ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Malaysia & Borneo

Rainforest Birds & Mammals

13th may to 31st May 2022 (19 days)



Bornean Bristlehead by Glen Valentine

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 adventure, we will visit some of Asia's most famous birding sites, including Fraser's Hill, the grand Taman Negara National Park, Danum Valley - protecting the largest rainforest in South East Asia, the Crocker Range, Sepilok and the fabled Mt. Kinabalu. Habitats range from lowland and montane rainforest to mangrove swamps and wetlands and these host a rich mix of typical south-east Asian birds as well as a number of rare species and Bornean endemics. As if this wasn't enough, it is also one of the

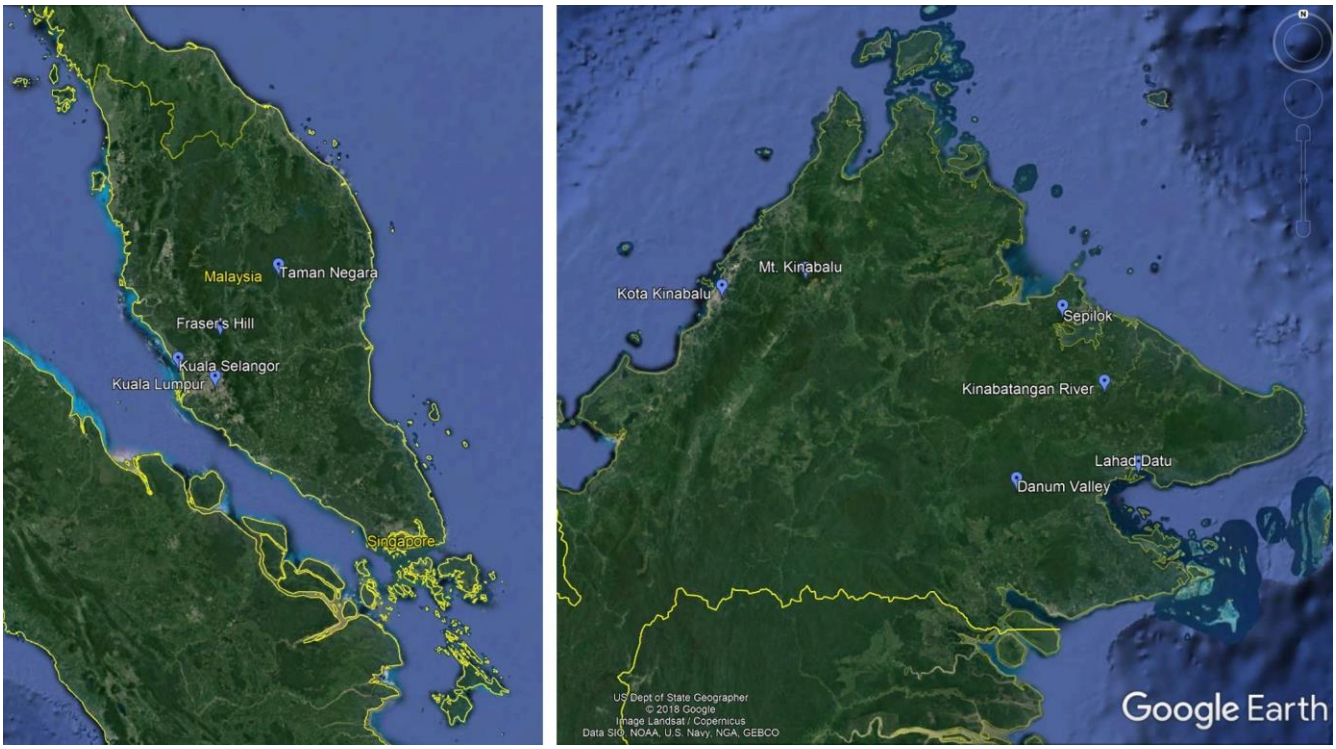
best countries in Asia to enjoy rainforest mammals and we can expect some incredible creatures, including Orangutan, several species of Gibbon, Mouse-Deers and if we are lucky, Leopard Cat! Join us for what is sure to be an awesome, exotic blend of fabulous birds, mammals and amazing scenery!

