ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

# Malaysia & Borneo

## Budget Birding

***26th June to 5th July 2022 (10 days)***

## Malaysia Budget Birding Extension

***5th July to 9th July 2022 (5 days)***



**Blue-headed Pitta by Rainer Summers**

*Borneo is the world's third largest island and typically conjures up images of a wild forest paradise where Orangutans, gibbons, broadbills and pittas roam the Bornean jungle! On this tour we will visit some of the island's most famous birding sites, namely the fabled Mt. Kinabalu, Tabin Wildlife Sanctuary, Sepilok and the Kinabatangan River. Habitats range from rich lowland and montane rainforest to coastal wetlands. A wide mix of highly sought-after, rare and endemic South East Asian birds can be expected on this fabulous adventure. As if this wasn't enough, Borneo is also one of the very best countries in Asia to enjoy rainforest mammals, and we can expect some incredible creatures such as Orangutan, Proboscis Monkey, Bornean Gibbon, Mouse-Deers, Leopard Cat and, if we are very lucky, Bornean Clouded Leopard! This budget tour has been designed to provide prime Bornean birding and wildlife viewing at a more economical price and for those with less time to spare in the field.*

## THE TOUR AT A GLANCE…

**BUDGET BORNEO ITINERARY**

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| **Day 1** | **Arrival in Kota Kinabalu, transfer to Mt. Kinabalu** |
| **Days 2 & 3** | **Mt. Kinabalu** |
| **Day 4** | **Mt. Kinabalu to Sepilok** |
| **Day 5** | **Sepilok Nature Conservancy** |
| **Day 6** | **Sepilok Nature Sanctuary to Sukau (Kinabatangan River)** |
| **Day 7** | **Sukau** |
| **Day 8** | **Sukau to Tabin Wildlife Reserve** |
| **Day 9** | **Tabin Wildlife Reserve** |
| **Day 10** | **Tabin Wildlife Reserve to Kota Kinabalu** |

**MALAYSIA EXTENSION**

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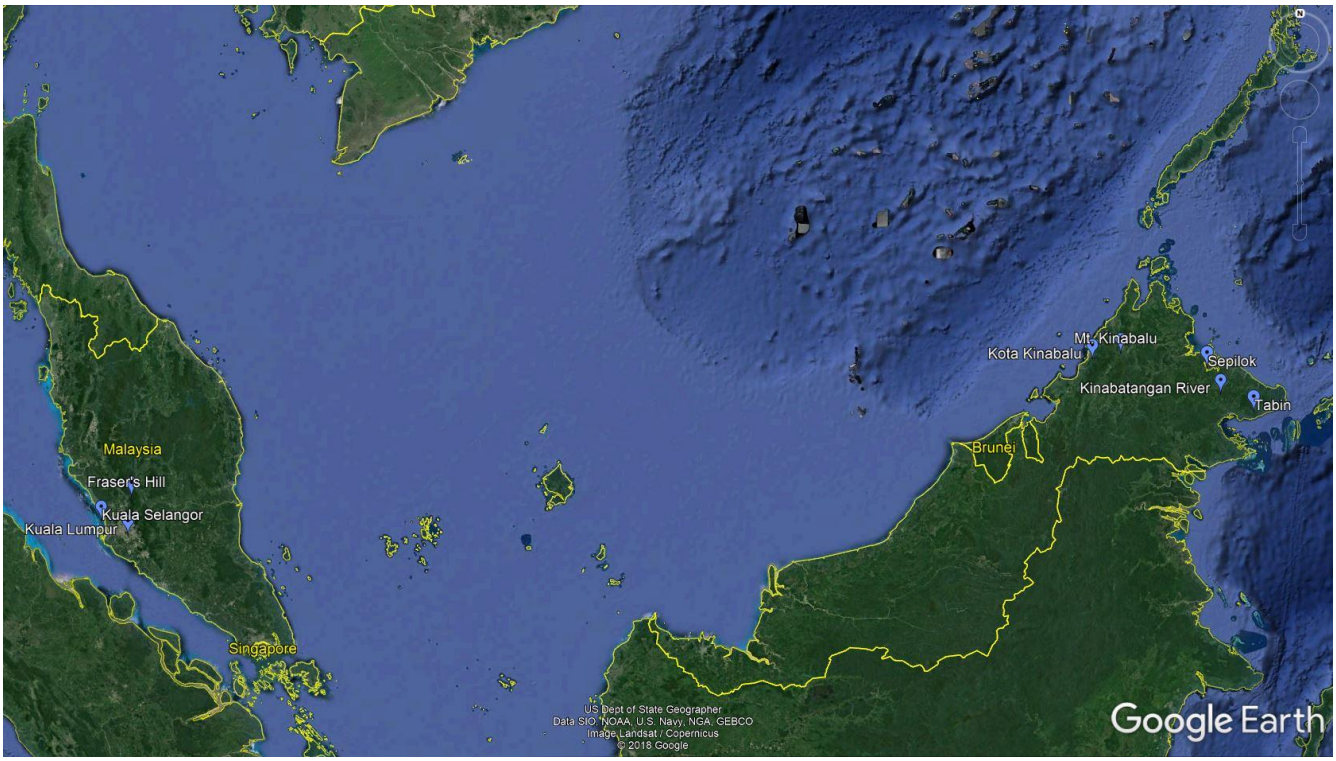
|---|---|
| **Day 1** | **Arrival in Kuala Lumpur and transfer to Kuala Selangor** |
| **Day 2** | **Kuala Selangor to Fraser's Hill** |
| **Days 3 & 4** | **Fraser's Hill** |
| **Day 5** | **Fraser's Hill to Kuala Lumpur and depart** |

