

The Reptiles and Amphibians of Borneo

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline Itinerary

Day 1	Fly Kuala Lumpur
Day 2 – 6	Kota Kinabalu and Kinabalu National Park
Day 6 – 9	Poring Hot Spring
Day 9 – 11	Kinabatangan
Day 10 – 14	Danum Valley
Day 14 – 15	Depart Kota Kinabalu, inbound flight

Departs

October

Focus

Reptiles and Amphibians

Grading

Important: please read the 'Tour Grading and Focus' section at the end of the document before booking.

Dates and Prices

See website (tour code MYS09)

Highlights

- Superb lizards including the sought-after Kinabalu Dragon, Mocquard's Eyebrow Lizard, gliding lizards and Sabah Flying Gecko
- Exquisite vipers include Malcolm's, Bornean Keeled, and Sumatran and Bornean Pit Vipers
- Fascinating amphibians include Wallace's Flying Frog, Cinnamon Frog, Kinabalu & Kobayashi Horned Frogs
- Discover rarely seen nocturnal mammals



Bornean Keeled Green Pit Viper (*Tropidolaemus subannulatus*), Kinabalu Dragon (*Hypsicalotes kinabaluensis*), Wallace's Flying Frog (*Rhacophorus nigropalmatus*)



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Introduction

Borneo is renowned for its amphibian and reptile biodiversity, as well as its suite of birds, insects, flora, and mammals. Approximately 300 reptile species have been recorded from the island of Borneo and approximately 150 species of amphibian, of which over two thirds are endemic.

On this exciting itinerary we'll explore Borneo's stunning habitats, utilising night walks and drives at every opportunity to search for the island's spectacular diversity of wildlife, the reptile and amphibian life of which consists such special species as Kinabalu Dragon, Malcolm's Pit Viper, King Cobra, Red-headed Krait, Giant Gliding Lizard, Harlequin Tree Frog and many others.

The group size for this holiday is limited to just six participants as we seek to find and photograph some of the most amazing reptiles and amphibians on earth. The itinerary explores Borneo using comfortable en suite accommodation throughout. Additionally, our visit to Borneo also helps to provide funding to our partners in Borneo for several community projects. One such project is their work with KOPEL, a local community cooperative that has a large-scale forest restoration project. Historically, this community consisted largely of illegal loggers and hunters, and now over 50% of the community is directly involved in the conservation work they are doing, whether they are planting trees, running a homestay, working as a boatman, etc. On a flagship project in Sayap Village, on the border of Kinabalu National Park, our partners are creating alternative livelihoods with a goal of putting a curb to hunting, illegal timber activities, and helping the village to see the surrounding natural forests as a community asset for tourism. Our partners have helped the village set up a homestay program, are in the process of building a cultural centre, bring tourists to the area, and offer training programs for youth that are interested to become nature guides.



Reptile & Amphibian habitat with *Rafflesia keithii* © C. Ryan

Itinerary

NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Day 1

Fly Kuala Lumpur

For those taking the group flights, we depart London on a direct scheduled service flight to Kuala Lumpur.

Day 2

Kota Kinabalu

In the morning we will arrive into Kuala Lumpur, the ultra-modern and rapidly expanding capital of Malaysia. We will soon board our onward flight to Kota Kinabalu, the capital of the Malaysian province of Sabah (part of what was previously known as North Borneo). Once we have collected our luggage we will be met in arrivals by our tour leader and we'll make a journey of just 15-minutes to our comfortable hotel where we can enjoy dinner together, before having a good night's rest in preparation for the exciting itinerary which lies ahead.

Tonight we'll stay in a city hotel providing rooms with modern en suite bathrooms and free Wi-Fi.

Days 3 – 6

Mount Kinabalu National Park

After a restful night in our hotel, the following morning we'll transfer to Mount Kinabalu National Park, a journey of approximately two hours. At 4,101 metres (13,455 feet) Mount Kinabalu is the highest mountain between the eastern Himalaya and New Guinea and its forested slopes hold a rich diversity of montane and sub-montane fauna and flora.

We'll arrive for lunch when we can fuel up for an afternoon's hiking in the UNESCO World Heritage site. Known for its vast diversity, there are many endemic reptiles and amphibians found in the park. We will be focusing on looking along streams and trails. In the evening, we'll take a spotlighting drive searching for reptiles along the road, after which we will continue for a night walk.