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE…

THE ITINERARY

Day 1	**Kuala Lumpur to Kuala Selangor via Bukit Tinggi**
Day 2	**Kuala Selangor to Fraser's Hill**
Days 3 & 4	**Fraser's Hill**
Day 5	**Fraser's Hill to Taman Negara National Park**
Days 6 to 8	**Taman Negara National Park**
Day 9	**Taman Negara to Kota Kinabalu (Sabah, Malaysian Borneo)**
Day 10	**Kota Kinabalu to Mt. Kinabalu via Crocker Range**
Days 11 & 12	**Mt. Kinabalu**
Day 13	**Mt. Kinabalu to Sepilok via Poring Hotsprings**
Day 14	**Sepilok to Sukau via Gomontong Caves**
Day 15	**Kinabatangan River**
Day 16	**Kinabatangan River to Danum Valley**
Days 17 & 18	**Danum Valley**
Day 19	**Danum Valley to Kota Kinabalu via Lahad Datu and depart**

TOUR ROUTE MAP…



THE TOUR IN DETAIL…

Day 1: Kuala Lumpur to Kuala Selangor via Bukit Tinggi. This fabulous south-east Asian birding adventure kicks off with an early morning departure for the nearby hill station of Bukit Tinggi. We will spend the entire morning birding the area's hill forest in search of the many specialties on offer at this excellent montane forest birding site. This locality is a relatively new and exciting addition to our regular route and is most famous for being one of the only sites on Earth where one has a realistic chance of seeing the rare and until recently mythical Mountain Peacock-Pheasant. This regal pheasant is endemic to the Malay Peninsula but due to its shy nature, rare status and difficult to access habitat it has been seen by very few visiting birders until very recently. Bukit Tinggi also provides a reasonable chance at finding Malaysian Partridge, another scarce endemic, which is also irregularly recorded on birding trips to the country. Both of these species are technically possible at Fraser's Hill, however, significant time and effort are usually required with little guarantee of success. The site is also excellent for a number of fabulous hill country species such as Silver-breasted Broadbill, Buff-rumped, Grey- and-buff and Crimson-winged Woodpeckers, Sultan Tit, Golden-whiskered, Sooty and Blue-eared Barbets, the beautiful Orange-breasted



Fire-tufted Barbet by Adam Riley



Stork-billed Kingfisher by Nigel Redman

Trogon, Black-crested and scarce Scaly-breasted Bulbuls, Rufous-fronted and Buff-breasted Babblers, White-bellied Erpornis, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, Blue-winged Leafbird and White-rumped Shama, while occasionally the site even turns up rare species such as Rail-babbler, the highly nomadic Pin-tailed Parrotfinch and extremely shy Ferruginous Partridge. We may also encounter troops of Dusky Leaf Monkeys foraging in the mid-canopy while strolling slowly along the forested road.

After what is sure to be an exciting, highly enjoyable and bird-filled start to the tour, we will continue the drive to the coastal town of Kuala Selangor. Our drive will take us through an area that is now sadly dominated by oil palm plantations, but we may find a few of south-east Asia's more widespread but nevertheless eye-catching and noteworthy species along the way and these could include the stunning White-throated Kingfisher, declining Long-tailed Parakeet, the shy and secretive Lesser Coucal, nesting Baya Weavers, the uncommon and nomadic White-headed Munia and possibly even the rare Cinnamon Bittern, more regular Yellow Bittern or the fairly elusive Watercock if we are lucky. We should arrive in Kuala Selangor by the mid to late afternoon with enough time to check into our hotel before heading out again for some afternoon birding in the productive gardens, nearby mangroves and forest edge habitats.

The monotonous calls of Coppersmith Barbets are usually heard echoing across the hotel grounds, while at the mangrove-edge we hope to obtain good views of the scarce Mangrove Whistler, as well as the superb Mangrove Blue Flycatcher and Golden-bellied Gerygone. Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker, Laced and Rufous Woodpeckers and Common Flameback are also present are we may also encounter Asian Koel, Little Bronze Cuckoo, Scaly-breasted and White-rumped Munias, Pied Triller and Black-naped Oriole.



Red-bearded Bee-eater by Bob Lewis

Day 2: Kuala Selangor to Fraser's Hill. Just before dawn there will be an option to search the hotel grounds for the widespread but handsome Large-tailed Nightjar before breakfast. Immediately after breakfast we will visit the nearby Taman Alam Nature Reserve where we will spend the remainder of the morning on foot ambling slowly along the network of trails that cover this bird-rich reserve. The Nature Reserve supports a variety of habitats, including coastal woodland, mangroves and wetlands and harbours all of the species mentioned for yesterday afternoon, as well as a number of other interesting species. Some of the birds that



Black-and-yellow Broadbill by Rich Lindie

we will look out for in the moist woodland here include the handsome Red Junglefowl (ancestor to the domestic chicken), Sunda Pygmy and Laced Woodpeckers, Greater and Common Flamebacks, Large Hawk-Cuckoo, noisy Asian Koel, Ruddy Kingfisher, Pink-necked Green Pigeon, Common Iora, Abbott's Babbler, Forest Wagtail, Yellow-bellied Prinia, Olive-winged Bulbul, Lineated Barbet, Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, exquisite Brown-throated and Ruby-cheeked Sunbirds, Pied Triller, Black-naped Oriole, lively Pied Fantail, Rufous-tailed and Ashy Tailorbirds and the rare and habitat-specific Chestnut-bellied Malkoha.

