

**Borneo Trip Report, with a short Singapore Pre-trip
Oct 22 to Nov 9, 2022**

Fiona A. Reid

Participants: Cheryl Antonucci, Deb Bradley, Peter Post, Michelle Maton, Mike Schaeffer, and Cicily Maton.

Guides: Mike Gordon (all but the first night at Mount Kinabalu), Siti Salihahfarhain Saidin (Mount Kinabalu), Paul Napoleon (Tabin), Max (Kinbatangan Wetland Resort).

Photo credits given as initials of name.

I had a Borneo trip on hold for two years, thanks to Covid-19, but it finally came to fruition and some of the original sign-ups remained on board. AA Borneo arranged the trip, and carried over my deposit from 2020. Most of the group decided to go via Singapore, and after I found out it was a lot cheaper to get 2 tickets (about \$500 savings), I joined them, with 2 full days in Singapore to relax and adjust to the time change. That was until Jon Hall's Singapore trip report was posted... then there was a mad scramble to contact people there and try for a few more mammals, and not a lot of sleep in Singapore as a result.

Oct 22. I arrived really early, and Deb Bradley a bit later. Peter joined us too, and we met Law Jai Bao (JB) at Lower Peirce Reservoir in hopes of seen Raffles Banded Langur. JB had arrived earlier and seen a group, but they had moved off. We walked along the reservoir and then moved to Thompson Park. Many **Long-tailed Macaques** were present in both parks, and at Thompson we also saw numerous **Plantain Squirrels**, one **Slender Treeshrew** and one **Common Treeshrew**. A bit later I found a **Colugo**. Peter was so impressed he fell off the boardwalk (it was only Day 1...). I also found a roost of **2 Sunda**



Short-nosed Fruit Bats (*Cynopterus brachyotis*) in a palm leaf tent. It is amazing how similar these tents are to New World bat tents, even though the bats are not related.

Later we went to meet Benjamin Lee at the Botanical Garden, where he showed us a roost of **Greater Bamboo Bats**. It was neat to see this species in life as I painted it over 30 years ago for the Golden Guide to bats of the world. Ben also took us to see a large roost of **Cave Nectar Bats** (*Eonycteris spelaea*) under a bridge (details in Jon's report).

In the evening we joined Mike and Michelle for the night safari at the zoo. It was packed with people, being a long weekend. It was pretty hectic. On the way out we looked for the trailhead that could be walked at night, but there were all kinds of roadworks and repairs that seemed to block access, so we ended up returning to the hotel.

Figure 1 Sunda Short-nosed Fruit Bats, FR

Oct 23. We went back to Lower Peirce Reservoir again and met JB. This time we located a family of 5 **Raffles' Banded Langurs** and were able to watch them for about an hour. It was great. The mom allowed other members of the group to take her small, white-headed baby and play with it for 5 minutes or so then she would gently come and retrieve it.



Figure 2 Raffles' Banded Langurs, PP

We visited another park to look for a few birds, and I found a second Colugo. JB then took us to another location where there was a den and latrine of an otter family.

Figure 3 Smooth-coated Otter, DB

These **Smooth-coated Otters** are guarded every day by a group of volunteers, mostly to stop people from bothering them, protect them from vehicles, and safeguard their breeding dens. One otter was seen briefly at the den entrance. We waited about an hour, and 3 adults returned to the den. We watched them roll in the dirt, use the latrine and play-fight. Deb stayed longer, and saw the cubs emerge. I met her after dark at Thompson Park, where there is a small side-road that looked promising (and legal) for a night walk. Unfortunately it had street lights along its entire length. We



came up with a creative solution that of course did not involve any illegality... We watched a group of

Cynopterus feeding on figs, and saw a **Greater Mouse Deer**, a group of 3 **Sambar Deer** and our third Colugo, but no pangolins unfortunately. On our way out, Deb spotted a female Wagler's Pit Viper, a really stunning snake. We had another rather short night of sleep.

Oct 24. We flew on Scoot to Kota Kinabalu, wandered around a bit on the coast and later met our whole group for dinner at Mamasitas.

