



*This otherworldly Whitehead's Broadbill was observed on multiple occasions near his nest, and was voted bird of the tour!  
All photos by Joshua Bergmark.*

## **BORNEO: SABAH**

**28 MARCH – 11 APRIL 2019**

**LEADER: JOSHUA BERGMARK**

The isle of Borneo. The largest of the Greater Sundas has long been known as one of the world's most ecologically significant areas. This was the setting for another magnificent tour exploring splendid lowland rainforest and misty mountainous terrain, searching out some of Asia's best birds in the wonderfully easy-going and pleasant country of Malaysia. The island holds more than 50 endemic species of bird at current count, and while it is impossible to see all of them on the Sabah route alone we did manage the desired selection we wanted. Beginning in the Crocker Range and on the slopes of Mount Kinabalu, we quickly searched out the majority of the montane endemic specialties, from the retiring Crimson-headed Partridge and Red-breasted Partridge which both showed well to everyone in the end, to the beautiful and sought-after trio of Whitehead's Broadbill, Whitehead's Trogon and Whitehead's Spiderhunter. Everett's Thrush was kind enough to sit on a log and sing to us, and the newly-split Bornean Shortwing performed well nearby. After a bit of skulking, we managed to entice Bornean Forktail, Bornean Whistling Thrush, Mountain Wren-Babbler,

Bornean Stubtail and Eyebrowed Jungle Flycatcher to the trail in front of us for fantastic views in the end. The amazing Bare-headed Laughingthrush (which may in fact not be a laughingthrush at all!) and the more common Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush mixed in noisy feeding flocks filled with Bornean Green Magpie and Bornean Treepie. Smaller roving parties often included Chestnut-crested Yuhina, Bornean Whistler, Black-sided Flowerpecker, and occasionally the difficult Bornean Leafbird or Mountain Blackeye when we were in the higher parts. Pygmy White-eye and Bornean Bulbul were found at lower elevations, while Bornean Barbet, Mountain Barbet and Golden-naped Barbet for once didn't require too much neck-straining. It is not all about endemics of course – other phenomenal species seen in the mountains included brightly-coloured Long-tailed Broadbill, Black-and-crimson Oriole, Checker-throated Woodpecker and Pygmy Flycatcher. Dark Hawk-Cuckoo, Sunda Cuckoo and Mountain Scops Owl were all tempted into view, plus a number of subspecies which have been proposed as upcoming endemics such as “Pale-faced” Flavescent Bulbul and “Bornean” Hair-crested Drongo.



*Everett's Thrush is one of the more difficult endemics on Mount Kinabalu, but we had fantastic views this year!*

Beginning our transect of Sabah's lowlands, we focused on some excellent patches of preserved where both Diard's Trogon and Scarlet-rumped Trogon performed very nicely, as did Banded Broadbill, Black-and-red Broadbill, the noisy Black-and-yellow Broadbill, and a few Oriental Dwarf Kingfishers. Keeping with brightly coloured species, the exquisite Hooded Pitta and endemic Black-crowned Pitta were very cooperative, while overhead we had Wallace's Hawk-Eagle, Rufous-bellied Eagle, Jerdon's Baza, and of course the amazing Bat Hawk which we watched hunting as millions of bats emerged from Gomantong Caves at dusk. The immense Great Slaty Woodpecker and White-bellied Woodpecker dwarfed smaller Buff-necked Woodpecker and Grey-and-buff Woodpecker. Hornbill diversity is particularly high in Borneo, and especially along the Kinabatangan River we enjoyed vibrant Wrinkled Hornbill, wacky White-crowned Hornbill, and of course the impressive Rhinoceros Hornbill. We worked hard to eventually nail superb views of a Bornean Ground Cuckoo hopped up on a log, while spotlighting picked us Oriental Bay Owl, Large Frogmouth, Buffy Fish Owl, and the distinct Bornean subspecies of Brown Wood Owl. We must not forget to mention the lovely endemic White-fronted Falconet, the rare Storm's Stork, and a pair of critically endangered Straw-headed Bulbuls singing melodiously to us one afternoon!



*While Straw-headed Bulbuls are surviving well in Danum Valley around BRL, it is heartbreaking to think that these two birds we saw on the Kinabatangan will probably be in a cage by the end of the year. Their conspicuous song is one of the most beautiful in world.*



*The Bornean endemic Blue-headed Pitta has often been hailed as the world's best pitta - hard to argue with that I reckon!*

Saving the best for last, we enjoyed our five days in Danum Valley at the luxurious Borneo Rainforest Lodge in company of some superb birds. Naturally the endemic Blue-headed Pitta was a big standout, but a pair of prehistoric Helmeted Hornbill perched above the road and some amazing looks at Gould's Frogmouth took some beating! Along the trails Green Broadbill and Dusky Broadbill delighted, and close-ups of Olive-backed Woodpecker, Bornean Wren-Babbler and Black-throated Wren-Babbler were much appreciated. A family of very rarely-observed "Umber" Brown-streaked Flycatchers along the canopy walkway were beaten in the looks department by Yellow-crowned Barbet, Golden-whiskered Barbet, a superb Red-bearded Bee-eater. An impossibly fabulous male Great Argus was seen well at his court, and some Bornean Orangutans delighted. In the same vein we have to note that Sabah has some magnificent mammals, of which we observed "Bornean Pygmy" Asian Elephant, the bizarre Proboscis Monkey, Sunda Stink Badger, the extremely rare Tufted Ground Squirrel, adorable Whitehead's Pygmy Squirrel, huge Common Red Giant Flying Squirrels, Philippine Slow Loris (a funny name for a species found almost exclusively in Borneo!), and Smooth-coated Otter. In all we recorded 308 birds (13 heard only), and an additional 33 mammals.



