

Borneo's Orangutans

Naturetrek Tour Report

22nd September – 2nd October 2023



Tour report by Rahman Mandu. Images by S Griffin - Proboscis Monkey, Orangutan, Spot-bellied Owl, Rhinoceros Hornbill



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour participants: Rahman Mandu (leader) with 11 Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Friday 22nd September

The group were en route to Borneo.

Day 2

Saturday 23rd September

Sepilok, Sandakan

Upon arrival at Sandakan Airport, we made our journey to Sepilok Nature Resort. The 25-minute journey was enough for everyone to be briefed in preparation for the week's tour. Once we arrived at Sepilok Nature Resort, we were greeted by local staff and checked in to our rooms. We had the rest of the afternoon relaxing and exploring nearby park.

Day 3

Sunday 24th September

Sepilok, Sandakan

We started our journey by visiting Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre. The weather was hot and humid. After a 10-minute walk we stopped at the Outdoor Nursery. Even before the feeding started, a few Orangutans were already waiting there. Among them, MALIM, a 22-year-old flanged male Orangutan patiently waited for the food. We then continued to the main feeding platform where it was more open and dedicated for semi-wild Orangutans that were fully rehabilitated. Around the same area we heard a familiar whistle, and we managed to spot Black-crowned Pitta (endemic) and everyone got a chance to see it. Later that morning we went to Borneo Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC) which was nearby. We had a good look at a few sun bears and got to learn about the effort of the place to increase awareness and education about this endangered species.

At around 2pm, after lunch, we went back to Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre and got a chance to see an Orangutan with a baby walking on handrails and few of us managed to capture the moment. We went back to the Resort and prepared for our night walk activities (optional).

At 6pm we all regrouped at the Rainforest Discovery Centre. We went straight to the Skywalk and managed to see Red Giant Flying Squirrel glide. Later that night we walked a few kilometres on the trail and managed to spot some wildlife such as Rufous-sided Sticky Frog, Lantern Fly (*P. whiteheadii*), and Greater Racket-tailed Drongo. Around 8pm we returned and had some rest for next day.

Day 4

Monday 25th September

Sukau, Kinabatangan

A few of the group decided to visit the Rainforest Discovery Centre in the morning, and they managed to spot.

North Bornean Gibbon, and a few birds and other wildlife. After lunch, we checked out from the Resort and headed to Sandakan to catch up with our boat. Our boat journey was smooth, we saw Greater Crested Tern And Whiskered Tern while we were cruising on the Sulu Sea. The journey took roughly two hours, through coastal forest, virgin mangrove reserve, and old secondary riverine forest. Somewhere in the middle we stopped and had a good look at a troop of Proboscis Monkey and one large Estuarine (Salt-water) Crocodile.

We arrived and were greeted by the Sukau Rainforest Lodge staff. After a welcome-briefing we had a quick rest and proceeded to our afternoon cruise. On the cruise we spotted a Water Monitor lizard, Rhinoceros Hornbill, Barred Eagle-Owl, Brown Barbet, Long-tailed Macaques and Proboscis Monkey. At dusk we returned and had dinner. At night due to lightning and heavy wind, we were advised to postpone our night cruise until the next day.

Day 5

Tuesday 26th September

Sukau, Kinabatangan

We were up at 5.30am and made our way to the pier for a morning cruise. We went out and headed to the nearby oxbow lake. On the cruise we managed to spot an Orangutan and a baby near the oxbow entrance. A good number of birds were spotted that morning. At the oxbow lake we had a quiet cruise, and the group enjoyed the peaceful surrounding of the lake. We headed back to the Lodge for breakfast.

Afterwards, we did a quick wildlife checklist, during which we were interrupted by one of the staff when someone spotted an Orangutan at the back of the Lodge. We then ran to the location and found a female Orangutan there, busy feeding on nearby fruits.

Later in the afternoon, torrential rain with thunder made us postpone our afternoon cruise. After an hour of waiting, we decided to just relax and wait for the night cruise. After dinner we set off back to the river. This time we had a night spotter. We had a good look at five Black-and-red Broadbills roosting together on a tree trunk, Blue-eared Kingfisher, Stork-billed Kingfisher and Striped Bronzeback on the reed. We returned at 9pm and went to rest.

Day 6

Wednesday 27th September

Sukau, Kinabatangan

We had an easy day today. We went out both in the morning and afternoon and had an extra hour each cruise. The highlights of the day were Scarlet-rumped Trogon, Storm's Stork, Rufous-backed Dwarf Kingfisher, and Hooded Pitta.