Oct 25. One of our group came down with covid. Two stayed to look after her, so we were a small party heading off to Mount Kinabalu with Siti, a wonderful guide that I had worked with 5 years earlier. We enjoyed a great variety of moths and other insects at our lunch stop, but hard rain kept us confined until evening. We drove up to the end of the road at 7 pm and walked down. It was a bit slow at first. We didn't get good looks at the rats foraging on garbage. We did see two lovely **Spotted Giant Flying Squirrels** and **Horsfield's Flying Squirrel** (new to me), and two **Bornean Striped Palm Civets**. Best of all, we saw a small gray mammal running along the water drain, and when it reached some steps with pools of water, it dived in and swam from pool to pool, confirming it was no rat but a **Bornean Water Shrew**! We had great views of a Sabah Green Pit Viper and a Kinabalu Angle-toed Gecko. Just before we reached the rooms I saw eyeshine under some shrubs, but it was moving off. We cut around to another road and were lucky enough to intercept this mammal racing across the grass. It was a **Short-tailed Mongoose** – all brown with a short, very bushy tail. It was a bit strange to see it out at night as they are generally diurnal, and sadly we did not have time to get photos.



Figure 4 Bornean Black-banded Squirrel, CA

Oct 26. We got a ride up the hill at 6 a.m. Birding was good, as was squirreling (is there such a word?). We saw **Bornean Mountain Ground Squirrel**, **Bornean Black-banded**, **Jentink's** and the lovely **Whitehead's Pygmy Squirrel**. We also saw a **Mountain Treeshrew**. I found a culvert I had visited 5 years ago and the same bats were still there, 3 **Andersen's Woolly Horseshoe Bats** (formerly Greater Woolly). After lunch it rained hard again. Mike Gordon joined us in the afternoon and came with us for spotlighting. With help from his thermal scope, we had great looks at a **Sabah Giant Rat** and 2 **Kinabalu Rats**, one **Ricefield Rat**, and 2 **Whitehead's Rat**. On the walk down we saw a total of 4 **Masked Palm**

Civets, 2 seen really well, and 2 Bornean Striped Palm Civets. We saw one small, odd-looking snake that Mike identified as a Schimdt's Reed Snake. I had set a UV light at the room, and we had a nice moth collection to view, including an Atlas Moth.



Figure 5 Mountain Treeshrew, CA



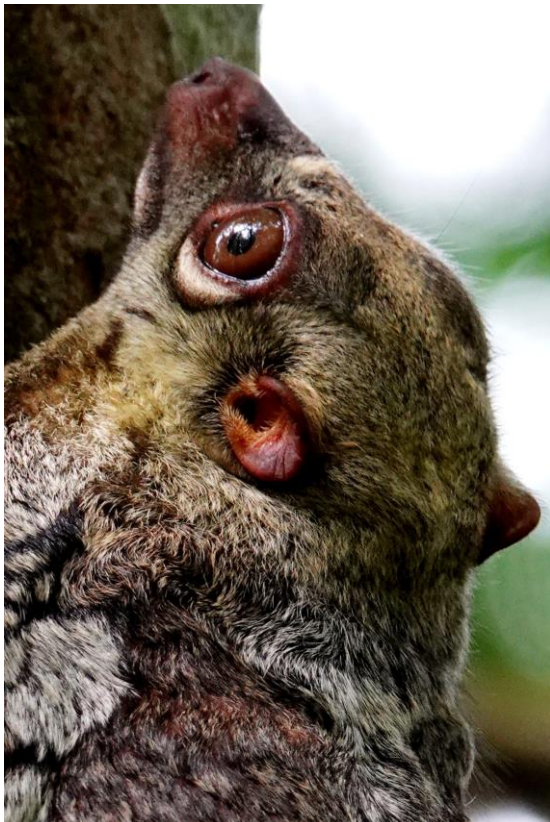
Figure 6 Bornean Mountain Ground Squirrel, CA

Oct 27. We had a morning walk, but didn't see any new mammals apart from **Plantain Squirrels**. We said a sad goodbye to Siti. We left at 10 and stopped near Poring to see Rafflesia in flower – quite spectacular but I still need to see one in the stinky phase. We stopped in Telupid for lunch (a mistake, it turned out later – two suffered from food poisoning, most likely from this lunch). On the way to Deramakot one of the vehicles had engine problems so we waited a while for a replacement. This meant we ended driving in after

dark, which was good in terms of animals seen, but bad being inside cars and not set up for photos. Nonetheless, I had a great, if fleeting view of my first **Moonrat**. We also saw 4 **Bornean Pygmy Elephants**, and Mike saw a mammal cross the road that he thought could be a Marbled Cat. Nobody else saw it though. We also saw **Lesser Mouse Deer** and **Island Palm Civet**. After a late dinner we took a night drive, which was a bit slow. A highlight was a mom and baby **Bornean Colugo** feeding together. We crossed off **Thomas' Flying Squirrel** (3 seen) and 3 Bornean Striped Palm Civets, a Sambar Deer and a mouse deer that remained a bit hidden. We also saw Dark-eared Treefrog.



