

SHAVEZ CHEEMA

MAMMALS REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

SHAVEZ CHEEMA

- Founder of 1StopBorneo Wildlife
- Author of a Pocketguide to Mammals of Borneo
- A Field Guide to Tawau Hills Park
- Editor of ARA Magazine and Producer of Borneo Wildlife Series.
- I am also currently doing my masters and actively on a research permit leading Ficus surveys (Thus all the fauna finds I am having) Mammal and Herpetofauna surveys.
- I work with Quentin Phillipps as well and to see the fauna which we find on ficus trees, you can log on to www.borneoficus.info
- Duration : 4 months. December 1st 2021 - March 30st 2022
- Locations: - Kinabalu National Park ,
 - Sayap Substation
 - Poring Maliau Basin,
 - Bukit Piton,
 - Danum Valley Field Center
 - Tawau(Hills Park, Mount Lucia and Bukit TV)
 - Plant4BorneoElephants,
 - Borneo Dolphin Project
 - Deramakot
 - Tabin
 - Inikea
 - Mulu National Park



FUTURE SUGGESTIONS FOR MAMMALS WATCHER

My personal advise or suggestion and trips which I will tailor-make make for mammal lovers.

Maliau
3-4 Nights

Inikea
2-3 Nights

Tawau
3-4 Nights

Tabin
2 Nights

Danum Valley
3-4 Nights

Kinabatangan
2-3 Nights

Deramakot
3-4 Nights

**Kinabalu National
Park**
2 Nights

With this suggestion, you have the best chance to see everything. From squirrels, rats, elephants, primates and potentially cats. All these places (except DFR, DVFC, KNP) are the places I personally have seen cats (Clouded Leopard, Marble Cats and Leopard cats) in the past 24 months. Also the reason why I suggested the places above is because they all have decent accommodation, nice roads, good general wildlife but from a scientific perspective and from a and just a better chance perspective, each of these places have their own 'resident' clouded leopards, and other mammals. So lets say if you went to Maliau Basin, where there are two recorded resident male cloudies, your chances are that you will get to see them if you are lucky and if they are around as they might be patrolling their massive territories.

So if you put all your eggs in one basket and lets say you did a 7 nights trip in one locality, your chances either get higher or 0 because there is chance his or her whole territory is a place where it takes 20 days to take a whole full round and if you happen to be at the wrong side of the road, you have no chance. So. Why not, go to all these places above, spend a decent time, and then you will be at-least in the territory of 10 clouded Leopards for example as most of these places above have at-least two clouded leopard residents and thus you have a better statistically speaking chance to stumble upon if that is indeed your end goal. But also from a general mammal watching perspective, you get to see a huge array of mammals above and hopefully a very satisfying general mammal experience form Cetaceans, Elephants, Squirrels, Primates and so on. You also get to see a huge array of other cool birds such as Hornbills, Herpetofauna in some of the places especially Tawau & Poring for example.

Objective

The main objective of my visit to all the places mentioned was because I am currently doing a ficus survey and research with Chun for Quentin Phillipps, also for our Borneo Wildlife Series which in this report I have added in a few other interesting non mammal finds. In each place I have written down the highlights we saw. At the end of this mammal report I have made the full list of mammals we saw through out .

First Stop:

SAYAP SUBSTATION

This particular place is the back entrance of Kinabalu National Park.

We spent two nights over here. We stayed at a homestay called Porohon Garden which runned by Jurinah Okit. We did two night walks and did some day time walks around the village thnad the park. This is the best place on Borneo for **Horned Frogs**. On one of the nights we saw a red headed krait and a **Long Tailed Porcupine**. Chun, my partner, on the second night saw a **Hoses Civet** crossing the trail during the night. A great start.