*Long-tailed Parakeets are best seen in Kota Kinabalu where they nest in coastal parks.*

We commenced mid-morning in the coastal town of Kota Kinabalu, focusing first on the shorebirds at Lok Kwai. Great Knot and Sanderling were good pickups amongst the regular Kentish Plovers, Lesser Sand Plovers and Greater Sand Plovers. Other East-Asian flyway visitors included Ruddy Turnstone, Bar-tailed Godwit, Grey Plover, Pacific Golden Plover, and Red-necked Stint. While a Collared Kingfisher was lovely, it was the breeding plumage Chinese Egret feeding in the shallows which stole the show. Heading south we explored some rice paddies and fields near Papar, enjoying our first Bornean endemic - the unassuming Dusky Munia. Also here we observed Chestnut Munia, Scaly-breasted Munia, Striated Grassbird, Pied Triller, Temminck's Stint, a large gathering of Wandering Whistling Ducks, and the thinly-spread Black-backed Swampphen which is probably easier to see in Sabah than anywhere else. Back at Lok Kwai a thorough scan finally found us the hoped-for Malaysian Plovers hiding in the sand dunes before we moved to Tg Aru for close encounters with the fabulous Long-tailed Parakeets and introduced Blue-naped Parrots (which are in fact endangered throughout their natural Philippine range). Malaysian Pied Fantails, Ashy Tailorbirds and Plume-toed Swiftlets rounded out our day, but the night beckoned. Sabah boasts excellent spotlighting opportunities, and this first session didn't let us down! While trawling for Sunda Scops Owl, a

large pale owl flew in and landed in a dead tree above us. As such, the often diabolically problematic Barred Eagle-Owl was the first night bird of the trip! Sunda Scops Owls began calling once the bird-in-charge had left and we had brief but good views of one at eye-level. A Sunda Frogmouth called distantly but could not be lured closer, so we made our way back to the hotel preceding what was to be an early start the next morning.



*The impressive Barred Eagle-Owl was the first nightbird of the tour!*

We were in the Crocker Range for dawn, where after an alfresco breakfast we set to work. Gaudy Long-tailed Broadbills and the endemic duo of Bornean Spiderhunter and our only Bornean Leafbird of the trip were first off the bat, while nearby fruiting trees were frequented by Mountain Barbets, Bornean Barbets, and at least two Red-throated Barbets. A splendid male Temminck's Sunbird outdid his namesake's stint from yesterday, while White-throated Fantails supported the cast, as did Black-and-crimson Orioles. An overhead Crested Serpent Eagle was sadly not his endemic relative, and try as we might not a single Whitehead's Spiderhunter was heard... We had to move lower down the range before luring in some curious Pygmy White-eyes and the lovely Bornean Bulbul, and after lunch we moved northwards to our base for the coming five nights - Mount Kinabalu.

Towering out of the mist, the huge granodiorite dome of the highest peak between the Himalayas and New Guinea greeted us with favourable weather and the promise of excellent birding. This World Heritage-listed area is one of the most ecologically diverse places on Earth, and is a perfect example of how tropical mountains can act as refuges during climate shifts to drive speciation. With over 5000 vascular plants (including 1000 orchids) and a huge array of endemic animals found on this mountain alone, Kinabalu is certainly a biological paradise. Our first afternoon session was fairly quiet, but splendid views of two Bornean Forktails, our first Mountain Leaf-warblers of the endemic Kinabalu subspecies, and White-bellied Erpornis, plus both Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush and Sunda Laughingthrush were all appreciated.



*The endemic Mountain Barbet was one of the many barbets we had eye-level views of during the tour. Much better than neck-craning!*



*The shadow of Low's Peak atop Mount Kinabalu being cast down the Crocker Range early one morning.*

We returned early the following morning and somehow our best laid plans came to fruition immediately, with the first bird logged as we began walking the Bukit Ular Trail being a superbly confiding Everett's Thrush! With the pressure immediately off, we worked hard on both calling Crimson-headed Partridges and Red-breasted Partridges, but for the moment we only managed brief views of the latter. An Eyebrowed Jungle Flycatcher, Bornean Stubtail and the newly split Bornean Shortwing were all coaxed out of the undergrowth, while Bornean Treepies, Maroon Woodpeckers and "Bornean" Hair-crested Drongos showed above us. A calling Mountain Serpent Eagle was sadly not visible and had disappeared by the time we reached a clearing, but the few feeding flocks we encountered contained goodies like Grey-chinned Minivet, Black-

capped White-eye, Blyth's Shrike Babbler and Bornean Whistler. Two diminutive Pygmy Flycatchers were a good find as they surreptitiously constructed their nest, and a Sunda Bush Warbler proved very bold. One calling Sunda Cuckoo was tracked down as we descended the mountain to explore trails closer to the HQ, and we additionally picked up the adorable Tufted Pygmy Squirrel, two striking Kinabalu Squirrel, and a Bornean Ground Squirrel. Over the course of the day we managed not only two cracking male Whitehead's Trogon (how such a bright red bird can be so hard to see will always be a mystery!), but also a pair of otherworldly fluorescent green Whitehead's Broadbill near their nest! Other additions included Snowy-browed Flycatcher, a flock of beautiful Bornean Green Magpie, and a lone Bare-headed Laughingthrush. What a list - probably this leader's best-ever single day on Mount Kinabalu!