We will also search hard for three mangrove specialities should we not have already encountered them yesterday afternoon: the tough and often elusive Mangrove Whistler, shy but beautiful Mangrove Blue Flycatcher and Golden-bellied Gerygone. Wetlands in the area support a variety of waterbirds, including Chinese Pond and Purple Herons, White-throated, Stork-billed and Collared Kingfishers, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite and occasionally the endangered Lesser Adjutant.

In the late morning we will depart Kuala Selangor and Malaysia's west coast and embark on the drive inland towards the world-famous birding locality of Fraser's Hill. If we have time we may make one or two scheduled birding stops along the way that could produce wetland and grassland associated species like Lesser Coucal, Watercock, Cinnamon and Yellow Bitterns, Barred Buttonquail, Great and Jungle Mynas, Baya Weaver and the handsome, regional endemic Rufous-bellied Swallow (a recent split of Striated Swallow). In the late afternoon we will arrive at the rather quaint little highland town of Fraser's Hill, which is surrounded by excellent and rather extensive mid-altitude broad-leaved forest and is home to a host of fabulous birds. Birding along one of the quiet back roads this afternoon may already produce an array of tantalizing birds such as the dashing Long-tailed Broadbill, stunning Common Green Magpie, ground-dwelling Streaked Wren-Babbler, Long-tailed Sibia, Chestnut-capped Laughingthrush, Javan Cuckooshrike and the gorgeous Silver-eared Mesia (Leiothrix).



Sultan Tit by Keith Valentine

Days 3 & 4: Fraser's Hill. The following two full days will be spent birding the network of forested back roads and trails



Pygmy Wren-Babbler by Nigel Redman

around Fraser's Hill. We will concentrate our efforts on finding the many special birds of the area and these include the outstanding Blue Nuthatch, Mountain Fulvetta, the rare, shy and endemic Malayan Whistling Thrush, attractive and localised Fire-tufted and Black-browed Barbets, exquisite Red-headed Trogon, Buff-breasted Babbler, delicate Rufous-browed Flycatcher, skulking Malayan Laughingthrush and the low-density and shy Large Scimitar Babbler. If we are very lucky, we may see two of the area's most secretive and elusive species: Malaysian Partridge and Rusty-naped Pitta. Other more widespread species that we also hope to encounter while searching for the more localized specialties mentioned above include the impressive Crested Serpent Eagle, Blyth's Hawk-Eagle, Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, Speckled Piculet, retiring Lesser Shortwing, Mountain and Dark-necked Tailorbirds, the vivid-blue Large Niltava, Green-billed Malkoha, sensational Black-eared and Blyth's Shrike-Babblers, secretive Pygmy Wren-Babbler, the brilliant White-tailed Robin, Slaty-backed Forktail and the hyperactive Fire-breasted Flowerpecker.

While we are staying at Fraser's Hill, we will also undertake nocturnal excursions in search of Malaysian Eared Nightjar and we might get lucky and find the scarce Brown Wood Owl and seldom-seen Mountain Scops Owl, a most elusive little owl that we are almost certain to hear but is notoriously difficult to see. Mammal species occurring in the area include the vociferous Siamang or Black Gibbon, White-thighed (Banded) Langur and Wild Boar.

During our two full days at Fraser's Hill we'll also venture downhill on at least one occasion to an area called the "Gap", which is a zone of beautiful, mixed broad-leaved forest and bamboo at the base of Fraser's Hill and covers the altitudes from 700 to 1200 meters (2,300 to 4,000 feet. This is a superb birding area that supports numerous exciting forest birds and is often one of the highlights on a tour to Peninsular Malaysia.



Garnet Pitta by Tim Boucher

Some of the delectable birds we may see in this fabulous area include the regal Black Eagle, Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagle, Orange-bellied and Blue-winged Leafbirds, Black-and-crimson Oriole, Grey-chinned Minivet, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, White-bellied Erpornis, Orange-breasted and Red-headed Trogons, White-crowned and Great Hornbills, Chestnut-backed Scimitar Babbler, Hill Blue Flycatcher, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, Black-and-yellow, Long-tailed, Silver-breasted and Dusky Broadbills, the near-endemic Black



Red-naped Trogon by Bob Lewis

Laughingthrush, immaculate Sultan Tit, Red-billed Malkoha, the truly spectacular Red-bearded Bee-eater and three bamboo specialists: the vocal Yellow-bellied Warbler, unobtrusive Collared Babbler and the shy and enigmatic Bamboo Woodpecker, as well as the very rare and secretive Marbled Wren-Babbler or scarce, highly nomadic and little-known Yellow-vented Green Pigeon if we are very fortunate.