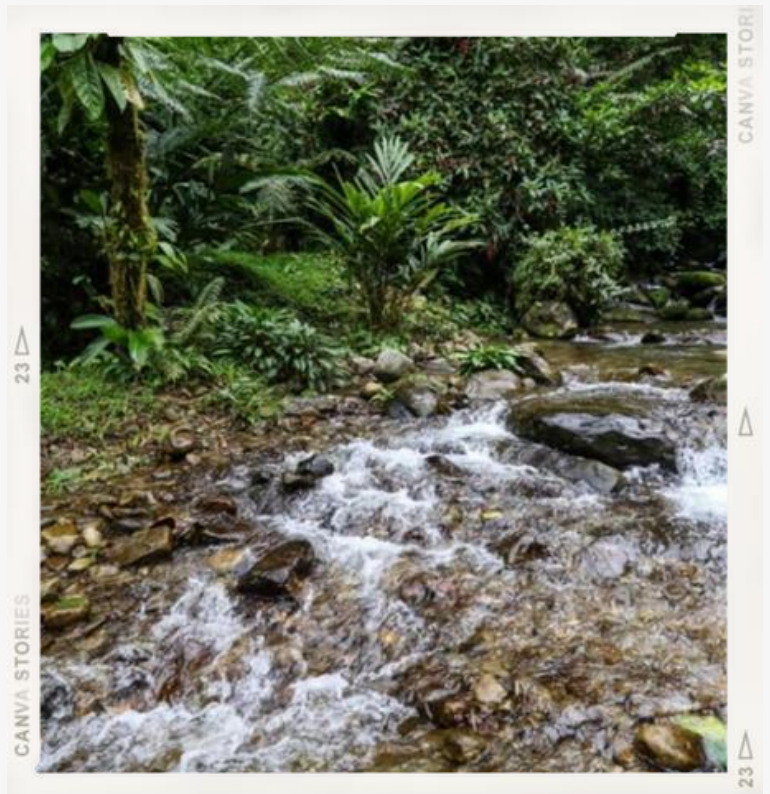


Photo of Horn Frog



Mountain Tree Shrew



The Second Stop

Kinabalu National Park

We stayed here a few nights. If you are doing mammal watching on Borneo, you have to visit the park as it's a haven for small mammals especially endemics like the whiteheads squirrel which I saw and the **Mountain Tree Shrew**. I climbed the mountain as I am doing a film series and came across many nice mammals including a spotted wing **Flying Squirrel** during the night.



Endemic *Rhododendron Ericoides* only at the summit of Mount Kinabalu. Next stop we had was Poring Hot Springs Park. During our night walks, we came across the **Mangrove Cat Snake** right outside our lodge and there was a fruiting fig tree and we came across a **Black Flying Squirrel**.

Next Stop

Bukit Piton

It is after the Kinabatangan and before Lahad Datu (one hour before). We did an evening drive and without fail like last year, we saw a group of wrinkled hornbills. Night drive was quite productive as we saw several civets including a two **Malay Civets** and **Island Palm Civets**. We saw a **Moonrat** as well.



Next Trip

Danum Valley Field Center

Over here we did four nights of night drives and walks. We saw several orangutans, mother and babies, we saw several **Flying Squirrel** species such as the red giant and Thompson, a leopard cat. Tons of **Sambar Deers** too. We were also lucky enough to have stumbled upon a Ficus Stupenda and saw many Helmeted hornbills. Yellow muntjac was also seen. On our way out on the final morning we saw a Malay Weasels and a Yellow Throat Marten crossing the road.



Helmeted Hornbill eating ficus stupenda



Sambar family at the football field



Mouse Deer having fun around the lodge

Next Up

Tabin Wildlife Reserve

They had a very good promotion during the Chinese New Year and it was a good trip. All the three night drives, I did were full of civets. We saw a western tarsier too. An **Orangutan** mother and baby were also found and they were very calm. Upon some investigation, the mother was released from Sepilok a decade ago and now has a baby. **Malay Civet, Palm Civet, Leopard Cats** were a norm.



Next stop

After Tabin, was my backyard. Tawau.

In particular the lowland part of Tawau Hills Park. Mount Lucia, our Plant4borneoelephants project site, our **Borneo Dolphins** project site and a new night drive destination which I will highlight later.

We first stopped by at Bukit Tv, a hill forest connected to Tawau hills. We did some night drives and also also day walks. We were very luck to have stumbled on a family of Sabah **Grey Leaf Langurs** here. During the drives we aw the **Long Tailed Porcupine, Red Giant Flying Squirrel** and the **Thompsons Flying Squirrel Sabah Grey Leaf** photo Subki



Photo by our friend Subki as his photo is more presentable than ours.

Tawau Hills

I spent the most as I am tracking fruiting fig trees, I came across an array of fauna of almost daily Red Leaf Langurs, Gibbons, Binturongs on the fig tree and on my camera traps, several sambar deers, muntjacs, I even came across an Asian Spiny Turtle, and the biggest tortoise in Asia, the Asian hill Tortoise. On my camera traps, as usual, I did encounter a clouded leopard and a marble cat. I came across the Tufted Giant Squirrel too during one of the walks. Banded Civet was a very good find. However, the highlight were the Helmeted Hornbills as I was doing my survey on them. And during one of the sittings, a Malay weasel also just hopped by me. I also observed for the first time personally a giant squirrel making a nest! During one of the walks, Chun saw a pangolin right near the lodge and that was a very exciting find.