*Borneo has some fantastic trogons, but this male Whitehead's Trogon is probably the best!*

Knowing full well the law of diminishing returns, we spent the next day tracing a similar route. The morning began well with a Dark Hawk-Cuckoo giving us prolonged views, and our first Indigo Flycatchers appearing with more Bornean Whistling Thrush and Bornean Whistlers. We studied the Bornean Swiftlets at Timpohon Gate, and almost connected with our target raptor at serpent eagle o'clock, but the calling bird seemed to bank down a valley seconds before cruising into our view at the lookout. A Collared Owlet was also noted calling far below us and out of reach, so we moved lower and spent the middle part of the day walking trails. Added species included the endemic Golden-naped Barbet, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Sunda Cuckooshrike, some male Blyth's Shrike-babblers, and Mountain Tailorbird (still awaiting a name change!), but having great encounters with more Bornean Green Magpies was definitely a highlight. Our last attempts to reign in partridges and babblers as dusk fell proved futile, but persistence with a troublesome Mountain Scops Owl eventually gave us some fine views during a spotlighting session.



*The loud Bornean Green Magpie was a regular bird in feeding flocks on Mount Kinabalu!*

The following day we connected with two overdue endemics early on - Mountain Wren-Babbler and Black-sided Flowerpecker. Accompanying these were some Temminck's Babblers, Little Pied Flycatchers, a Checker-throated Woodpecker, and, best of all, three Whitehead's Spiderhunter perched together in the scope bathed in early morning light! Usually very flighty and energetic, we had excellent views of this lovely species sitting quite still indeed to complete our Whitehead's trio! Moving higher another Checker-throated Woodpecker was logged while a large party of Mountain Wren-Babblers passed us by, but otherwise the forest was somewhat silent. The unseasonal dryness was certainly not making our lives easy. With some perseverance we bumped into two high altitude endemics which are rare in the currently accessible areas of the park - the strange Mountain Blackeye, and a small group of "Plain-faced" Flavescent Bulbuls. We finally heard our first Fruithunter late in the day, but it moved off before any visuals were obtained. Our only Long-tailed Shrike of the tour sat on a powerline as we returned to the hotel was noted to be the endemic Bornean subspecies.

Our last day on the mountain was hard work, but we still connected with a few remaining targets. Early on we improved our views of Bare-headed Laughingthrush, and John was extremely happy to catch up on Checker-throated Woodpecker. An Eyebrowed Thrush was spotted flicking leaves on the track, and we had two excellent sightings of Red-breasted Partridge where birds stopped in the open for everybody to get their

binoculars on. Best of all, finally we were able to push out an unresponsive Crimson-headed Partridge which was seen well by all. Now understood to not really be a partridge at all, it really was a last-minute challenge to add this bird in the difficult dry conditions.



*Mountain Wren-Babblers can often be seen passing by in large groups. This was one of ten individuals by the track one morning!*

We elected to spend a morning at Poring Hot Springs, where a few hours of birding in the crossover between hill and lowland netted us a few species we would not see again, namely Grey-headed Babbler, a pair of nomadic Streaked Bulbul, and the pretty Banded Broadbill. Chestnut-backed Scimitar Babbler and Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher perched nicely on some open branches, while Moustached Babbler and Rufous-crowned Babbler gave us an introduction to the always-popular brown forest babblers! Around the springs themselves the endemic White-crowned Shama appeared on a post by the track, and two Rufous-tailed Tailorbirds chased each other around a bamboo thicket. Before departing we had just enough time to visit a blooming *Rafflesia* in a nearby garden – this impressive plant flowers for just seven days and is very unpredictable, however all the locals in the vicinity of Poring keep tabs on their plants so that usually at least one big smelly flower can be found during a quick stop-over!



*This blooming Rafflesia keithii was enjoyed at Poring, measuring about 80cm across.*

Arriving at Sepilok mid-afternoon we began our explorations of the Rainforest Discovery Centre. While it was fairly quiet, we started working on our lowland birds which included the amazing Rhinoceros Hornbill, Rufous-bellied Eagle, a crimson-red Banded Woodpecker, Brown-throated Sunbird, Crimson Sunbird, our first endemic Yellow-rumped Flowerpecker, Blue-throated Bee-eater, and some careful studies of Cream-vented Bulbul. The definitive highlight was a young male Bornean Orangutan which appeared in a tree next to the walkway eating some fruit. When he was finished, we watched as he expertly swung over to the railing and walked right past us before slipping off into another tree and disappearing. Sharing the canopy with this superb creature was a truly awe-inspiring experience - he likely originated from the nearby recovery center but was well and truly surviving on his own out here in the forest. We spotlit extensively in search of Oriental Bay Owl at night and eventually had one in the torch, but only briefly for some of the group. We did however enjoy excellent views of Common Giant Flying Squirrel, Thomas's Flying Squirrel, and a sleeping Blue-eared Kingfisher.



