Marbled cats but too much time for Banded linsang 😊

I will be back on Borneo.

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