## TOUR ROUTE MAP




## THE TOUR IN DETAIL…

**Day 1: Arrival in Kota Kinabalu, transfer to Mt. Kinabalu.** Leaving Kota Kinabalu in the early morning, we will embark on the short drive to nearby Mt. Kinabalu. This impressive mountain is covered in extensive forest that hosts some highly range-restricted Bornean endemics. We have almost three full days to explore these vibrant forests while enjoying panoramic views of the impressive mountain.



**Whitehead's Trogon by Markus Lilje**

**Days 2 & 3: Mt. Kinabalu.** Birding this avian wonderland will begin at the break of dawn to maximise our chances of seeing some of Borneo's most elusive endemics, including Everett's Thrush and Bornean Whistling Thrush, both of which can sometimes be found on the forest trails and along the roadside in the early morning, along with many other prized species that are attracted to the abundance of insects surrounding the roadside lights. These include mouth-watering birds such as Indigo Flycatcher, Bornean Whistler, Black-sided Flowerpecker, exquisite Temminck's Sunbird, Chestnut-hooded and Sunda Laughingthrushes, Mountain Leaf and Yellow-breasted Warblers, Black-capped White-eye and

the lively Chestnut-crested Yuhina, Sunda Cuckooshrike, Ashy and Hair-crested Drongos, Short-tailed Magpie and Bornean Treepie. On the nearby trails we may see Checker-throated and Maroon Woodpeckers, White-browed Shrike-Babbler, White-crowned Forktail, Eye-browed Jungle Flycatcher, the skulking Bornean Stubtail and, with a fair amount of luck, Crimson-headed Partridge.



**Temminck's Sunbird by Markus Lilje**

A 19th century naturalist with the surname Whitehead spent many months on the mountain, and a trio of very special birds, mainly restricted to Mt. Kinabalu, are named after him: Whitehead's Broadbill, Whitehead's Spiderhunter and Whitehead's Trogon. We will put in much time and effort on the forest trails in an attempt to locate all three of these rare beauties, as well as the striking Fruithunter. (Please note: all the Whitehead's species are very difficult to find and we will require a lot of luck to see any of them!) Whitehead's Pygmy Squirrel, a tiny creature with long ear tufts, is another creature we hope to see here.

We will also depart on one of our days here for the wonderful low- to mid-altitude forests that cloak the hills around Poring. The hot springs situated there are surrounded by superb forest, which contains a range of different species more typically associated with lowland areas. These forests are probably most famous for being one of the only accessible sites on the island where the brilliant, endemic Hose's Broadbill can be found. This spectacular, rare and highly sought-after bird occurs at low densities throughout the area and is attracted to fruiting trees. Finding one of these trees and waiting patiently for one to come in to feed will be our best chance of finding this elusive species, though a sighting is by no means guaranteed.