*The man of the forest, a young male Bornean Orangutan eyeballing us on the canopy walkway.*

Our morning at Sepilok was more productive. In particular we marveled at an abundance of woodpeckers, with Great Slaty Woodpecker, Banded Woodpecker, Buff-necked Woodpecker, Grey-and-buff Woodpecker, Rufous Woodpecker and Rufous Piculet all logged before lunch! A host of lowland forest birds was highlighted by a showy pair of Diard's Trogon, a young Wallace's Hawk Eagle just starting to develop his diagnostic black streaking, one cooperative Green Iora, Fiery Minivet, Blue-eared Barbet, the weird Brown Barbet, some noisy Black-and-yellow Broadbill, Chestnut-breasted Malkoha, Raffles Malkoha, Chestnut-winged Babbler, Yellow-bellied Bulbul, Black-naped Monarch, Black-winged Flycatcher-shrike, and Ruby-cheeked Sunbird. To finish up, both Black Hornbill and Bushy-crested Hornbill put in really excellent appearances right by the trail allowing for great photos!



*Both Black Hornbills (top) and Bush-crested Hornbills (bottom) were seen well during our morning at Sepilok.*



*This Green Iora was kind enough to visit us in a low shrub so we could admire his finery!*

Moving on to Gomantong Caves we entered the enormous main cavern and, remembering to keep our mouths shut, looked up at the ceiling towering over 100 metres above us. Such huge numbers of bats and swiftlets, all producing a constant fall of guano which builds huge mounds in the center of the cave, in turn providing nutrients for thousands of cockroaches, centipedes and crabs. Certainly, this is up there with the most disgusting places you can go birding, but once you get used to the smell of ammonia this place really is an ecological wonder. We watched as some of the last swiftlet nests were scraped off the walls, destined to end up in somebody's pot of soup. It was only by enlisting the help of a nest-collector that we were find a small ledge where five remaining Edible-nest Swiftlets were sitting on their characteristic white nests. Nearby we studied both Mossy-nest Swiftlets and Black-nest Swiftlets side by side, also on their respective constructions. Outside the cave, explorations of the forest revealed both Spotted Fantail and Malaysian Pied Fantail, Scaly-crowned Babbler, Black-capped Babbler, at least two Asian Red-eyed Bulbul, and a troop of Maroon Langur. As dusk fell we bore witness to the spectacle showcased by David Attenborough in Planet Earth as millions of bats began exiting the cave in murmuration-like clusters to avoid the three amazingly accurate Bat Hawks which sliced through the air, catching prey almost effortlessly.



*The exquisite Bat Hawk hunt in Planet Earth was shot in Sarawak, but Sir David has filmed two sequences on bats here at Gomantong!*