Some of the superb species we can find here include Malcolm's Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus malcolmi*), Mount Kinabalu Pit Viper (*Garthius chaseni*), Borneo Pit Viper (*Craspedocephalus borneensis*), Kinabalu Dragon (*Hypsicalotes kinabaluensis*), Sabah Flying Gecko (*Ptychozoon rhacophorus*), Kinabalu Horned Frog (*Megophrys*



Malcolm's Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus malcolmi*) © K. Ping

baluensis), Kobayashi's Horned Frog (*Megophrys kobayashii*), Kinabalu Tree Frog (*Rhacophorus baluensis*), Everett's Tree Frog (*Rhacophorus everetti*), and Kiau Borneo Frog (*Meristogenys kinabaluensis*) amongst many others.

Some of the stunning birds we may encounter include Temminck's Sunbird and a trio of Whitehead's birds; Trogon, Spiderhunter and Broadbill. There is also a host of squirrels and tree-shrews to look out for, including the delightful Whitehead's Pygmy Squirrel.

The following day we'll have time to further explore the numerous trails which strike out into prime reptile and amphibian habitat, in search of any species that we may have missed yesterday. After dinner, we'll utilise the trails for forays for the nocturnal species.

During our three nights in Kinabalu we'll stay in a comfortable hotel with free Wi-Fi and stunning views across to Mount Kinabalu.

Days 6 – 9

Poring Hot Spring

After breakfast, we will continue to Poring Hot Spring where we'll be based for the next three nights. Poring is a hotspot for a selection of reptiles that are otherwise difficult to find in Borneo. We will spend two fantastic days exploring this beautiful area and searching for these species by day and night.

Some of the amazing species here include Sumatra Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus sumatranus*), Bornean Keeled Green Pit Viper (*Tropidolaemus subannulatus*), Sabah Bamboo Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus sabah*), Red-headed Krait (*Bungarus flaviceps baluensis*), *Asthenodipsas borneensis*, Jasper Cat



Bornean Horned Frog (*Megophrys nasuta*) © C. Ryan

Snake (*Boiga jaspidea*), Giant Gliding Lizard (*Draco maximus*), Mocquard's Eyebrow Lizard (*Pelturagonia cephalum*), Wallace's Flying Frog (*Rhacophorus nigropalmatus*), Bornean Flying Frog (*Rhacophorus borneensis*), Bornean Horned Frog (*Megophrys nasuta*), Spotted Stream Frog (*Pulchrana picturata*), Cinnamon Frog (*Nyctixalus pictus*).

During our time in Poring, we'll stay in comfortable accommodation with a swimming pool.

Days 9 – 11

Kinabatangan

After lunch, we'll travel to Sukau Village where we'll take a 10-minute boat ride to arrive at the resort. Having settled in, we'll have chance to enjoy an afternoon river cruise in search of the iconic

wildlife along the Kinabatangan. Each boat is equipped with an electric motor in order to provide a more peaceful experience. Some of the reptiles we may see along the riverbanks include Reticulated Python (*Malayopython reticulatus*), Mangrove Snake (*Boiga dendrophila*), Striped Kukri Snake (*Oligodon octolineatus*), Sumatran Cobra (*Naja sumatrana*), Green Vine Snake (*Ahaetulla prasina*), King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*) and Paradise Tree Snake (*Chrysopelea paradisi*).

Common mammals include Proboscis Monkey, Silvery Langur, Pygmy Elephant, macaques, Orangutans, and more. We will finish a fantastic day by enjoying dinner overlooking the riverbank followed by a night walk.

The following morning, we have chance to enjoy a dawn river cruise along the Kinabatangan to Kelenanap Oxbow Lake where we can experience the surrounding forest coming to life and a chance to search for more wildlife. After returning for breakfast, we have the whole day to search for the array of wildlife which surrounds our lodge before viewing the stunning river landscape as the sun sets. We'll then head back to the lodge for dinner, before heading out on an exciting nocturnal boat safari.

Some of the target species here will include Estuarine Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*), Green Vine Snake (*Ahaetulla prasina*), Elegant Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis formosus*), Reticulated Python (*Malayopython reticulatus*), Paradise Tree Snake (*Chrysopelea paradisi*), Mangrove Snake (*Boiga dendrophila*), Dog-toothed Cat Snake (*Boiga cynodon*), Striped Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis caudolineatus*), Brown-striped Tree Frog (*Polypedates macrotis*), and Collett's Tree Frog (*Polypedates colletti*).

Days 11 – 14

Danum Valley

After breakfast, we'll proceed on a boat transfer to Lepit Jetty and where we will then overland to Lahad Datu.

We'll soon arrive at Danum Valley Field Centre where we will register at the welcome centre upon arrival and check-in for three nights after a briefing by DVFC staff. We'll then meet our in-house guide, settle-in and enjoy lunch together with our guide before heading out into the field. The area surrounding the centre teems with wildlife and it is not unusual to spot resident orangutan, hornbills, and many other species. We'll return to the centre at sunset to have dinner.

