Malaysia & Borneo

Bird Families

10th to 21st August 2025 (12 days)

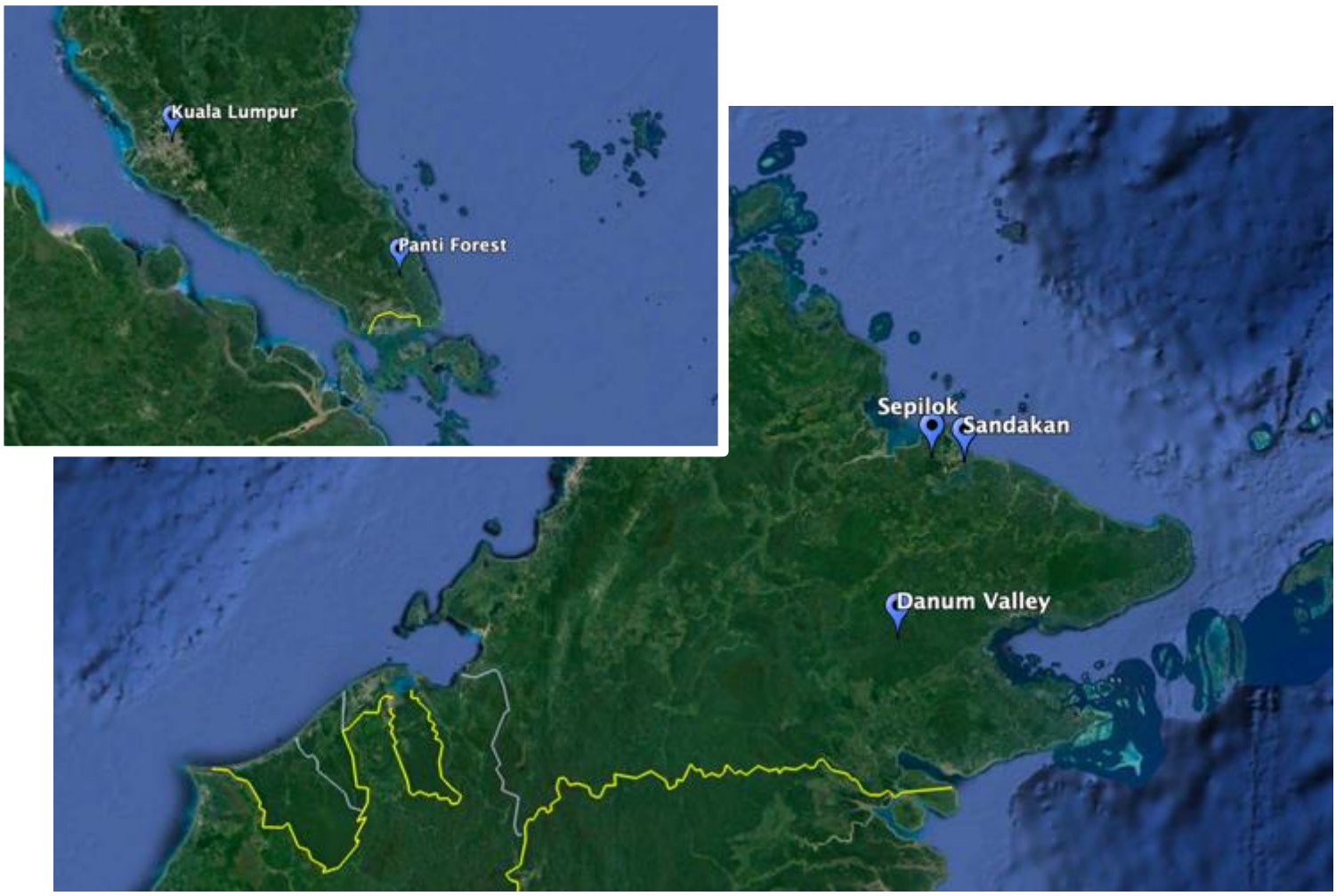


Rail-babbler by Liew Weng Keong

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 the Panti Forest, Danum Valley - protecting the largest rainforest in Southeast Asia, and Sepilok targeting the sole members of three monotypic families (Rail-babbler, Shrikejay, and Bristlehead) along with a rich mix of typical south-east Asian birds as well as several 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!

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Kuala Lumpur**
Day 2	**Kuala Lumpur to Bukit Tinggi and continue to Mersing via Krau Forest**
Day 3	**Full day of birding from Mersing to Lenggor/Panti Forest**
Day 4	**Full day of birding from Mersing to Lenggor/Panti Forest**
Day 5	**Mersing to Lenggor/Panti Forest and continue to Kuala Lumpur**
Day 6	**Kuala Lumpur to Sandakan and continue to Sepilok**
Days 7 & 8	**Sepilok**
Day 9	**Sepilok to Lahad Datu and continue to the Danum Valley**
Days 10-11	**Danum Valley**
Day 12	**Danum Valley, tranfer to Lahad Datu for afternoon departures**



Birding sites in detail

Lenggor/Panti Forest. Situated in the southern part of Peninsular Malaysia, Panti Forest is known as the best place to find the monotypic Rail-babbler. This enigmatic species is found here at an unusually high density, and coupled with the typically sparse undergrowth - provides birders with the best chances of seeing it (and maybe even photographing it). There are a good number of known, accessible territories that we'll work our way through slowly, hoping to watch our quary strutting their stately walk and puffing their blue cheek pouches out.