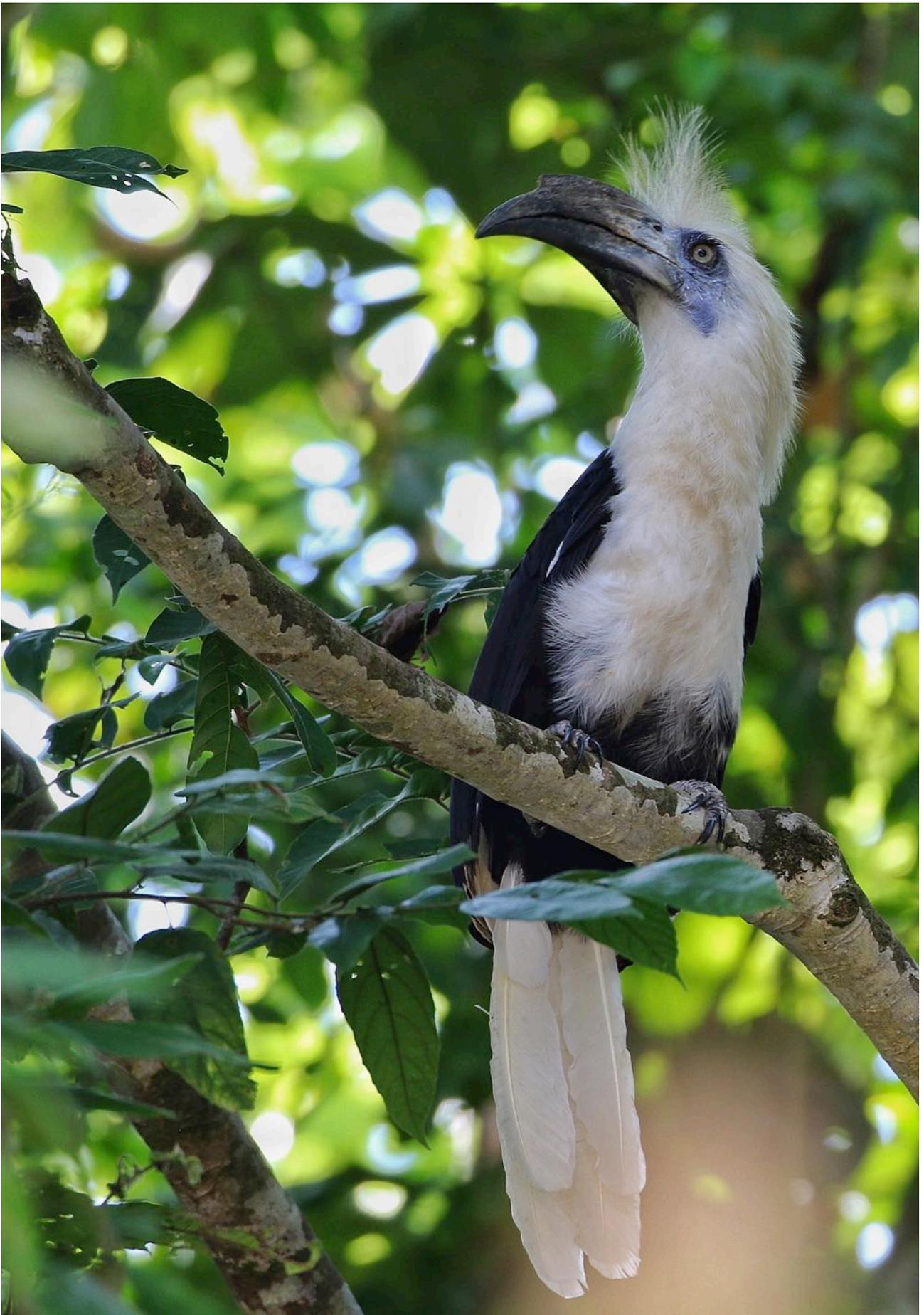
The Kinabatangan River winds through eastern Sabah, and is bordered by narrow yet extraordinary swamp forest. Over many decades the wildlife has been concentrated here by encroaching palm oil plantations, which has produced a habitat ready to provide an exceptional wildlife experience. We left early and almost had another Oriental Bay Owl for the whole group at dawn, but it once again moved off soon after the torch was put on it. As the sun rose, pairs of Oriental Pied Hornbill whooshed over us while Malaysian Blue Flycatchers whistled along the shoreline. Jerdon's Baza, a trio of Storm's Storm, and one Lesser Adjutant plied the early thermals and offered great looks above the boat, but it was a pair of White-fronted Falconets on a snag which stole the show. Oriental Darters and Stork-billed Kingfishers dotted the shoreline, and some gaudy Black-and-red Broadbills were thoroughly enjoyed. Before lunch a short walk behind the lodge netted us both White-chested Babbler (nothing the write home about), and a Black-crowned Pitta perched up in the open a few metres away (that's more like it!).



*We saw a number of adult Storm's Storks plying the thermals, but this juvenile which flushed from a sandbank allowed nice photos!*

The afternoon cruise began with two superbly confiding White-crowned Hornbills and ended with a bunch of Wrinkled Hornbills flying around and perching up in the evening light - great stuff! In between we spent time watching a lone male Little Green Pigeon, loud Rhinoceros Hornbills, two young Storm's Storks walking on a muddy bank, and a number of perched Blue-crowned Hanging Parrots, but probably the best sighting was a vocal pair of Straw-headed Bulbuls chortling away above our heads. Sadly this critically endangered species is becoming rarer and rarer - our boat driver had not seen one here for three years!