Day 5: Fraser's Hill to Taman Negara National Park. This morning we will leave the lovely town of Fraser's Hill and begin the drive to Taman Negara National Park. We will have another chance to bird the "Gap" in search of any species we may not have encountered during the past two days. After what should be another excellent morning's birding we will depart the "Gap" by mid-morning and continue the journey to the headquarters of Taman Negara National Park, our base for the next three nights.

Taman Negara is Malaysia's largest remaining natural area (over 4,300 km2) and protects a vast expanse of pristine lowland rainforest. It constitutes one of south-east Asia's largest remaining forest blocks and is home to some of the most exciting and impressive birds in all of Asia. We should arrive at Taman Negara with time in the afternoon for a short walk around the beautiful and bird-rich lodge grounds and nearby hide. This will be our first taste of proper lowland forest birding on this trip and some of the fantastic bird families we hope to encounter over the next few days include impressive woodpeckers, trogons, hornbills, babblers, pheasants, broadbills and pittas, among many others.

We can expect to already encounter a number of new and exciting species during this afternoon's short foray around the Mutiara Taman Negara Lodge grounds and during our vigil from the nearby hide at the forest edge. Highlights could include the gigantic Great Slaty Woodpecker – the world's largest extant woodpecker – White-bellied and Banded Woodpeckers, the very scarce Large Green Pigeon, Thick-billed and Little Green Pigeons, Stripe-throated, Black-headed, Asian Red-eyed, Buff-vented, Spectacled, Cream-vented and Streaked Bulbuls, Grey-breasted, Long-billed and Thick-billed Spiderhunters, the diminutive Black-thighed Falconet, outstanding Asian Fairy-bluebird, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher and screeching flocks of



Whiskered Treeswift by Rich Lindie

Blue-rumped Parrots and Blue-crowned Hanging Parrots in flight overhead.



Long-tailed Broadbill by Rich Lindie

There is also often at least one fruiting tree somewhere in the lodge grounds and if we are fortunate enough to find one of these bird magnets then there is an excellent chance that we'll be able to obtain good, close views of a number of otherwise scarce forest interior or canopy species such as Golden-whiskered and Yellow-crowned Barbets, Greater and Lesser Green Leafbirds, Purple-naped and Plain Sunbirds, the dazzling Green Broadbill, Grey-bellied Bulbul and Crimson-breasted Flowerpecker, as well as outside chances at the rare, nomadic and elusive Jambu Fruit Dove, Black-and-white Bulbul and Scarlet-breasted Flowerpecker.

Days 6 to 8: Taman Negara National Park. We will spend the next three full days exploring the park's fantastic network of trails. Some of the mouth-watering species that we will be searching for include the stunning Garnet, Malayan Banded and Hooded Pittas, the enigmatic and monotypic Rail-babbler, the retiring Malayan Peacock-Pheasant, the now very elusive Great Argus, Black-and-yellow, Black-and-red, Banded and unbelievably vivid Green Broadbills, furtive Large Wren-Babbler, Striped Wren-Babbler, the *leucopterus* race of Black Magpie, the shy and elusive Crested Jay (now placed in its own unique monotypic family!), Crimson-winged, Checker-throated, Buff-necked, Rufous, Orange-backed, Buff-rumped and extremely scarce Olive-backed Woodpeckers, Rhinoceros, Bushy-crested and White-crowned Hornbills, Red-naped, Diard's, Scarlet-rumped and the very rare and shy Cinnamon-rumped Trogons, Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, the shy Rusty-breasted Cuckoo, Black-bellied, Chestnut-breasted and Raffles's Malkohas, the elusive but stunning Rufous-collared Kingfisher, Red-throated, Yellow-crowned, Sooty (recently split from Brown Barbet) and Golden-whiskered Barbets, Puff-backed, Hairy-backed, Yellow-bellied and Grey-cheeked Bulbuls, the vociferous Fluffy-backed Tit-Babbler and the richly-coloured Black-throated Babbler.