Sleeping day time Binturong after having a feast on Ficus Subcordata, the Sultan of Figs



The resident Colugo at its usual spot



Another male Helmeted Hornbill eating ficus subcordata



Ficus Subcordata



Female Golden Tree Frog (Rentapia Hosii) during a night walk



Gibbon Mother and baby eating Ficus Sagittata



First photo of a male orangutan by myself from Tawau Hills on a ficus subcordata.



Almost a daily sighting of the local Red Leaf Langur Troop. This one at the football field



The Sunda Pangolin which we had stumbled upon during a walk. This one has seen life!



The rare White Morph Red Leaf Monkey and we have been first new records of this species eating ripe ficus fruit! Soon to be published.

Plantation

Just an hour drive from Tawau is a plantation which has resident Bornean Pygmy Elephants. These elephants happily co-exist with the workers in the plantation. Read more about this particular plantation here https://www.nss.org.sg/articles.aspx?art_id=EMwgszsbkVg=

Not only did we see two groups of elephants but we were very fortunate to even witness not one, or two but three orangutans in the Albizia plantation. This proves that the wildlife corridor of this plantation is working and the Orangutan were not very far from the corridor. From my latest trips, it again proves, the place to see, statistically and percentage wise, is this plantation ahead of the Kinabatangan river.

Orangutan in the Albizia plantation and elephants and Sunbear corssing the road

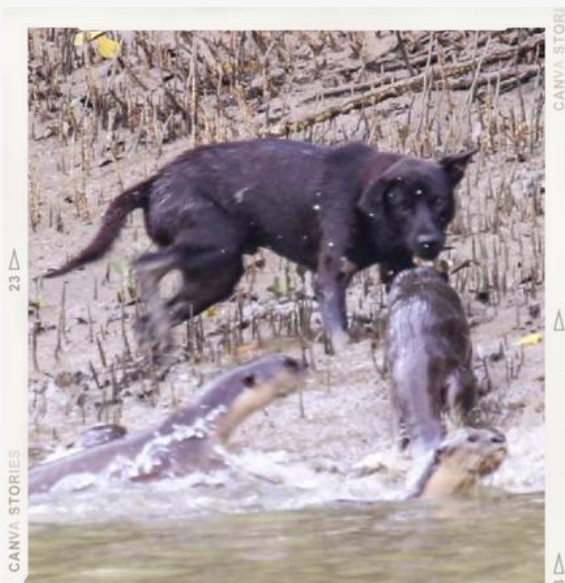


**Mother and baby Orangutan in the Albizia
plantation**
by Chun Xing Wong



**A family of Bornean Elephants during one of
our safari and filming trips.**
Photo by Chun Xing Wong

Borneo Dolphin Project



Smooth Coated Otters vs the local pack of dogs

I did a few days of cetacean surveys while being in Tawau and this time we failed to find the **Humpback Dolphins**. They seem to have been not seen for a year now However on a positiven nite, on all my trips I saw **Irrawaddy Dolphin** and healthy pods of them. I was also blessed and lucky to see large numbers of Proboscis monkeys and even smooth coated otters including a time where was a fight between the resident smooth coated otters and the dogs which were taking care of the aquafarm. On purpose I even went also during the low tides to search for the migratory birds as the Tawau bay is a great place for them. We were very lucky to have seen many species of them.



A floating dead Proboscis



Irrawaddy Dolphin

Inikea

Next up is the new night drive destination in Luasong (Inikea) which I first visited in 2020 but visited several times during this period. I am in love with this new site. Its a rehabilitating forest. The road is full of ficus trees. The lodge is basic but nice. There is no one else around and its literally off the beaten track. We did our own cooking. The pricing of the place is still very high and they should not standardized the rates like they do in Danum Valley or Maliau. The night drives I did here was full of mammals. The mammals were not very skittish either. Saw **Masked Civet, Palm Civet, Banded Civet** and **Malay Civets**. Several of them. Saw **Mouse Deers** and Sambar Deers. Towards the end of the drive, was lucky also to see not one but two Binturong on a fruiting ficus tree too. Leopard cat was very cooperate as you can see from the photo below but the highlight of the night drive was the apex predator. The Clouded Leopard. Neofelis Diardi Bornensis. The male seemed to have come off from a fresh fight from other male or animal. I have a very good video which I will feature in the Borneo Wildlife Series. The photos of the the male I saw are below. I am sold for this place and looking forward to signing a contract with the agency to do more night drives as for now only people with permissions and permits are allowed in.