At dinner, all were informed about the next leg of the journey to Danum Valley and what to expect. We had an early night due to long travelling for the next day.

Day 7

Thursday 28th September

Danum Valley

We had an early start today. We set out on our journey crossing the river to the village and our driver drove us for about 2 hours to Lahad Datu Town, where we registered and changed to 4WD. Another 2½ hours later we arrived at Borneo Rainforest Lodge. Upon arrival, we were greeted and we proceeded to lunch. After lunch some of us went out near the restaurant while waiting for check in. In the distance we spotted North Bornean Gibbon and a few minutes later, a Helmeted Hornbill flew above us - what a great start!

We met our local guides (Nevin and Gilven) at around 3pm, and after we introduced each other, the guides conducted a slide show. Then we set our journey to roadside and trail. After a few minutes walking, we were taken to a trekking range where we saw Mom and baby Orangutans. Other sightings that afternoon were troops of endemic Red Langur, Bornean Colugo, and a few other birds. We then finished our introductory walk and headed back to the Lodge where we were invited to a cocktail party hosted by the Lodge.

After a delicious dinner, we went out by foot to find nocturnal wildlife. We managed to see a few Anurans such as, Harlequin Flying Frog, Dark-eared Tree Frog, Four-lined Tree Frog. We were also lucky our guides managed to spot the rare Western Tarsier, everyone in the group was so happy. Later that night we returned tired but satisfied and returned to rest, ready for the next day.

Day 8

Friday 29th September

Danum Valley

After breakfast, around 8am, we went out and headed to the Canopy Walkway, returning to the Lodge near lunchtime. The weather was great, we saw two more Orangutans, Bornean Bristlehead, and many other birds. We also spotted Rajah Brooke's Birdwing and the endemic Kinabalu's Birdwing, and last but not least, we had a snake spotted: a Twin-barred Tree Snake.

In the afternoon we went out again, where we managed to see the Bornean Bristlehead; this time we saw it much better through the telescope. We were again so lucky with four Orangutans in that afternoon, one Flanged male orangutan was eating Durian, Mom and Baby and two were travel buddies. We returned at dusk and had a quick rest.

At 6.45pm, we went for our Night Drive, another spectacular trip where we spotted Bornean Slow Loris, and another Black-crowned Pitta, Bornean Colugo, Thomas's Flying Squirrel and Red Giant Flying Squirrel. We returned at 8pm for dinner.

Day 9

Saturday 30th September

Danum Valley

On our last full day at Borneo Rainforest Lodge we decided to do a more challenging trek, where most of us went up to the Coffin trail and Viewpoint. It took us just two hours to reach the top where the trek was challenging for a few members of our group; nevertheless, we managed to reach our goal. Not just that, but also we managed to spot a family of North Bornean Gibbon. We had great views for more than 10 minutes. We stopped at the jacuzzi pool, where the group chilled and swam. They had a great time there, after a while we headed back to the Lodge and arrived at lunch time.

In the afternoon few of us went out for trekking, mainly for bird watching, and some of us decided to have a relaxing afternoon.

We had our last activities together at night; we went out again for a night drive, which our guests loved. We saw our second Western Tarsier, and we spotted a new addition to our list: Sambar Deer. We returned and had a farewell dinner.

Day 10

Sunday 1st October

Lahad Datu-Kota Kinabalu

We said goodbye to our guides and headed out to Lahad Datu town. The journey was smooth, and we arrived at the Lahad Datu airport. After checking in to their flight, I said my goodbye to the group and wished them a safe journey to their next destination.

Day 11

Monday 2nd October

Those London-bound landed at Heathrow Airport.

Summary

Mammals: 24 species

Bird: 99 species

Reptiles: 14 species

Anurans: 6 species

Butterflies 15 species

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Social Media

We're social! Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and be the first to hear about the launch of new tours, offers and exciting sightings and photos from our recently returned holidays.



www.facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays



www.twitter.com/naturetrektours



www.instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays

Species lists

Mammals

1. Orangutan
2. North Bornean Gibbon
3. Proboscis Monkey
4. Silver Langur
5. Red Langur
6. Long-tailed Macaque
7. Pig-tailed Macaque
8. Western Tarsier
9. Bornean Slow Loris
10. Bornean Colugo
11. Large Flying Fox
12. Wrinkle-lipped Bat
13. Lesser Tree Shrew
14. Prevost's Squirrel
15. Low's Squirrel
16. Plantain Squirrel
17. Bornean Pygmy Squirrel
18. Cream-coloured Giant Squirrel
19. Thomas's Flying Squirrel
20. Red Giant Flying Squirrel
21. Bornean Sun Bear (Captivity)
22. Bornean Striped Palm Civet
23. Lesser Mouse-deer
24. Sambar Deer