Bornean Crested Fireback by Nigel Redman

In the late afternoon the spectacular Crested Fireback can sometimes be seen strolling around between the cabins or along the adjacent forest trails. Nocturnal birding at Taman Negara is often extremely challenging but with perseverance we may be fortunate and find a few of the area's sought-after



Indigo Flycatcher by Nigel Redman

nocturnal species. These include the scarce Gould's, Javan and very rare Large Frogmouths, Brown Hawk-Owl, Brown Wood Owl, Barred Eagle-Owl, Oriental Bay Owl and Reddish and Sunda (recently split from Collared) Scops Owls. We would however have to put in a great deal of time and effort to encounter just a few of these difficult and extremely low-density night birds. While searching for these nocturnal species we may also get lucky with one or two rarely seen nocturnal mammals such as Slow Loris, Brush-tailed Porcupine, Malayan Colugo or Binturong.

Day 9: Taman Negara to Kota Kinabalu (Sabah, Malaysian Borneo), via Kuala Lumpur. This morning we will depart early for Kuala Lumpur where we will board an afternoon flight to Kota Kinabalu in Borneo. Borneo is the world's third largest island and conjures up images of a wild forest paradise. The entire island was once a vast rainforest block but this has, unfortunately, been reduced to isolated pockets over the course of the last few decades. However, there are still reasonably large tracts of lowland and montane rainforest that remain, and we will be visiting a number of these wildlife-rich sites during our Borneo visit.

Upon arrival in Kota Kinabalu we will board our vehicles and begin our explorations of the Kota Kinabalu. Our first birding site will be Prince Philip Park where we have an excellent chance of finding several interesting species, many of which will not be seen again on the trip. Highlights could include Nankeen and Black-crowned Night Herons, Little Tern, Pacific Reef Heron, Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker, Collared Kingfisher, Olive-backed Sunbird, Blue-naped Parrot, Crested Myna, White-breasted Woodswallow, Chestnut Munia and the handsome but introduced Java Sparrow. A newly discovered species for the Kota Kinabalu area is the extremely range-restricted and scarce Malaysian Plover and we will be sure to stop in at the site where a pair of these much sought after plovers have been residing the past few years.



Golden-naped Barbet by Keith Valentine

This evening we'll return to our very comfortable hotel in the city for an overnight stay.

Day 10: Kota Kinabalu to Mt. Kinabalu via the Crocker Range. Leaving Kota Kinabalu in the early morning we shall embark on the short drive to the nearby Crocker Range. The forested hills of this mountain range are home to an exciting array of localized endemic birds, many of which are extremely difficult to find on Mt. Kinabalu and several of which are



Bornean Green Magpie by John Caddick

completely absent from the accessible section of Kinabalu that we'll be visiting. We'll spend the entire morning working flocks along the road that winds through the mountains for specialties such as Mountain, Bornean and Golden-naped Barbets, brilliant Bornean Leafbird, scarce Pygmy Ibon that roam around in small flocks, the nomadic Fruithunter, gaudy Long-tailed Broadbill, noisy Bornean Treepie, Bornean and Cinereous Bulbuls, Mountain Black-eye, Chestnut-hooded, Sunda and Bare-headed Laughingthrushes, Black-sided (Bornean) Flowerpecker, Temminck's Sunbird and the vociferous but shy Dark Hawk-Cuckoo. Two of Borneo's most elusive and sought-after endemics, the spectacular Whitehead's Broadbill and Whitehead's Spiderhunter, are both found in these vast forests and we will try our best to see these great birds during our time here. As the day progresses, we should find several species of raptor soaring overhead and these may include Blyth's Hawk-Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle and Crested Honey Buzzard, and if we are extremely fortunate, we may even find the very rare Mountain (Kinabalu) Serpent Eagle soaring above the forest. In the mid-afternoon we will continue the drive to our accommodation at Mt. Kinabalu where we will be based for the next 3 nights.

Days 11 & 12: Mt. Kinabalu. The pristine, montane forest that cloaks the lower slopes of Mt. Kinabalu - Borneo's highest mountain at 13,435 feet (4,095 m), is home to some of Borneo's most prized birds that includes a multitude of localised mountain endemics. Some of the many fine birds to be sought here over the next few days include Sunda Cuckooshrike, Golden-naped Barbet, the sensational Bornean Green Magpie, noisy Bornean Treepie, resident Dark Hawk-Cuckoo and Sunda Cuckoo (a recent split from Oriental Cuckoo), Indigo Flycatcher, Chestnut-crested Yuhina, Bornean Whistler, Chestnut-hooded, Sunda and extremely scarce and shy Bare-headed Laughingthrushes, Bornean Whistling Thrush, the delightful Bornean Forktail (recently split from White-crowned), Black-sided (Bornean) Flowerpecker, Eyebrowed Jungle Flycatcher, Bornean Swiftlet, Temminck's Babbler, the miniscule Bornean Stubtail, Mountain Wren-Babbler, the exquisite Temminck's Sunbird and Black-capped White-eye, as well as some really star birds such as the rare Fruithunter, an endemic, canopy-dwelling thrush, Crimson-headed (now considered to be a kind of pheasant called a Bloodhead) and