**Flowering Rafflesia by Keith Valentine**

Other great birds that may be seen while waiting for the broadbill include Red-throated, Golden-naped and Bornean Barbets, and several species of bulbul, including the boldly-marked Scaly-breasted and scarce Streaked Bulbuls. We may even pick up a Whitehead's Broadbill or Whitehead's Spiderhunter, which also inhabit the lush forests around Poring. If we are very fortunate, we might hear about a flowering *Rafflesia* (news of flowering *Rafflesia* spreads very fast!), affording us the opportunity to witness this floral wonder.

A number of other wonderful birds have

been seen in the Poring area. Specialties include the very rare Chestnut-capped Thrush, Rufous-tailed Jungle, Grey-chested Jungle and White-tailed Flycatchers, secretive White-necked Babbler as well as the more regular Moustached and Grey-headed Babblers, Purple-naped Sunbird, Yellow-bellied and Yellow-breasted Warblers, and White-crowned and Chestnut-naped Forktails on the forested mountain streams. The endemic White-crowned Shama calls at dawn and dusk from shaded thickets, while Orange-bellied Flowerpeckers make their appearance around flowering trees where they can be located by their high-pitched whistles. Many of these species take a good deal of time to find and occur only at extremely low densities, so even if we spot a handful of these birds we would consider our efforts successful!



**Bornean Bristlehead by Steve Zarate**

**Day 4: Poring to Kota Kinabalu, flight to Sandakan and transfer to Sepilok.** After breakfast today we will depart the cool environs of Kinabalu for the humid lowlands of Sepilok in the extreme northeast of the island. Our flight from Kota Kinabalu in the mid-morning will take us across the island to Sandakan, from where we will drive to our very comfortable lodge situated at the edge of the Sepilok Nature Conservancy.

**Day 5: Sepilok Nature Conservancy.** One of the Sepilok's most acclaimed assets is its fantastic canopy walkway that stretches for about 500m through the high forest canopy of the reserve's lowland rainforest. This amazing structure affords us with a very good chance of finding one of Borneo's star endemics, the bizarre Bornean Bristlehead! This canopy dweller occurs in small, noisy flocks in very low numbers and we will make a concerted effort to track down this regal bird. Other delectable species to be found from the canopy walkway are Van Hasselt's Sunbird, Yellow-rumped Flowerpecker, Banded and Black-and-yellow Broadbills, White-bellied Woodpecker, Lesser and Greater Green Leafbirds, Spectacled Spiderhunter and several species of gigantic hornbills, including the impressive Rhinoceros, Bushy-crested and White-crowned. The forest trails below the walkway provide good access to most corners of this rewarding reserve and we hope for some fabulous birds during the course of our explorations.



**Red-bearded Bee-eater by Adam Riley**

Sepilok is also an excellent place to see one of the world's most spectacular bird families, and which are very well represented in Borneo. Black-crowned Pitta is the most likely species here, but we will also have a chance at the very rare Giant Pitta as well as the spectacular, endemic Blue-headed Pitta. Diard's Trogon perches quietly on low-hanging vines, while Red-

bearded Bee-eater hawks insects from the lower canopy. Dusky and Chestnut Munias occur in small, mixed flocks in forest clearings and we will be on the lookout for the dazzling but scarce Rufous-collared Kingfisher in the forest under-storey. Mixed flocks of babblers will be a feature throughout the trip and sifting through these flocks may reveal the likes of White-chested, Scaly-crowned and Sooty-capped Babblers, as well as the attractive Fluffy-backed Tit-Babbler. Sepilok is also a good place to find two of Borneo's scarce rainforest specialists, the highly attractive Crested Jay and noisy Black Magpie (the endemic race of this species is visually distinct from the mainland race).