Figure 7 Colugo mom and baby above, Colugo portrait, below, DB



Oct 28. We had no plans in the morning. In the afternoon we left for the river, earlier than usual so we would have a chance to look for Sabah Gray Langurs. Mike thought we might be too early for **Orangutan** activity, but we saw 10, so that was plenty! We had one **Pig-tailed Macaque** and many **Long-tails**. Cheryl, Mike and I tried for the langurs, taking a small boat a short distance upriver, but we didn't find the langurs. After dark we headed back slowly. We saw the usual suspects (including 3 **Red Giant Flying Squirrels**, henceforth relegated to a common species) and added 2 **Leopard Cats** and our first **Sunda Slow Loris**. As we arrived near camp we saw a **Teledu**! Super exciting. We went out after a late dinner, and saw a Teledu again (maybe the same one), a **Malay Civet**, another Slow Loris, and a Colugo in flight.

Oct 29. I found a **Giant Squirrel** near the dining area. We had good looks at it. We also crawled under the dining hall and the adjacent cabins in search of bats. We confirmed **Acuminate Horseshoe Bats** at both



Figure 8 Giant Squirrel, CA

places, and also some **Dayak Roundleaf Bats** under the cabins. Later we took a walk down the road and spent time watching a big male Orangutan eating Durian.

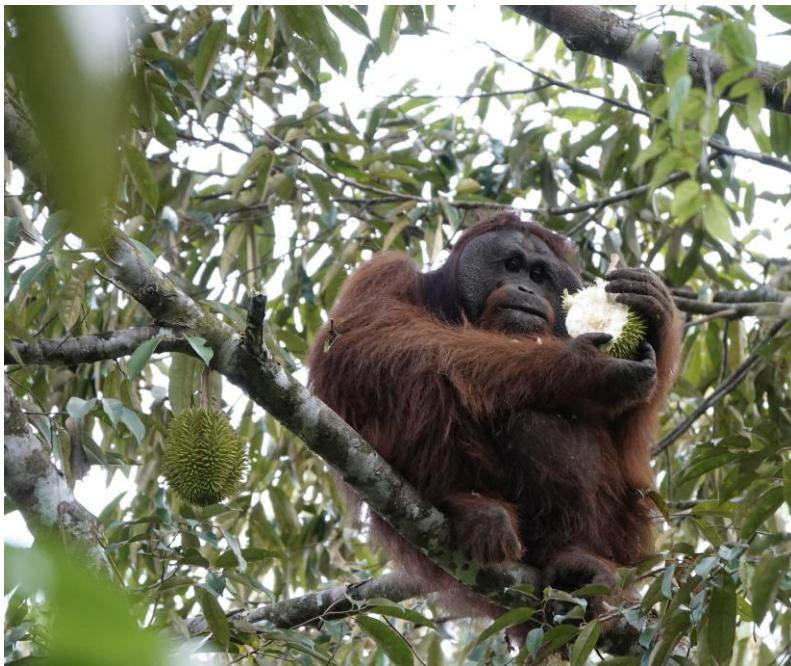


Figure 9. Orangutan male, CA

Around this time Mike's face was starting to resemble a male Orang on one side (due to a tooth abscess), and Peter was not at all well. Added to that, our safari truck was not starting, so we had to leave it running and have another car follow us in case of issues. Luckily, the food poisoning had resolved, and in the evening the rest of the group arrived, freed at last from KK. Mike S saw a Teledu near the rooms, our 3rd sighting. We did a night drive, but didn't add anything new, but at least the new arrivals

got to see some of the common species. Cheryl and Deb saw a **Long-tailed Porcupine**, but I missed it as it was on the other side of the vehicle and raced off fast. Later they went for a walk along the road and saw a **Moonrat**.