Birds

1. Great Argus
2. Sabah Partridge
3. Spotted Dove
4. Zebra Dove
5. Green Imperial Pigeon
6. Chestnut-breasted Malkoha
7. Silver-rumped Needletail
8. Plume-toed Swiftlet
9. White-nest Swiftlet
10. Whiskered Treeswift
11. Red-legged Crake
12. Whiskered Tern
13. Greater Crested Tern
14. Storm's Stork
15. Lesser Adjutant
16. Purple Heron
17. Little Egret
18. Striated Heron
19. Black-crowned Night Heron
20. Black-winged Kite
21. Crested Serpent Eagle
22. Changeable Hawk-Eagle
23. Black Eagle
24. White-bellied Sea Eagle
25. Grey-headed Fish Eagle
26. Barred Eagle Owl
27. Diard's Trogon
28. Scarlet-rumped Trogon
29. Rhinoceros Hornbill
30. Bushy-crested Hornbill
31. Black Hornbill
32. Oriental Pied Hornbill
33. Wreathed Hornbill
34. Wrinkled Hornbill
35. Blue-eared Kingfisher
36. Rufous-backed Dwarf Kingfisher
37. Stork-billed Kingfisher
38. Black-capped Kingfisher
39. Collared Kingfisher
40. Blue-throated Bee-eater
41. Brown Barbet
42. Blue-eared Barbet
43. Yellow-crowned Barbet
44. Gold-whiskered Barbet
45. Malaysian Honeyguide
46. Rufous Piculet
47. White-fronted Falconet
48. Long-tailed Parakeet
49. Dusky Broadbill
50. Black-and-red Broadbill
51. Banded Broadbill
52. Black-and-yellow Broadbill
53. Black-crowned Pitta
54. Hooded Pitta
55. Fiery Minivet

56. White-breasted Woodswallow
57. Rufous-winged Philentoma
58. Maroon-breasted Philentoma
59. Bornean Bristlehead
60. Green Iora
61. Spotted Fantail
62. Malaysian Pied Fantail
63. Greater Racket-tailed Drongo
64. Black-naped Monarch
65. Long-tailed Shrike
66. Ashy Tailorbird
67. Rufous-tailed Tailorbird
68. Yellow-bellied Prinia
69. Striated Grassbird
70. Barn Swallow
71. Pacific Swallow
72. Puff-backed Bulbul
73. Grey-bellied Bulbul
74. Red-eyed Bulbul
75. Charlotte's Bulbul
76. Streaked Bulbul
77. Bold-striped Tit-Babbler
78. Ferruginous Babbler
79. Bornean Wren-Babbler
80. Brown Fulvetta
81. Asian Glossy Starling
82. Javan Myna
83. Dark-sided Flycatcher
84. Malaysian Blue Flycatcher
85. White-crowned Forktail
86. Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker
87. Orange-bellied Flowerpecker
88. Brown-throated Sunbird
89. Red-throated Sunbird
90. Olive-backed Sunbird
91. Crimson Sunbird
92. Purple-naped Spiderhunter
93. Little Spiderhunter
94. Yellow-eared Spiderhunter
95. Bornean Spiderhunter
96. Asian Fairy-bluebird
97. Lesser Green Leafbird
98. Dusky Munia
99. Chestnut Munia

Reptiles

1. Saltwater Crocodile
2. Water Monitor Lizard
3. Green Crested Lizard
4. Paradise Flying Tree Snake
5. Striped Bronzeback
6. Keel-bellied Whip Snake
7. Bornean Keeled Pit Viper
8. Twin-barred Tree Snake
9. Black-banded Skink

10. Rufous-banded Skink
11. Bornean Striped Tree Skink
12. Rough-scaled Sun Skink
13. Barking Gecko
14. House Gecko

Amphibians

1. Rufous-sided Sticky Frog
2. Giant River Toad
3. White-lipped Tree Frog
4. Harlequin Flying Frog
5. Four-lined Tree Frog
6. Cricket Frog (H)

Butterflies

1. Golden Birdwing
2. Kinabalu Birdwing
3. Raja Brook's Birdwing
4. Great Mormon
5. Bornean Mormon
6. Malay Yeoman
7. Large Tree Nymph
8. Common Tree Nymph
9. Bornean Blue Clipper
10. Yellow Helen
11. Black-and-White Helen
12. Common Grass Yellow
13. Common Albatross
14. Cycas Blue
15. Grey Pansy