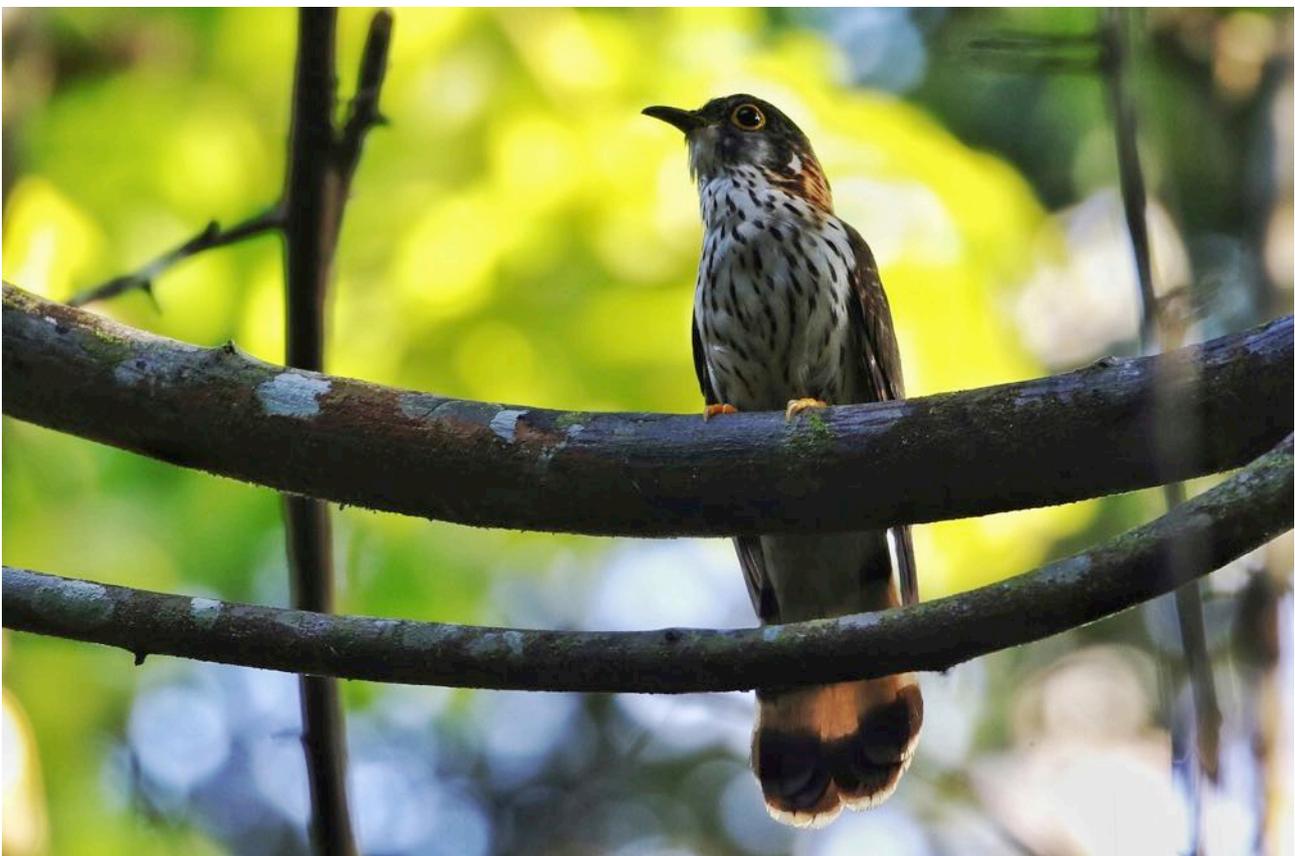
Further downstream another tributary beckoned, but a tactical early start saw us nailing a mega Large Frogmouth en. route, as well as Buffy Fish Owl and a Brown Wood Owl which came in to try and eat the imaginary Bay Owl which was playing out of the leader's speaker! A Malaysian Eared Nightjar was abruptly heard calling overhead just before dawn - a very rare bird in Sabah - but we could not get the torch on it in time as it passed by and the call faded into the distance. We slowly cruised up the channel which was becoming more and more choked with logs, when suddenly the noise we had been waiting for erupted angrily from behind a small ridge on the left. Our boatman Jidi expertly swung around and nosed the boat



*The wondrously strange White-crowned Hornbill was very cooperative on the Kinabatangan!*

into a small channel where seconds later a stunning Bornean Ground Cuckoo hopped up onto a branch and began to call! He was in view for a few minutes, but as if often the case the bird was quite obscured behind leaves and twigs. We tried various methods to bring him back, and sure enough after a tense wait suddenly he was there in full view right by the bank, tail pumping and everything! It was only ten seconds or so, but a treasured moment for everyone!

With this main target secured, we were able to “relax” over the following two and a half cruises on the river. Brightly coloured Hooded Pittas and a male Scarlet-rumped Trogon impressed, while Moustached Hawk-Cuckoo and White-bellied Woodpecker took some time to track down but eventually provided stellar views. Raptors were unusually thin on the ground, but we did find singles of both Crested Goshawk and Lesser Fish Eagle. We had two more frustrating nighttime sessions which only added a heard Reddish Scops Owl to the bird list, but Masked Palm Civet and the strange Sunda Stink Badger (which it turns out is not uncommon in the Bilit Rainforest Lodge grounds after everyone has gone to bed!) were appreciated. Mammals are of course particularly evident along the Kinabatangan, and some of the highlights seen along the river included the marvelous Proboscis Monkey sporting impressive beer-guts, Silver Langur, **two rare Smooth-coated Otters**, and the adorable Least Pygmy Squirrel. One or two big Saltwater Crocodiles reminded us exactly why we had to be careful around the water’s edge!



*We finally heard a Moustached Hawk-Cuckoo down on of the tributaries and tracked it down for walk-away views!*

Our transfer to the magnificent Danum Valley was somewhat delayed, but in good fortune our late afternoon drive down the entrance road meant that the “Bornean Pygmy” Asian Elephants which had apparently not been present earlier in the day were in fact all over the road! We made use of what daylight was left once arriving at the luxurious Borneo Rainforest Lodge (BRL) adding Finsch’s Bulbul, Orange-backed Woodpecker and Silver-rumped Spinetail before the night drive netted us a cute Philippine Slow Loris at eye level by the road. Following this success, we had a scrumptious dinner and retired to our lovely rooms for a well-needed rest.



*Both Gould's Frogmouth (top) and the endemic Black-throated Wren-Babbler (bottom) were uncharacteristically easy!*

Hitting the trails for our first full day proved to be exceptional birding, as is usually the case in this wonderful rainforest! It was a babbler-fest to begin with as we quickly nailed down views of Horsfield's Babbler, Sooty-capped Babbler, the fantastic Bornean Wren-Babbler, and the often-elusive endemic Black-throated Wren-