Figure 10 Red Giant Flying Squirrel, CA

Oct 30. We had a bird walk in the morning, and after lunch took a drive. We saw 9 Orangutans, so the others had a chance to catch up on those at least. After dinner we had a good night drive when the rain eased up. We had great views of two **Malayan Porcupines**, in the process of making more porcupines. We saw two more Leopard Cats and the common species. Later a smaller group went out again, and we saw our first **Large Flying Fox** and **Black Flying Squirrel**, and 2 more Leopard Cats. The rest of the group saw a **Pen-tailed Treeshrew**, one of my top 3 most wanted Borneo mammals. To my chagrin I was not able to get on it as it whirled round pursued by numerous lights.

Oct 31. At noon I took Michelle and Mike to see the bats under the buildings. It was difficult to get a good look at the *Hipposideros*. We went to the quarry in the afternoon, where we saw our first **Earspot Squirrel**, and a treeshrew that could not be identified to species, we also saw **Prevost's Squirrel** en route (and on a few other days). We saw a nice group of **Maroon Langurs**, our first ones. We decided to start very early the next day, so we skipped the evening drive.

Nov 1. We set out at 3:30 a.m. hoping to reach the river at dawn. The drive was productive, with 4 civets and some sambar and mouse deer. Deb spotted a **Sunda Pangolin**, which we all tried to see, and most of us saw parts of it as it took off into the bracken fern. This was my first ever wild pangolin of any species! The river was good for hornbills, but the Sabah Gray Langurs did not appear. On our way back we stopped to watch a mother and baby Orangutan peeling bark and eating the cambium. It was really nice to watch them feeding, unconcerned by our presence. In the afternoon Deb found the **Sabah Gray Langurs** very close to the buildings. Mike had never seen them in that area before. Cheryl was quite

stoic, holding out hope she would find them at Tabin. After dark we went out on a night drive until midnight. We saw a Slow Loris, and a Large Flying Fox, which were new for some of the group, and had good views of a Teledu. Unfortunately I dropped my phone, and decided I had to repeat the night drive. Mike and his wife kindly came along to help me look, but we were in a van so it was difficult to watch for animals. We had really good views of a Teledu (possibly the same individual) and of a Moonrat, and the only decent views of a bull Pygmy Elephant. I didn't find my phone and was pretty bummed and sleep deprived.



Figure 11 Slow Loris, CA

Nov 2. I got up a couple of hours after returning from the late trip and went with Cheryl to try to find the Sabah Gray Langurs that Deb had seen. We didn't find them, but fortunately someone had swerved to avoid a python and at the same time found my phone!

We left after breakfast for the long drive out and to Sukau. The most interesting find on the way out was a Spiny Hill Tortoise. We arrived at the deluxe Kinabatangan Wetland Resort for a very late lunch. The atmosphere was a bit weird (our guide Max was positively hostile) but the food was much better than at Deramakot (not exactly great, but at least edible in parts). We went out by boat in the afternoon, and saw a good number of **Proboscis Monkeys**, **Silvered Langurs** (including one orange morph) and one Orangutan, and many Long-tailed Macaques. Birding was pretty good. We arrived back after dark and Deb saw a bat near the boardwalk, twirling on a vine. I saw it later and identified it as a **Trefoil Horseshoe Bat** by its yellowish coloration. I walked the boardwalk loop, which was quite a bit longer than expected, and I got soaked. It rained all evening so we stayed in and caught up on some sleep.



Figure 12 Silvered Langur, orange morph, PP

Nov 3. We had an early morning trip on the river, seeing more of all the primates and a good variety of birds. After our late breakfast we walked the boardwalk trail which was really nice, with numerous *Nepenthes* of various species, Malagasy Box Turtle, and best of all Mike spotted a very low and close Colugo. I went back to collect people who had missed the outing so they could see it. Plantain and Prevost's Squirrel were also present. We went out again in the late afternoon, and again after dinner. Near the restaurant we spotted a **Whiskered Flying Squirrel**, which we saw again from the boat, a new one for most of us. The night trip was pretty good, with good views of a *Myotis* sweeping insects off the water surface. The most likely species for this area is **Horsfield's Myotis**, as the other fishing *Myotis* appear to be largely coastal. We saw numerous pteropids, most of which were Large Flying Foxes, but one might have been an Island Flying Fox – I was not sure enough about this to list it. I spotted a small, perched pteropid that was very spotty, but the spotting seems to be unrelated to species, just a weird form of partial leucism. After much examination and consultation with several experts I am pretty sure it was a **CaveNectar Bat**.