**Rhinoceros Hornbill by Markus Lilje**

**Day 6: Sepilok Nature Conservancy and transfer to Sukau.** Today we will have a second morning in the Sepilok Nature Conservancy to pick up a few tricky-to-find species that we may still require. After lunch we will then embark on the drive to Sukau, a small village situated on the banks of the well-forested Kinabatangan River. En route we will stop at the amazing Gomontong Caves where an estimated two million bats and a million swiftlets of four species make their home! Time will be taken this afternoon to see these huge caves and we may even observe the bird-nest collectors harvesting old nests of Edible-nest and Black-nest Swiftlets for bird's-nest soup. These fearless collectors climb high onto the cave ledges using flimsy rope ladders, an amazing feat indeed. The other two species of nesting swiftlets we are likely to see are Mossy-nest and Glossy Swiftlets. In the evening, we will wait outside the caves for the mass bat exodus and we hope to enjoy the added spectacle of seeing a number of raptors that may include several Bat Hawks, Peregrine Falcon, White-bellied Sea Eagle and Rufous-bellied Eagle coming in for a potentially easy feast. We will arrival at our lodge near Sukau in the early evening.



**Orangutan by Bob Lewis**

**Day 7: Sukau (Kinabatangan River).** Some superb rainforest birding is to be had along the Kinabatangan River at Sukau. The surrounding area has unfortunately been reduced to endless tracts of commercial Oil Palm plantations, with the result that nearly all the region's wildlife has been forced into a narrow strip of forest along the river. The concentration of wildlife here is very high and we will spend most of our time birding on productive boat trips along the river and its tributaries.

These boat trips are simply amazing, often allowing very close approach to both birds and mammals. Some of the wildlife we may encounter on these trips include Oriental Darter, the rare and endangered Storm's Stork, Lesser and

Grey-headed Fish Eagles, White-breasted Waterhen, Blue-eared, Oriental Dwarf and Ruddy Kingfishers, Blue-throated Bee-eater, Wrinkled, Black, Rhinoceros and Helmeted Hornbills, White-fronted Falconet and Hooded and Blue-winged Pittas. Some good mammals can also be found along the river and these include Maroon and Silvered Langurs, Long-tailed and Pig-tailed Macaques, the highly endangered Orangutan – fondly referred to as the "Old Man of the Forest", amazing Proboscis Monkey and Bearded Pig.



**Buffy Fish Owl by Markus Lilje**

One of Borneo's least known endemics is the rare Bornean Ground Cuckoo, which also occurs in the area, and we stand a fair chance of finding this very elusive species. There will be an option to do a night boat ride this evening along the river and this will provide us with a good chance of seeing Buffy Fish Owl, with other possibilities including Leopard Cat, several species of roosting kingfishers and even the uncommon small race of Asian Elephant.

**Day 8: Sukau to Tabin Wildlife Reserve.** Leaving Sukau we will drive through vast areas of Oil Palm plantations to get to one of Borneo's best reserves, Tabin Wildlife Reserve. This large, 122,000 ha reserve in the centre of the Dent Peninsula is covered with lowland *dipterocarp* forest and has been declared a Wildlife Reserve primarily on account of the large number of animals inhabiting its forests, some of which are highly endangered. This is one of the few places on earth where the Sumatran Rhinoceros still occurs in the wild, and optional night drives through the park often produce Leopard Cat, Colugo, Asian Palm, Small-toothed Palm and Malayan Civets, and both Red Giant and Black Giant Flying Squirrels. Buffy Fish and Brown Wood Owls are also often seen on these nocturnal excursions, while even the rare and spectacularly patterned Bornean Clouded Leopard occasionally appears.

**Day 9: Tabin Wildlife Reserve.** We have an entire day to explore this exceptional wildlife refuge that will no doubt produce some amazing sightings. Some of the very special birds that we will be searching for during our time here include the near-mythical Blue-banded Pitta, exquisite Blue-headed, Bornean Banded and Black-crowned Pittas, the shy Black-throated Wren-Babbler, Rufous-tailed Shama and Chestnut-necklaced Partridge. Birding from the road edge is a pleasure with mixed species flocks being a near-constant feature. Working through these flocks we hope to encounter such avian gems as Rufous Piculet, Buff-rumped and Buff-necked Woodpeckers, Rufous-fronted and Ferruginous Babblers, Brown Fulvetta, White-bellied Erpornis, Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker, Black-



**Proboscis Monkey by Colin Valentine**

bellied and Chestnut-breasted Malkohas, Blue-eared Barbet, superb Red-naped Trogon, Maroon-breasted Philentoma, Bar-winged and Black-winged Flycatcher-shrikes, gregarious Fiery Minivet, Green Iora, Dark-necked and Rufous-tailed Tailorbirds, Streaky-breasted and Little Spiderhunters, immaculate Ruby-cheeked Sunbird and a multitude of bulbul species, to name just a few!