Babbler which for once even provided photographic opportunities! A pair of Bornean Blue Flycatchers joined the party before a fluorescent Blue-headed Pitta posed on a log while he preened for a good couple of minutes in full view! The supporting cast included nesting Crested Honey Buzzards (thus easily identifiable as the splittable Sunda taxon), Red-bearded Bee-eater, Dark-throated Oriole, Sunda Blue Flycatcher, Verditer Flycatcher, Rufous-winged Philentoma, and the brand new cryptic Bornean endemic Cream-eyed Bulbul which has just been “discovered” after being long overlooked as a variable form of Cream-vented Bulbul! A Chestnut-necklaced Partridge (once again likely to become a future endemic) was enticed to stroll across the track, but it took until our lunch break before a pair of endemic Charlotte’s Bubbles appeared at our only (!!!) fruiting tree of the trip. The afternoon plan got rearranged when a Helmeted Hornbill began calling upstream from the lodge - we tried hard to track it down but alas to no avail. We did however add a number of new species in the process, such as the dapper Whiskered Treeswift, noisy Dusky Broadbills, “Bornean” Black Magpie, Chestnut-rumped Babbler, and a small foraging group of the lovely Striped Wren-babbler. Some beautiful “Bornean” Crested Firebacks behaved like chickens near the lodge buildings while we prepared for an extensive spotlighting session, but when a Gould’s Frogmouth flew in after only three whistles to perch at eye-level there was nothing left to do but go back and have dinner!



*We were very happy to find an Olive-backed Woodpecker – one more towards John’s family target!*

Some more specific targeting during day two saw us explore the further reaches of BRL’s trail network. While we did hear the single available Blue-banded Pitta, it showed no interest in coming closer. The undisputed highlight was when a pair of prehistoric Helmeted Hornbills whooshed overhead like modern-day Pterodactyls and subsequently sat in the open above the road for superb scope views. This critically endangered species has a stronghold in Danum Valley for now, and is surely one of Asia’s most fantastic birds! We picked up some uncommon residents nearby such as Maroon-breasted Philentoma, Grey-chested Jungle Flycatcher and Rufous-chested Flycatcher, while Ferruginous Babbler, Asian Fairy Bluebird and Buff-rumped Woodpecker also put in appearances. We came close to a pair of Short-toed Coucal, but as usual they remained hidden in the thick tangles. An afternoon walk proved slow birding until we hit the famous canopy walkway for our first visit - just about the first bird which drew our attention was a *Muscicapa* flycatcher which proved to be the extremely cryptic and rarely-observed “Umber” Brown-streaked Flycatcher! A resident canopy nester, this non-migratory taxon has only been observed with confidence a few dozen times, but our initial suspicions were confirmed by some excellent close-up views and the sudden appearance of a begging juvenile which was being attended by the adults! The participating Birdquesters did not seem as excited by this little brown job as the leader, so we also made sure to enjoy superb views of a curious Yellow-crowned Barbet, the dapper Whiskered Treeswift, and a Plain Sunbird!



*The critically endangered Helmeted Hornbill is now a very important bird in Danum Valley, where poaching is somewhat limited.*

Our third full day in this magical rainforest was dedicated to the enigmatic Bornean Bristlehead, which we had still not even heard (but not for lack of trying!). Criss-crossing the main family territory on various trails we finally bumped into the long-overdue Short-tailed Babbler and Red-naped Trogon, but also some tricky bonus species such as a fantastic male Green Broadbill, a showy Rufous-tailed Shama, Puff-backed Bulbuls, and nailed superb views of the scarce Olive-backed Woodpecker for our woodpecker fan. When a male Great Argus began calling from a known dance court we stealthily snuck down towards it and had good views of this immense pheasant before he spotted us and wandered off into the forest. Nearby, a strange shape which appeared on the trail in front of us caused simultaneous gasps from both the leader and the local guide as our binoculars focused on the huge squirrel holding an enormous bushy tail aloft above it. The ultra-rare Tufted Ground Squirrel may well be the most cryptic and desirable mammal species on Borneo - amusingly our local guide had just been relating how it was number one on his "wishlist" after working at BRL for six years without a sighting!



*The Sabah form of Chestnut-necklaced Partridge is a good candidate for splitting as yet another Bornean endemic!*

Not long after this mammalian encounter, a party of Bornean Bristlehead were heard nearby, and led us on a merry chase through the forest which ultimately ended up for naught. This would prove to be a continuing theme - even with half a dozen guides on the ground in radio contact, we just couldn't get close to a sighting. After lunch, we set out again and searched all afternoon, adding only Thick-billed Green Pigeon, flyover Blue-rumped Parrots, and an Indian Cuckoo. We also enjoyed seeing a recently weaned Orangutan who must have been just over seven years old, looking way too small to be swinging between trees thirty metres above our heads! After dinner we enjoyed a final spotlighting session with Sunda Frogmouth, Malay Civet, and the amazing Wallace's Flying Frog proving highlights.



*This Yellow-crowned Barbet on the canopy walkway really let us appreciate his attractive plumage!*

With the pressure on, our final morning sadly once again only tuned up distantly heard Bristleheads despite concerted efforts. We did finally connect with Crested Jay, "Bornean" Banded Kingfisher, and Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, but all too soon it was time to bid the forests of Borneo farewell. Although we ended on a frustrating note, our tour really did compile a staggering species list with almost every target endemic and endemic subspecies squeezed in the bag. It is always a pleasure to bird in the wonderful forests of Malaysian Borneo, and especially so when in good company!