Figure 13 Cave Nectar Bat, MG

After the trip, Deb and I walked the boardwalk twice, in hopes of finding Otter Civets, as they are seen quite often around the lodge. We didn't see them, just Greater Mouse Deer and Sambar, and many frog species.

Nov 4. We had a long trip out by boat, truck and van, arriving at Tabin at 1:30 p.m. Tabin has a great reputation for mammals, but the habitat is weird. Oil palm grows on one side and very trashy, vine-covered secondary forest on the other. There is a bit of primary forest, but the track to it was blocked so we did not get to see it. We met Paul, our local guide who was really good and very helpful. Our first



Figure 14 Teledu from video, CA

safari was in the late afternoon, and we drove back to the park entrance. Here a number of Red Giant Flying Squirrels made their way from tree to tree, some sailing considerable distance. It was great to see this at dusk. We saw the common civets and flying squirrels (though Thomas's is not so common here) and returned to the lodge to eat. After dinner we went out again and had an

amazing Teledu sighting (our 6th!), as it ran along the fence line. We also saw a **Small-clawed Otter** on the road, squeaking loudly. We thought we would see otters every day, as our rooms were right on the river, but the high water made it possible for them to swim by silently, and this was the only one we actually saw. We saw a total of 5 Malay Civets.



Figure 15 Sabah Gray Langur, CA

Nov 5. We went for an early drive but didn't find many mammals. I risked my neck checking out a steep culvert, but only found one bat, the Acuminate Horseshoe Bat. Another outing at 10 a.m. didn't yield much of interest either. A walk did bring us a **Lesser Treeshrew** though. In the afternoon we drove into the more mature forest, and we were called by another guide as his group was seeing the **Sabah Gray Langur**. We rushed to join them, me with some trepidation as time was running out. And there they were! We saw two, one of which we watched feeding for some minutes. We added another Orang to our list as well. Later I found a bat roosting under a huge arum leaf, another Trefoil Horseshoe Bat.



Figure 16 Trefoil Horseshoe Bat, CA

We had two night drives, in the open road and the more mature forest. We added some **Black Flying Squirrels** and saw the usual contenders too.



Figure 17 Pig-tailed Macaque, CA



Figure 18 Horsfield's Fruit Bat, FR

Nov 6. We had the morning free, so I searched for bat roosts. I had a horseshoe bat on my back balcony (River Cabin 4), and found a big colony of *Emballonura* under some of the hill cabins. I found another group of horseshoe bats in a nearby culvert, and looked at a bat Mike had found, a *Cynopterus*.

Later we found another group of these bats under the eaves of the main building, along with more *Emballonura* sp. where I also found the wall of shame. The management had put up mist nets to stop the bats, and had killed at least 10 bats. I was able to rip down that mist net, but others had been placed elsewhere. In the late afternoon we went out and saw an uncommon white morph of the Sabah Gray Langur. Our night drives were a bit slow, mostly just the common flying squirrels and civets, but did yield our first Slow Loris for Tabin. The moon was up which probably contributed.



Figure 19 Greater Sheath-tailed Bat, FR

Nov 7. We split into groups and I went up to the mud volcano with Michelle and Paul. It was a great walk, with very good views of a mouse deer and our first **Red Muntjac**. We also saw a Blue-headed Pitta and I found a pair of sleeping Bonaparte's Nightjars, which Paul was thrilled to see (not only had he searched for them unsuccessfully for 5 years, his last name is Napoleon!). We saw Rhinoceros Hornbills