Great Slaty Woodpeckers by Nigel Redman



Blue-headed Pitta by Rainer Summers

Red-breasted Partridges, the rare and near-endemic race of Collared Owlet (this race is shared with the birds in highland Sumatra and has a completely different call/song to the widespread and relatively common mainland birds that occur throughout Asia's montane forest and this near-endemic race is likely to be split as a Greater Sundaic endemic in the near future), the very rare and furtive Everett's Thrush, extremely rare and seldom-seen Mountain (Kinabalu) Serpent Eagle, the extremely nomadic and unpredictable Tawny-breasted Parrotfinch and the local, highland race of Rufous-tailed Jungle Flycatcher that is likely to be split soon as Crocker Jungle Flycatcher. While walking the park's trails and access road, we may also encounter Blyth's Hawk-Eagle, Checker-throated and Maroon Woodpeckers, Blyth's Shrike-Babbler, Ashy and Hair-crested Drongos, Yellow-breasted and Mountain Leaf Warblers, Sunda Bush Warbler and White-browed Shortwing.

A 19th-century naturalist called Whitehead spent many months on the mountain and three very special birds, restricted to Mt. Kinabalu and the highlands further south in Sabah and Sarawak, are named after him: Whitehead's Broadbill, Spiderhunter and Trogon. We will put in much time and effort on the forest trails in an attempt to locate these rare beauties. However, one must be aware that all three of these species occur at extremely low densities on Mt. Kinabalu and are usually very tricky to find. We will therefore require a fair amount of luck, coupled with hard work and good field craft to locate them! Whitehead's Pygmy Squirrel, a tiny creature with ear tufts nearly as long as its body, is another endemic creature we hope to encounter during our time in the park.

Day 13: Mt. Kinabalu to Sepilok via Poring Hotsprings. This morning, we will venture to Poring Hot Springs, situated at a lower elevation but still within the Mt. Kinabalu National Park. The hot springs are surrounded by superb, mid-elevation forest that contains a range of different species more typically associated with lowland forest such as Black-and-yellow, Green and Banded Broadbills, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, the endemic White-crowned Shama, Golden-whiskered,



Mountain Peacock-Pheasant by Glen Valentine



Whitehead's Trogon by Nigel Redman

Blue-eared, Red-throated and Brown (a recently recognised Bornean Endemic) Barbets, the brilliant Violet Cuckoo, Yellow-eared and Spectacled Spiderhunters, Dusky Munia, Scaly-breasted, Streaked and Spectacled Bulbuls, Orange-bellied Flowerpecker and the scarce and extremely local Grey-headed Babbler. If we are fortunate during our time here, we may hear about a flowering *Rafflesia* (news of these in flower spreads quickly), affording us the opportunity to see this floral wonder. After lunch, we will drive to lowland forest at Sepilok for a two-night stay. Tonight, after dinner, we will take a short walk to look for nocturnal birds such as Bornean Wood Owl and Oriental Bay Owl and careful scanning may reveal a roosting Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher.

Day 14: Sepilok to Sukau via Gomontong Caves. Early this morning we will walk the trails in search of a number of lowland species such as Scarlet-rumped Trogon, Rufous-collared Kingfisher, Chestnut-rumped Babbler and Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher. We will also spend time in elevated bird hides/towers. Here, one is level with the canopy and offers a good vantage point to look for raptors such as Oriental Honey Buzzard, Crested Serpent Eagle, Wallace's Hawk Eagle, Brahminy Kite, and Crested Goshawk. Other possibilities may include Cinnamon-headed (Green), Pink-necked (Green) and Thick-billed (Green) Pigeons, Long-tailed Parakeet, Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot, Silver-rumped Spinetail, Bushy-crested, Wreathed and Rhinoceros Hornbills, Great Slaty and several species other species of woodpeckers and barbets. If we are very lucky, we may find the rare Bornean Bristlehead which has been recorded here on a regular basis.