Leopard Cat



The male Clouded Leopard which we photographed during the night drive also did stop by at the fig tree!



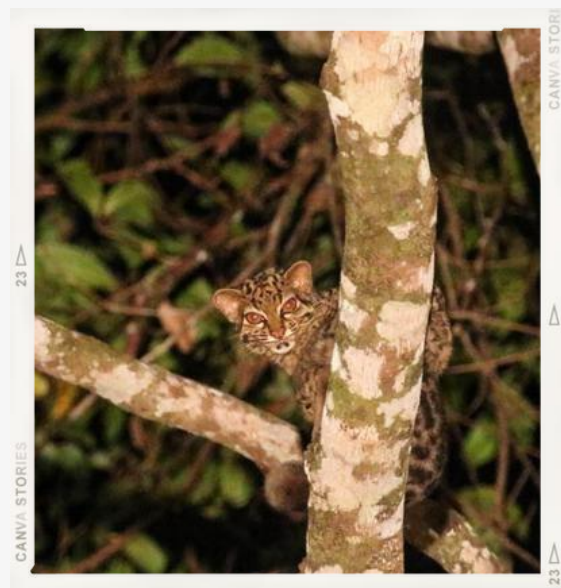
The **Sun Bear** photographed by my driver while all our expensive camera gear was in our bags!! So We set up some camera traps under the fig tree and he came back at night and we all saw some bear marks on the tree

Maliau Basin

Maliau Basin was the final part of the trip. I stayed here a combined total of 6 nights in two trips. I have always not been a fan of Maliau Basin. However my view points have certainly changed. Again to be fair, I have only visited Maliau Basin In the past only for trekking to the waterfalls or for some work at the lodge. This time I did 6 night drives in total and oh boy the night drives and all my drives did not disappoint. I saw a **Clouded Leopard** during my first trip and night drive. And on the third night of my second trip, I saw a **Marbled Cat**. Finally I have gotten a photo of the Marbled Cat after seeing it for 5 times but with no avail of a photo with my camera. I am a happy man and so is my team of Mala, Adi and Chun. Good videos for the series too. I saw several **Helmeted Hornbills** and a **Collared Mongoose** as well



Collared Mongoose



Marbled cat

Clouded Leopard



Mulu National Park

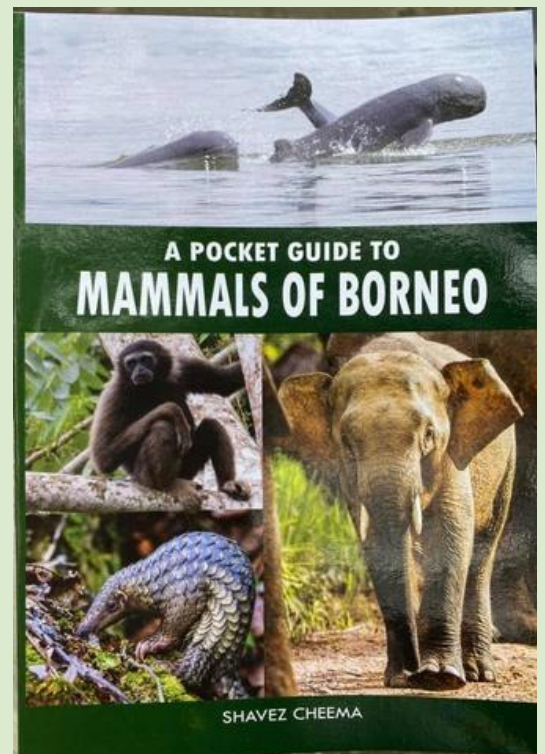
I was in Mulu National Park for 5 days for a Ficus survey. During my stay, I saw 4 species of bats including **Forest Short Nosed Bat**, **Dusky Fruit Bat** and **Tree Foil Horseshoe Bat**. I also saw a **Prevost's Squirrel**, the Sarawak Morph. Moreover, during the evenings we witnessed Bahawks hunting the bats.





REFERENCE

The Reference book I used during this trip were the Phillipps Guide to Mammals of Borneo and my own Photographic guide to Mammals of Borneo which has 185 species of Mammals featured, to test out if my own book is field ready! And with the groups I was with during this period, I am pleased at the results. A few changes will take place in the second edition though but it is perfect for the field.



**A Pocket Guide to Mammals
of Borneo**