After dinner, we shall go on a night walk with the resident guide. Some of the target species during our time in Danum include Reticulated Python (*Malayopython reticulatus*), Green Vine Snake (*Ahaetulla prasina*), Paradise Tree Snake (*Chrysopelea paradisi*), Striped Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis caudolineatus*), Bornean Keeled Green Pit Viper (*Tropidolaemus subannulatus*), Bornean Leaf-nosed Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus borneensis*), Harlequin Tree Frog (*Rhacophorus pardalis*), Wallace's Flying Frog (*Rhacophorus nigropalmatus*), Jade Tree Frog (*Zhangixalus dulitensis*), File-eared Tree Frog (*Polypedates otitophus*), Bornean Horned Frog (*Megophrys nasuta*), King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*), and White-spotted Cat Snake (*Boiga drapiezii*).

The following morning provides chance to wake up early for an early morning guided walk and a chance to see the forest come to life. We'll return to centre for breakfast and, for those who wish, there will be further chance to explore another of the forest trails.

After lunch, for those who wish, there will be opportunity to take a dip at the Ulu Segama River, before heading off to explore another trail – there are numerous trails and our guide can help us choose the best trails for any species we have missed. We will return to the centre in the late afternoon, in time to watch the sky change colour as the sunsets. After dinner, there will be chance for another night walk with our guide.

Days 14 – 15

Inbound flights

The following day, for those who wish, there's another chance to wake up early for yet more wildlife sighting possibilities. After a stunning exploration of Borneo, we'll transfer to Lahad Datu Airport for our flights back to Kota Kinabalu and Kuala Lumpur and then, if using the group flights, fly to London on an overnight flight, after a most memorable wildlife holiday in Borneo.

Tour Grading & Focus

On a typical day on our herpetology tours we'll begin searching in the field after breakfast, when the sun has warmed the substrates and landscapes, often getting into the vehicles at 9am and, after stopping for approximately one hour for lunch, we'll continue into early-evening when we will stop for a rest and dinner. Most evenings it will be possible to do excursions in search of nocturnal species, which will on average be for three hours after dinner. With an equal percentage of the target reptile and amphibian species likely to be nocturnal, these night searches are an important part of the tour but are optional, with some participants preferring to rest on some of the days. On average, 5-8 miles are walked per day.

We'll focus our time in the field on building an enviable list of reptile and amphibian species seen. Whilst searching, there is no doubt we'll come across a huge variety of amazing fauna and flora, of which we'll also take time to enjoy, but reptiles and amphibians will strongly remain our focus. Sensitively checking under stones, logs and other refugia is an effective way of finding many species. Some of the target reptile or amphibian species may require longer field hours to locate and therefore this tour is suitable, and most enjoyable, for experienced herpetologists or naturalists who, aside from wishing to see the region's rarely-seen reptiles and amphibians, relish being in the field searching for and identifying the vast array of birds, mammals, butterflies, invertebrates, and other wildlife which can be found sharing the wonderful habitats that we'll explore on the tour.

In summary, Naturetrek herpetology holidays are suitable, and offer tremendous value, for those of whom spending most of their holiday time in wildlife habitats and for whom seeing some of the world's superb reptiles and amphibians is the focus of their time away.

This is a traditional lodge-based wildlife tour. Whilst some of the lodges are appointed simply, each is comfortable and has en suite facilities. A certain level of fitness is required for the tour, as the terrain may be rough, steep, or slippery in parts.

Weather, Clothing & Equipment

Malaysia has a typical tropical climate. It is hot and humid all year round. The temperature rarely drops below 20C, and usually climbs to 30C or more during the day. The wet season in Sabah is generally considered to run from June to December (November and December being the wettest). However, being a tropical country it can rain at any time, frequently and heavily. When not raining, however, it is usually sunny! Recently locals have begun to deny any pattern to the weather, saying that relying on wet and dry seasons is a thing of the past. You can reasonably expect plenty of sun, plenty of rain and hot temperatures. In Kinabalu NP it will be noticeably cooler and mornings can be chilly with more wind possible here.

What's Included

All accommodation and food is included, starting with dinner in Kota Kinabalu on Day 2 and ending with breakfast on Day 14. Soft drinks and juices are provided throughout, and snacks are provided on our longer transfers in vehicles. Entrance fees and camera fees are included in all locations.

Extending Your Holiday

We would be happy to assist in arranging pre- or post-tour extensions, should this be of interest. Popular options are to extend to Gaya Island Resort which is just offshore of Kota Kinabalu. This is the ideal extension for those wishing to relax, with a lovely beach and snorkelling possible and there is also some great intact forest on the island. Please contact Dan Lay (dan@naturetrek.co.uk or 01962 733051) for further information and/or make sure to stipulate any interest in a possible extension upon booking.

How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements at the time of booking.

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