After lunch, we will drive to the Gomontong Caves. The entrance road that cuts through some beautiful and pristine lowland rainforest where we will spend the early morning searching for any lowland species we may still need. These could include the likes of some of Borneo's trickier species such as White-fronted Falconet, Black-crowned, Bornean Banded and very rare Giant Pittas, Black-throated Wren-Babbler and Moustached Hawk-Cuckoo, as well as more regular but sometimes elusive species like Black-throated Babbler, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (the race here sometimes split as Rufous-backed Dwarf Kingfisher), Little Green Pigeon and Puff-backed Bulbul. In the late afternoon we will make our way a short distance inside these huge caves where we may observe the bird's nest collectors



Orangutan by Colin Valentine



Wrinkled Hornbill by Glen Valentine

harvesting old nests of Edible-nest and Black-nest Swiftlets for bird-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 hope to see are Mossy-nest and Glossy Swiftlets. Thereafter we will wait outside the caves for the mass bat exodus. There is an estimated two million bats (mainly made up of three species: the Wrinkle-lipped Free-tailed Bat, Large-eared (Philippine) Horseshoe Bat and Fawn Leaf-nosed Bat but as many as 27 species recorded!) and a million swiftlets make their home. Here several raptors including Bat Hawks, Peregrine Falcon, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite and Wallace's and Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagles usually join in for the feast. When the show is over and it becomes too dark to see anymore we will make our way to the nearby Kinabatangan River where we cross the river by boat to our very comfortable and perfectly situated lodge for the next two nights of the trip.

Day 15: Kinabatangan River. Superb rainforest birding is to be had during our full day along the Kinabatangan River. 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, however, phenomenal and we will spend most of our time birding on productive boat trips on the main Kinabatangan River and its adjacent tributaries. These boat trips are simply amazing, allowing one to approach both birds and mammals at close range. Some of the wildlife we are likely to encounter on these trips include the rare Storm's Stork, Lesser Adjutant, Grey-headed and Lesser Fish Eagles, Oriental Darter, Blue-eared and Stork-billed Kingfishers, Blue-throated Bee-eater, Wrinkled, Black and Rhinoceros Hornbills, Silvered Langur, Long-tailed Macaque and the bizarre Proboscis Monkey. If we are fortunate, we may encounter some of the Kinabatangan's rarer inhabitants such as Helmeted and White-crested Hornbills, White-fronted Falconet, Wallace's Hawk-Eagle, Jerdon's Baza, Moustached Hawk-Cuckoo, Long-tailed Parakeet, the very rare and until recently mythical Bornean Ground Cuckoo, Orangutan, Maroon Langur (Red Leaf Monkey) and Pig-tailed Macaque.



Storm's Stork by Nigel Redman

Birding around our lodge can also be rather productive and here we may very well find Hooded Pitta, Orange-bellied Flowerpecker, Brown-throated Sunbird, Plaintive Cuckoo, Black-and-red and



Ferruginous Partridge by Rich Lindie

Black-and-yellow Broadbills, Short-tailed and White-chested Babblers and Rufous Piculet. We will also undertake a night boat ride along the river and this will afford us the opportunity of seeing the much desired Buffy Fish Owl, as well as roosting Stork-billed and Blue-eared Kingfishers and the possibility of encountering the rare and nocturnal Flat-headed and Leopard Cats, Asian (Bornean Pygmy) Elephant and endemic Bearded Pig.

Day 16: Kinabatangan River to Danum Valley. This morning we depart the Kinabatangan River after breakfast and begin the drive to the wonderful Danum Valley, our base for the next two nights. A few short birding stops will be made along the way to our lodge in the Danum Valley Conservancy and these could produce the likes of Blue-eared Barbet, Green Iora, Fiery Minivet, Whiskered Treeswift, Dusky Munia and Brown Barbet, among others. The journey also often yields a wide variety of raptors that could include Wallace's and Changeable Hawk-Eagles, Crested Honey Buzzard, Crested Serpent Eagle, Crested Goshawk, Black Eagle and the tiny endemic, White-fronted Falconet.

Days 17 & 18: Danum Valley. Two full days will be enjoyed birding the area's lush and verdant lowland rainforest along the network of forest trails, the access road, the lodge grounds and the canopy walkway all within the extensive Danum Valley Conservation Area.

Some of the area's very special birds that we will search for during our time there include the bizarre Bornean Bristlehead (currently placed its own monotypic family), Dusky Broadbill, Black Magpie (the endemic *aterrimus* subspecies sometimes split as Bornean Black Magpie), Crested Jay, scarce and unobtrusive Bornean, Black-throated and Striped Wren-Babblers, Rufous-tailed and White-crowned Shamas, Bornean and Sunda Blue Flycatchers, the scarce, primary forest specialist Finsch's Bulbul, elusive and unpredictable Chestnut-naped Forktail, endemic and minuscule Pygmy Ibon and White-fronted Falconet.