Rufous-winged Philentoma by Keith Valentine

Aside from Rail-babbler, this fabulous birding location also gives a good chance of finding Crested Shrikejay, a species that has just recently been elevated to its own unique family (2021) - Platylophidae. The forests here also hold many other quality species such as Red-bearded Bee-eater, Red-crowned Barbet, Rufous Piculet, Rufous-winged Philentoma, Diard's and Red-naped Trogons, Wrinkled Hornbill, Banded Kingfisher, Red-billed Malkoha, and Fiery Minivet. Panti is also well regarded as one of the better sites to try and find Brown-backed Flowerpecker, a fairly non-descript but highly elusive species and the equally elusive Scarlet-breasted Flowerpcker. The understorey is home to the magnificent Great Argus while understorey mixed flocks hold a vast selection of species including Moustached, Short-tailed, Chestnut-winged, Black-throated, Scaly-crowned, Black-capped, Sooty-crowned, Chestnut-rumped, and the uncommon White-necked Babblers, Fluffy-backed Tit-babbler, Crow-billed Drongo, Banded and Dusky Broadbills, the uncommon Finsch's Bulbul, and Purple-naped Spiderhunter. Woodpeckers are also in good supply and we may well see species such as Maroon, Checker-throated, Rufous, Banded, the massive White-bellied, Olive-backed and Orange-backed.



Crested Shrikejay by Liew Weng Keong

Kuala Lumpur area (Bukit Tinggi). We'll visit a hill station near to Kuala Lumpur in our quest for Rail-babbler. Should we already have had good views of the bird, then we may seek to enjoy the many other fabulous hill country species of this montane forest 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 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, 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.



Bornean Bristlehead by Liew Weng Keong

Sepilok. 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-r umped Spinetail, Bushy-crested, Wreathed and Rhinoceros Hornbills, Great Slaty and several species other species of woodpeckers and barbets. However, our priority at this site will be the rare Bornean Bristlehead which has been recorded here on a regular basis and we stand an excellent chance of seeing this species.

A session of owling may turn up Bornean Wood Owl and Oriental Bay Owl, whilst careful scanning may reveal a roosting Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher.

Danum Valley. The Danum Valley has lush and verdant lowland rainforest which we'll bird along the network of forest trails, the access road, lodge grounds and a canopy walkway. Some of the area's very special birds that we will search for during our time here include the bizarre Bornean Bristlehead (currently placed its own monotypic family), Dusky Broadbill, Bornean Black Magpie), backup chances for the tricky Crested Shrikejay, 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.

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 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



Black-crowned Pitta by Liew Weng Keong



Orangutan by Colin Valentine

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 a pitta paradise with a staggering six species recorded here (including four spectacular species endemic to Borneo: Black-crowned, Blue-headed, Blue-banded and Bornean Banded Pittas)! The other two 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.

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 other secretive forest mammals. Species that are regularly seen include Sambar and Southern Red 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.



Great Argus by Daniel Danckwerts

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate. This tour has a lot of trail walking and early starts. Not suitable for anyone with mobility or health challenges.
Birding Ease		Bird density can be low. Several difficult target species, many skulking understorey species that require sitting/standing for periods of time to observe. We will also be targeting a number of shy forest residents that may require dedicated searches and persistence to see.
Accommodation		Comfortable to very comfortable.
Walking / Trails		Some narrow trails, many trails will be muddy and slippery after rain. Terrain can be uneven with fallen logs, tree stumps or rocks under foot.
Vehicles / Roads		Small coach for most of tour, some roads are in poor condition.
Photography		Average, but tough due to skulking nature of many species. No dedicated blinds / hides.
Annoyances		Hot and very humid in the lowlands. Potential for malaria and dengue, though infection is rare.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 12;
- Bottled drinking water, tea and coffee at meals;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services;
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights (except as stated above);
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions & activities;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, 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.

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 you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is 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. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes made need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- 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.
- 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 (+-18kg) for hand luggage.
- Fitness: this tour does require a high level of fitness, and 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.
- For much of the tour you will be far away from modern medical facilities.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour departs Kuala Lumpur very early on day 1, do ensure that you arrive the day before the tour starts. The tour will conclude after breakfast at Lahad Datu on day 12.

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.

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 to Malaysia.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements. The following website provides detailed information about visa eligibility and assistance with online applications options where viable: Visa HQ for Travel

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.