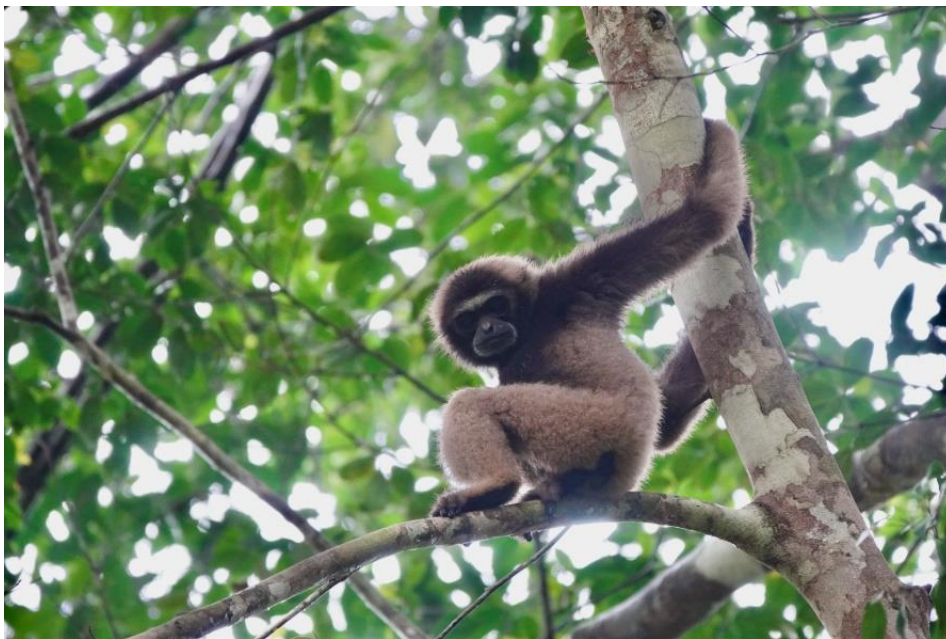


Figure 20 North Bornean Gibbon, CA

and **North Bornean Gibbons** in a fruiting fig.

Later I took the group around to see various bats and spent more time on IDs. The *Rhinolophus* all proved to be Acuminates, others were **Greater Sheath-tailed Bats** (and possibly Lesser too). The pteropids I identified as **Horsfield's Fruit Bat** based on large size and relatively long, sturdy muzzle.

Mike noticed that I had Greater Sheath-tailed Bats under my front balcony too. We did an afternoon drive, but did not add much of interest. After dinner we walked a trail in hopes of finding a tarsier, but failed. We saw a sleeping Black-headed Pitta and a few frogs and insects. We then went for a night drive and saw 3 Leopard Cats and Deb spotted a **Hose's Pygmy Flying Squirrel**. She was the only one to see it well, but we all saw it glide to a nearby tree. We saw the usual civets and several mouse deer, as well as the larger flying squirrels.



Figure 21 Island Palm Civet, CA

Nov 8. We had a morning drive, then after an early lunch we headed out to Lahad Datu and flew back to Kota Kinabalu. We said goodbye to Mike, who had been amazing, with his ability to not only spot but instantly identify every mammal encountered. My goal is to get him to smile for a photo. Next trip. Cheryl and I stayed at the Rasa Ria Shangri La, a very nice resort that had numerous colonies of **Forest Short-nosed Fruit Bats** and one palm-leaf tent with a group of **Sunda Short-nosed Fruit Bats**. This lodge has good potential for other mammals – binturong, otters, tarsiers and even reintroduced pangolins are seen in the small reserve. We arrived too late to get information about these, but I plan to return. It was certainly by far the best food of the trip.

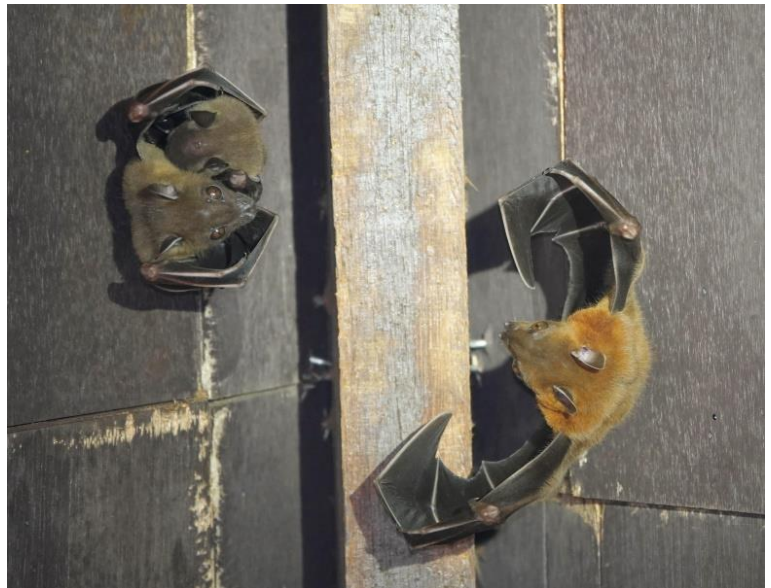


Figure 22 Forest Short-nosed Fruit Bat, CA



Figure 23 Cicily, Peter, Paul, Cheryl, Fiona, Deb, Mike G (for grumpy) Michelle, Mike S. in Tabin. FR