Black-crowned Pitta by Markus Lilje

The lodge grounds themselves offer superb birding and here we may find species such as Bold-striped Tit-Babbler, Long-billed, Yellow-eared, Bornean, Little and Spectacled Spiderhunters, Red-throated, Plain, Purple-naped, Van Hasselt's and



Buffy Fish Owls by Adam Riley

Crimson Sunbirds, Yellow-rumped and Yellow-breasted Flowerpeckers, the immaculate Whiskered Treeswift, Dusky Munia, Large Woodshrike, Lesser Cuckooshrike and very attractive Blue-throated Bee-eater. The Danum River that meanders lazily just below the lodge often harbours Lesser Fish Eagle, Great-billed Heron, the once common but now very rare Straw-headed Bulbul and in the evenings, Buffy Fish Owl. Other exciting species that we may very well see during our time in the valley include Blyth's Hawk-Eagle, Diard's, Red-naped and Scarlet-rumped Trogons, the inexplicably scarce and shy Cinnamon-rumped Trogon, Chestnut-necklaced Partridge, Green Imperial Pigeon, Common Hill Myna, Maroon-breasted and Rufous-winged Philentomas, Wreathed, Wrinkled, Rhinoceros, Bushy-crested, Black and the awesome Helmeted Hornbills, Black-capped, Short-tailed, Scaly-crowned, Sooty-capped, Ferruginous, Rufous-crowned and Horsfield's Babblers, Black-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, Black-throated Oriole, Spotted Fantail, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, the unimpressive Brown Fulvetta, striking White-crowned Forktail, Charlotte's Bulbul (recently split from Buff-vented Bulbul as a Bornean endemic), Grey-rumped Treeswift and Rufous-chested Flycatcher.

Danum is also pitta paradise with a staggering six species occurring at this time of year (including four spectacular species endemic to Borneo: Black-crowned, Blue-headed, Blue-banded and Bornean Banded Pittas)! The other three pittas include the widespread Hooded and the very rare Giant Pitta. We will endeavour to find as many of these as possible but, given their retiring and unpredictable nature and the dense habitat, we will need a large dose of patience and luck to see these shy avian jewels. Another of Danum Valley's great attractions is the amazing Great Argus, a huge, long-tailed pheasant; we are likely to hear the males bellowing their far-carrying calls but we'd need to be extremely lucky to encounter one along the forest trails since they've stopped visiting their traditional display sites for the past few years. The lodge here also has its own canopy walkway and we will spend some of our time high in the trees, scanning for the aforementioned species amongst many others.



Proboscis Monkey by Colin Valentine

One of Danum's prized mammals is the highly endangered Orangutan – fondly referred to as the "Old Man of the Forest". We usually succeed, with the help of the excellent local guides, in tracking down these regal primates and staring into the eyes of these magnificent creatures is sure to be one of the most

memorable experiences of the entire trip. We will also undertake a night drive on one of our nights here and this provides a superb opportunity for seeing a range of secretive forest mammals. Species that are regularly seen include Sambar and Red Barking Deer (Muntjac), Greater and Lesser Mouse-Deer, Thomas's and Red Giant Flying-Squirrels, Malayan Colugo (Flying Lemur) and Common Palm and Malayan Civets. Rarer species that do occur include Asian Elephant (sometimes split as Bornean Pygmy Elephant), Leopard Cat, Bornean Clouded Leopard, the near-mythical Marbled and Bay Cats, Banded Palm Civet, Malay Badger, Thick-quilled Porcupine, Slow Loris, Western Tarsier and the strange Binturong (Bear Cat) but we'd be very lucky to encounter any of these extremely scarce forest denizens during our limited time in the Danum Valley.

Day 19: Danum Valley to Kota Kinabalu via Lahad Datu and depart. After some final birding this morning, we will drive to Lahad Datu to connect with our flight to Kota Kinabalu.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

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

This includes:

- All meals from breakfast on day 1 to breakfast on day 19;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Boat transfers as stated in the itinerary;
- Reserve entrance fees;
- Extra activities as mentioned in the itinerary; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services).

The tour fee does not include:

- Visa fees;
- **ANY** flights;
- Optional excursions e.g. extended night drive at Danum Valley;
- All beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- 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 (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If, therefore, you feel that he/they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them.

Please Note:

- 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: this tour does 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. 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 high standard and the hotels and resorts that we make use of range from comfortable to rather luxurious. There is no camping on this trip.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:
This tour **does not** include **any** airfares. The tour will depart from Kuala Lumpur on day 1 by **06:00, and it is, therefore, imperative that you arrive the day before the tour starts.** The tour will conclude after breakfast at Kota Kinabalu on day 19.

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:
Kuala Lumpur International Airport (IATA: KUL) is the main port of entry, and Kota Kinabalu International Airport (IATA: BKI) is the main point of departure for international flights into and out of Malaysia. Both airports are well serviced by many of the world's major airlines. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