**Day 10: Tabin to Kota Kinabalu and departure.** We will spend the early morning birding at Tabin before transferring to Lahat Datu for a flight back to Kota Kinabalu, where the tour will conclude and we will catch our international flights home.



**Storm's Stork by Adam Riley**

# Malaysia Budget Birding Extension



**Green Broadbill by Markus Lilje**

*Malaysia is a developed Asian nation offering first class facilities, an extensive range of well serviced national parks and nature reserves, and a bounty of quality birds and mammals; simply put, this is the perfect destination for a birding tour! On this short extension we will visit one of Asia's most famous birding sites, Fraser's Hill, where highlights include the localized Blue Nuthatch, Black Laughingthrush, Malayan Whistling Thrush and Fire-tufted Barbet. We will also spend a day birding mangrove habitat at Kuala Selangor with specials such as Mangrove Blue Flycatcher, Mangrove Whistler, Ashy Minivet and Laced Woodpecker. This extension is a perfect addition to our Budget Borneo tour and offers the opportunity to pick up a good selection of widespread Asian species and a host of specials at a reduced price to our standard tour.*



**Silver-eared Leiothrix by Markus Lilje**

**Day 1: Arrival in Kuala Lumpur and transfer to Kuala Selangor.** Depending on the time of our flight from Kota Kinabalu to Kuala Lumpur for those doing the Budget Borneo Tour, we will most likely depart Kuala Lumpur in the afternoon for the coastal town of Kuala Selangor where we expect to arrive in the late afternoon.

**Day 2: Kuala Selangor to Fraser's Hill.** In the early morning before dawn we will search around our lodge for Large-tailed Nightjar before heading to the nearby Taman Alam Nature Reserve, where we will spend some time birding this morning. The reserve supports a variety of habitats, including coastal woodland, mangroves and wetlands. Some of the birds we hope to find here include the impressive Black Baza, Red Junglefowl (ancestor to the domestic chicken), Laced Woodpecker, Greater and Common Goldenbacks, Large Hawk-Cuckoo, noisy Asian Koel, Pink-necked Green Pigeon, Black-naped Oriole, Pied Fantail and Rufous-tailed and Ashy Tailorbirds. Other birds we will look for, which are almost entirely confined to mangroves, include Ashy Drongo, Mangrove Whistler, Mangrove Blue Flycatcher and Golden-bellied Gerygone. Wetlands in the area support a variety of waterbirds such as Chinese Pond and Purple Herons, White-throated, Black-capped and Collared Kingfishers, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite and occasionally the endangered Lesser Adjutant.

Later in the day we will make our way northwards to Fraser's Hill. Birding stops along the way will include time spent at wetlands and grasslands. The latter can occasionally turn up Barred Buttonquail, Blue-breasted Quail, Red-wattled Lapwing and Savanna Nightjar. Wetlands can often be very productive and species we have found in the past include Watercock, Black, Yellow and Cinnamon Bitterns, White-browed Crake, Oriental Pratincole, Lesser Coucal, White-headed Munia, Baya Weaver and Oriental Reed Warbler. We will arrive at Fraser's Hill in the late afternoon and, if we arrive with sufficient time, we will spend the remainder of the afternoon birding along the forested roads around town.