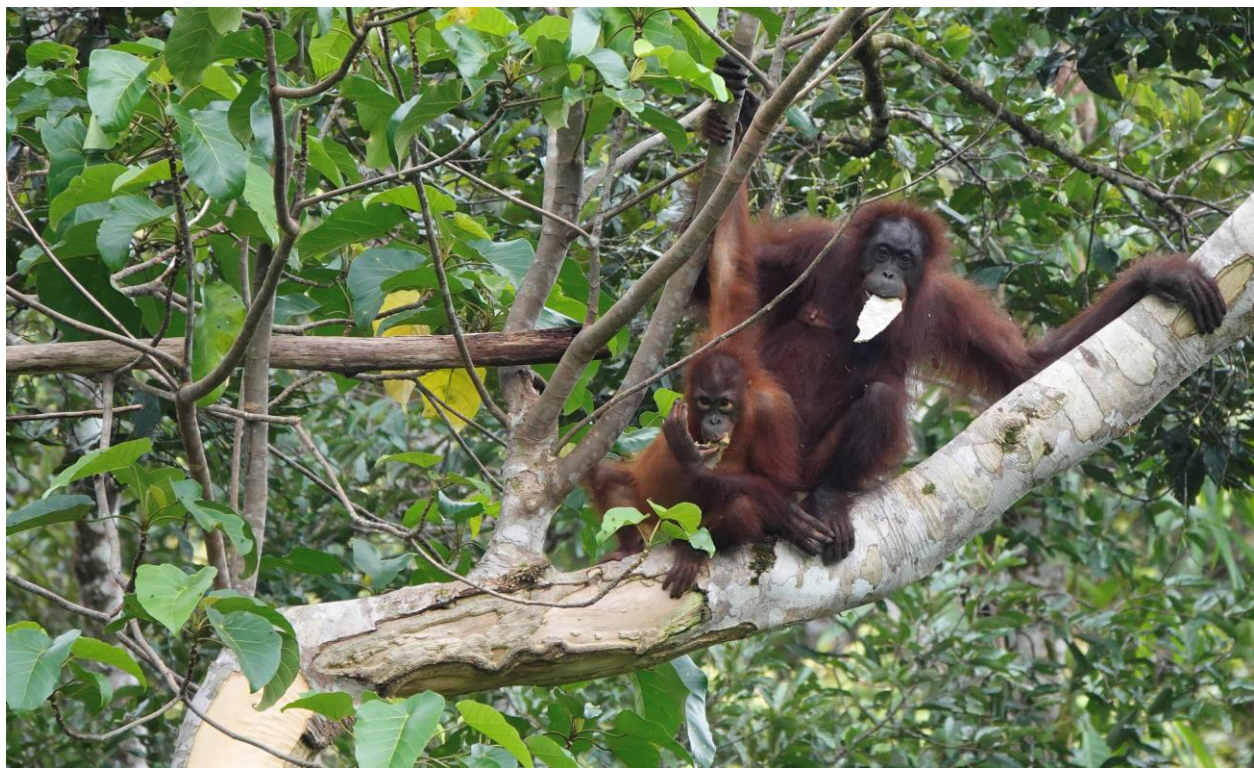


Figure 24 Mother and baby Orangutan stripping bark, CA

Singapore Mammal List

Order Scandentia

Slender Treeshrew *Tupaia gracilis*

Common Treeshrew *Tupaia glis*

Order Chiroptera

Sunda short-nosed Fruit Bat *Cynopterus brachyotis*

Greater Bamboo Bat *Tylonycteris robustula*

Cave Nectar Bat *Eonycteris spelaea*

Order Dermoptera

Sunda Colugo *Galeopterus variegatus*

Order Primates

Raffles' Banded Langur *Presbytis femoralis*

Long-tailed Macaque *Macaca fascicularis*

Order Rodentia

Plantain Squirrel *Callosciurus notatus*

Order Carnivora

Smooth-coated Otter *Lutrogale perspicillata*

Order Artiodactyla

Sambar Deer *Rusa unicolor*

Greater Mouse-deer *Tragulus napu*

Borneo Mammal List

Family Soricidae

Bornean Water Shrew *Chimarrogale phaeura*

Family Erinaceidae

Moonrat *Echinosorex gymnura*

Order Scandentia

Pen-tailed Treeshrew *Ptilocercus lowii*

Mountain Treeshrew *Tupaia montana*

Lesser Treeshrew *Tupaia minor*

Order Pholidota

Sunda Pangolin *Manis javanica*

Order Chiroptera

Forest Short-nosed Fruit Bat *Cynopterus minutus*

Sunda Short-nosed Fruit Bat *Cynopterus brachyotis*

Horsfield's Fruit Bat *Cynopterus horsfieldi*

Large Flying Fox *Pteropus vampyrus*

Cave Nectar Bat *Eonycteris spelaea*

Greater Sheath-tailed Bat *Emballonura alecto*

Andersen's Woolly Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus foetidus*

Acuminate Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus acuminatus*

Trefoil Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus trifolius*

Dayak Roundleaf Bat *Hipposideros dyacorum*

Horsfield's Myotis *Myotis horsfieldii*

Order Dermoptera

Bornean Colugo *Galeopterus borneanus*

Order Primates

Philippine Slow Loris *Nycticebus menagensis*

Maroon Langur *Presbytis rubicunda*

Sabah Gray Langur *Presbytis sabana*

