

# Sabah, Singapore, Peninsular Malaysia

June 30<sup>th</sup> – July 17<sup>th</sup> 2019

Phil Telfer

## Intro

A fifth trip to Borneo for me still trying to see some of the remaining big targets, like Sun Bear, Marbled Cat, Otter Civet, Sunda Pangolin and Banded Linsang. I was joined this time by Karen Baker and Mark Bibby and we were also accompanied for the Deramakot section by Mark Spence and Robin Backhouse. Deramakot was arranged with AA Borneo where we'd again be with Mike Gordon the amazing spotlifter. It was an exceptional trip throughout and we got lucky this time with three of the above target mammals and a very good supporting cast.

## Itin

Day 1. Kinabalu Mountain Lodge

Day 2 - 8. Deramakot

Day 9. Kinabalu Mountain Lodge

Day 10 - 12. Sapulut Forest Reserve

Day 13 -14. Singapore

Day 15 - 16. Fraser's Hill, Malaysia

## Mount Kinabalu Lodge

We spent the first night here. The lodge is situated outside of the national park in a forest clearing on the lower slopes of the mountain. Anyone with an interest in moths and bugs would do well to stay here for the incredible number and variety of species attracted to the lights. Plus it's clean and very cheap. We saw Whitehead's Pygmy Squirrel in the grounds but a short walk in the park that morning failed to find the hoped for Kinabalu Squirrels.

## Deramakot

What a great place this is! The freedom to spotlight and the flexibility to fix a schedule with Mike along with the number of rare species which show up here with some regularity including of course

Clouded Leopards. You'll probably have some slow nights along the way but if you put in the hours here something good will show up. Had another great encounter with a Clouded Leopard, on our sixth night, along the road down to the White House.



Photo by Mark Spence

A feature this year which was completely different to last year was the exceptional number of Leopard Cat sightings, more than ten most nights, and we reckon 80-100 for the week. We also did well for Flying Squirrels apart from frequent Red and Thomas' we saw Black, Red-cheeked and Horsfield's. A Banded Palm Civet was a good sighting on the second night. Another night had two Otter Civets in a roadside puddle while on the road to the river where we often stopped for coffee and cake. Mark Spence had spent some nights camping in the clearing here on a previous trip and had seen a Flat-Headed Cat by the small tributary. Later on in the night/morning as we were almost back to the base accommodation the jeep stopped suddenly and we were all stunned to see a large Sunda Pangolin walking across the road and off into the forest.



Shortly into the following evenings drive Mike spotted a different Pangolin just off the roadside and it climbed into a low bush where we managed some partially obscured photos. Other good sightings were Moonrat, Western Tarsier and Sabah Giant Rat along with a few nice snakes.



## Sapulut Forest Reserve

We spent three nights here with Mike and Nick from AA Borneo, checking the place out as a potential second Deramakot. It has been heavily logged and not too pretty in places although the logging has now stopped and there is much replanting taking place. There is some wildlife left, probably in quite low densities, but we managed to see Yellow Throated Marten, Binturong, Yellow Muntjac and Earspot Squirrel. Tufted Ground squirrels are seen here with some regularity, which was one of the main reasons for our visit. We had no luck with this but the local guides showed us videos of the squirrel on their phones and what an animal that would be to see! The place does have potential but needs some recovery time.

## Singapore

We spent two nights here visiting Bukit Timah national park one morning. It's full of Plantain and Slender squirrels but also full of people. Pangolins have been introduced here and there is a good population and they're often seen on the trails by early morning walkers. As this is an introduced population and we'd had good views in Deramakot we gave up on our planned night walk to try and see them. We ended up wandering around China Town for the evening after having downed some super expensive cocktails at Raffles Hotel.

## Fraser's Hill

We stayed at Stephen's Place about a two hour and half to three hour drive North of KL airport. Stephen Hogg is an ex-BBC wildlife cameraman and his place is totally geared for wildlife watchers. He has a wealth of local wildlife knowledge and some great stories of past adventures. Siamang Gibbons are around here although we missed them and Tigers have also been around on occasion. There has even been a Golden Cat in the lodge garden one night raiding the chickens, again, unfortunately not while we were there. Some species we found during the day included Common Treeshrew, Lesser Gymnure and Red-Cheeked squirrel.



Lesser Gymnure



Red-Cheeked Squirrel

One of our target species here was Spotted Giant Flying Squirrel which is regularly seen at night on Telecom Loop road, as elsewhere though we missed it again. However, on our last night of the trip we got a hell of a bonus as totally unexpectedly we found a Sun Bear close by in a tree by the road. It was more or less at our eye level and we found it from the noise it was making, having actually walked past it. It was ripping at something in the tree and not too concerned by our lights for a couple of minutes before it climbed down. What a great ending.



Many thanks to Mike, Nick and Tom from AA Borneo plus all my travelling buds for a great and fun trip.

## Mammal list

### Mount. K

Striped Palm Civet

Giant Squirrel

Whitehead's Pygmy Squirrel

Jentink's Squirrel

Mountain Ground Squirrel

Bornean Black-Banded Squirrel

Mountain Treeshrew

### Deramakot

Thomas' Flying Squirrel

Red Flying Squirrel

Black Flying Squirrel

Red-Cheeked Flying Squirrel

Horsfield's Flying Squirrel

Plantain Squirrel

Bornean Pygmy Squirrel

Sunda Clouded Leopard

Leopard Cat

Malay Civet

Banded Palm Civet

Island Palm Civet

Striped Palm Civet

Otter Civet

Long-Tailed Macaque

Orangutan

Western Tarsier

Philippine Slow Loris

Colugo

Sunda Pangolin

Moonrat

Large Flying Fox

Diadem Roundleaf Bat

Trefoil Horseshoe Bat

Lesser Woolly Horseshoe Bat

Long-Tongued Nectar Bat

Malayan Porcupine

Sabah Giant Rat

Red (or Brown) Spiny Maxomys

Lesser Rane Mouse

Sambar

Lesser Mousedeer

Yellow Muntjac

Bornean Pygmy Elephant

Sapulut Forest

Earspot Squirrel

Prevost's Squirrel

Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat

Pig-tailed Macaque

Yellow-throated Marten

Binturong

Yellow Muntjac

Brown Rat

Slow Loris

Singapore

Slender Squirrel

Plantain Squirrel

Colugo

Fraser's Hill

Three-striped Ground Squirrel

Grey-bellied Squirrel

Red-bellied (Pallas's) Squirrel

Low's Squirrel

Red-cheeked Squirrel

Common Treeshrew

Lesser Gymnure

White-thighed Langur

Dusky Langur

Small-tooth Palm Civet

Common Palm Civet

Wild Boar

Pacific Rat

Sun Bear