**Black Laughingthrush by Adam Riley**

**Days 3 & 4: Fraser's Hill.** The following two full days will be spent birding the network of trails on Fraser's Hill. Many of the forest birds here are shy and elusive and we will concentrate our efforts on finding the more special birds and mammals of the area. Bird feeders at the Shahzan Inn often attract some great species and excellent views of Fire-tufted Barbet, Long-tailed Sibia, Chestnut-capped and Malayan Laughingthrushes and the beautiful Silver-eared Leiothrix can be enjoyed. The network of trails and quiet roads on the top of Fraser's Hill hold a number of superb birds, and some of these that we hope to find include Sultan Tit, Speckled Piculet, Large Scimitar Babbler, Crested Serpent Eagle, Orange-breasted and Red-headed Trogons,



**Brown Wood Owl by Adam Riley**

Green-billed Malkoha, Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, Streaked Spiderhunter, the stunning Common Green Magpie, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, the endemic Malayan Whistling Thrush, Siberian Thrush, delicate Rufous-browed and Pygmy Flycatchers, Javan Cuckooshrike and the gorgeous Large Niltava.

The lower slopes below Fraser's Hill can also be highly productive and good birds in this area are Rufous-bellied and Black Eagles, Orange-bellied and Blue-winged Leafbirds, Black-and-crimson Oriole, Grey-chinned Minivet, Blue and Velvet-fronted Nuthatches, Yellow-bellied Warbler, Collared Babbler, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, the truly spectacular Red-bearded Bee-eater, the localized Black Laughingthrush, Red-billed and Chestnut-breasted Malkohas, Pygmy and Marbled Wren-Babblers, Hill Blue Flycatcher, Collared Owlet, the impressive Rhinoceros and Wreathed Hornbills, Crimson-winged Woodpecker, Chestnut-backed Scimitar Babbler, Everett's White-eye and the smart Slaty-backed Forktail. Forest specials we may be lucky enough to see are Malaysian Partridge, Long-tailed and Silver-breasted Broadbills and Rusty-naped Pitta.

We will also take at least one night walk where we will look for Grey and the scarce Malaysian Eared Nightjars and Brown Wood Owl. Mammal species occurring here include the vociferous Siamang or Black Gibbon, Banded and Dusky Langurs and Wild Boar.

**Day 5: Fraser's Hill to Taman Negara National Park.** After some final early morning birding at Fraser's Hill, we will depart for Kuala Lumpur where the tour will conclude

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:**

**Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for the Borneo Budget Tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.**

**This includes:**

- Meals on main tour as specified:
  - breakfasts from day 2 to day 10;
  - lunches on days 7, 8, 9 & 10;
  - dinners on days 6, 7, 8 & 9.
- Meals on extension as specified:
  - breakfasts on days 2, 3 & 4;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Reserve entrance fees; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services).

**The tour fee does not include:**

- Visa fees;
- **ANY** flights;
- Any meals other than those mentioned above;
- Any beverages, including bottled drinking water;
- Camera fees;
- Optional excursions e.g. extended night drives at Tabin or night boat rides at Sukau;
- Tips for local guides and services;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls; and
- Laundry and other items of a personal nature.

**Single Supplement:** The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

**a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.**

**b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.**

**c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**

**d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

**Tipping:** As noted above, gratuities are NOT included on this tour.

**Special Notes:**

- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18lb) for hand luggage.
- Fitness: These tours do not require a high level of fitness, but participants should be in good general health as most of the birding will be done on foot, and may require walking for several hours at a time. Some of these trails can be quite steep and slippery, especially after rain and the lowland sites are always humid. Should you have any physical limitations, please notify us in advance of departure. Please note that for much of the tour you will be far away from modern medical facilities.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of a generally good standard and the hotels and resorts that we make use of are quite comfortable. There is no camping on this trip.

**ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:**

This tour **does not** include **ANY** airfares. The main tour will begin in Kota Kinabalu on day 1 at **06:00** and conclude by mid-afternoon in Kota Kinabalu on day 10. The extension will depart from Kuala Lumpur on completion of the main tour in the afternoon of day 1 and conclude by mid-afternoon in Kuala Lumpur on day 5.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

**FLIGHTS:**

Kota Kinabalu International Airport, Kota Kinabalu (IATA: BKI) is the main port of entry and exit for international flights into and out of Borneo, and is best reached by direct flights from Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Kuala Lumpur (IATA: KUL) as there are a number of flights daily on Air Malaysia. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**