Silvered Langur *Trachypithecus cristatus*

Proboscis Monkey *Nasalis larvatus*

Long-tailed Macaque *Macaca fascicularis*

Pig-tailed Macaque *Macaca nemestrina*

North Borneo Gibbon *Hylobates funereus*

Bornean Orangutan *Pongo pygmaeus*

Order Rodentia

Giant Squirrel *Ratufa affinis*

Prevost's Squirrel *Callosciurus prevostii*

Plantain Squirrel *Callosciurus notatus*

Ear-spot Squirrel *Callosciurus adamsi*

Bornean black-banded Squirrel I *Callosciurus orestes*

Jentink's Squirrel *Sundasciurus jentinki*

Bornean Mountain Ground Squirrel *Dremomys everetti*

Whitehead's Pygmy Squirrel *Exilisciurus whiteheadi*

Horsfield's Flying Squirrel *Iomys horsfieldi*

Whiskered Flying Squirrel *Petinomys genibarbis*

Hose's Pygmy Flying Squirrel *Petaurillus hosei*

Black flying Squirrel *Aeromys tephromelas*

Thomas's Flying Squirrel *Aeromys thomasi*

Red Giant Flying Squirrel *Petaurista petaurista*
Spotted Giant Flying Squirrel *Petaurista elegans*
Sabah Giant Rat *Leopoldamys sabanus*
Kinabalu Rat *Rattus baluensis*
Ricefield Rat *Rattus argentiventer*
Whitehead's Rat *Maxomys whiteheadi*
Malayan Porcupine *Hystrix brachyura*
Long-tailed Porcupine *Trichys fasciculata*

Order Carnivora

Yellow-throated Marten *Martes flavigula*
Teledu (Sunda Skunk) *Mydaus javanensis*
Malay Civet or Tangalunga *Viverra zangalunga*
Masked Palm Civet *Paguma larvata*
Island Palm Civet *Paradoxurus philippinensis*
Bornean Striped Palm Givet *Arctogalidia stigmatica*
Banded Palm Civet *Hemigalus derbyanus*
Small-clawed Otter *Aonyx cinerea*
Short-tailed Mongoose *Herpestes brachyurus*
Leopard Cat *Prionailurus bengalensis*

Order Proboscidea

Bornean Pygmy Elephant *Elaphas maximus*

Order Artiodactyla

Lesser Mouse-deer *Tragulus javanicus*
Greater Mouse-deer *Tragulus napu*
Red Muntjac *Muntiacus muntjak*
Sambar Deer *Rusa unicolor*

Total species = 63