#### **BIRD OF THE TOUR (AS VOTED FOR BY THE GROUP)**

- 1: Whitehead's Broadbill (13 points)
- 2: Helmeted Hornbill (9 points)
- 3: Bornean Ground Cuckoo (7 points)
- = 4: Everett's Thrush (6 points)
- = 4: Straw-headed Bulbul (6 points)
- = 4: Whiskered Treeswift (6 points)



Our small group at Mount Kinabalu on one of many sunny days!

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRD SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

**Total number of bird species recorded: 308**

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). IOC World Bird Names. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>. Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

**Wandering Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna arcuata* One large flock in a wetland near Papar.

**Red-breasted Partridge** ◊ *Arborophila hyperythra* Excellent looks at this endemic on three occasions on Kinabalu.

**Chestnut-necklaced Partridge** ◊ *Arborophila charltonii* Heard often, one tempted across the track at Danum.

**Crimson-headed Partridge** ◊ *Haematortyx sanguiniceps* Also heard often, eventually seen on Kinabalu.

**Crested Fireback** ◊ (Bornean C F) *Lophura ignita* Small family group seen most days near our rooms at Danum.

**Great Argus** ◊ *Argusianus argus* The superb male standing at his dance court at Danum will long be remembered.

**Storm's Stork** ◊ *Ciconia stormi* Three adults on a thermal on the Kinabatangan, plus two young ones on the bank.

**Lesser Adjutant** *Leptoptilos javanicus* Singles every day on the Kinabatangan.

**Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* Two on our first day exploring wetlands near Papar.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Singles around Kota Kinabalu and on the Kinabatangan.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* Noted at various points near waterbodies.

**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Throughout the lowlands.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* One near Papar in a small wetland.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* Seen coming to roost every evening on the Kinabatangan, but never during the day!

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* Around Kota Kinabalu, and on the Kinabatangan.

**Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia* Around Kota Kinabalu and near Papar.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Around Kota Kinabalu, and on the Kinabatangan.

**Chinese Egret** ◇ *Egretta eulophotes* Two great looking individuals in breeding plumage at Lok Kwai Beach.

**Oriental Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster* Multiple birds along the Kinabatangan.

**Crested Honey Buzzard (Sunda H B)** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* One dark morph at Kinabalu, two nesting at Danum.

**Jerdon's Baza** ◇ *Aviceda jerdoni* Just one along the Kinabatangan, flying lazily above our boat.

**Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela* Common throughout the lowlands and hills.

**Mountain Serpent Eagle** ◇ *Spilornis kinabaluensis* Heard on three occasions at Kinabalu, but sadly no visual. (H)

**Bat Hawk** ◇ *Macheiramphus alcinus* Three individuals expertly hunting bats at Gomantong Caves.

**Changeable Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus cirrhatus* Just one along the Danum entrance road this year.

**Wallace's Hawk-Eagle** ◇ *Nisaetus nanus* Superb looks at a perched bird near Sepilok, singles at Danum.

**Rufous-bellied Eagle** *Lophotriorchis kienerii* One flying over at Sepilok, and another at Gomantong.

**Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malaiensis* One soaring high up at Danum.

**Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus* Single on the Kinabatangan.

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus* Some along the Kinabatangan.

**White-bellied Sea Eagle (W-b Fish E)** *Haliaeetus leucogaster* Both along the Kinabatangan, and at Danum.

**Lesser Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus humilis* Eventually found one on the Kinabatangan, one more at Danum during lunch.

**White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Noted in the lowlands and fields.

**Black-backed Swampphen** *Porphyrio indicus* Great looks at a few birds near Papar – a tricky one to see elsewhere!

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* Noted near Kota Kinabalu.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* Noted near Kota Kinabalu

**Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* Five at Lok Kwai Beach.

**Grey Plover (Black-bellied P)** *Pluvialis squatarola* Two at Lok Kwai Beach.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* Numerous along the Kota Kinabalu shoreline.

**Malaysian Plover** ◇ *Charadrius peronii* Two in their usual spot at Lok Kwai.

**Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus* Some at Lok Kwai.

**Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii* Some mixed in with Lesser Sand Plovers at Lok Kwai.



*Mountain Imperial Pigeons showed very nicely on Mount Kinabalu!*

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Two with the shorebirds at Lok Kwai.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* Just one at Lok Kwai.

**Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris* Nice to see a single bird with the flock at Lok Kwai – quite rare on passage in Sabah.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* Some in the rice fields near Papar.

**Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis* Small numbers at Lok Kwai.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba* Another passage species which I think is almost a vagrant in Sabah – just one at Lok Kwai.

**Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* Small numbers at Lok Kwai.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Noted throughout.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Some near Papar.

**Greater Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bergii* A few offshore from Lok Kwai.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* One on the Kinabatangan.

**Rock Dove (introduced)** *Columba livia* Noted occasionally.

**Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis* Mainly around Kota Kinabalu.

**Little Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia ruficeps* Nice looks in the Crocker Range and on Mount Kinabalu.

**Common Emerald Dove (Asian E D)** *Chalcophaps indica* Heard only at Danum.

**Zebra Dove (introduced)** *Geopelia striata* Common around Kota Kinabalu.

**Little Green Pigeon** *Treron olax* One male initially, then half a dozen in a tree one morning on the Kinabatangan.

**Pink-necked Green Pigeon** *Treron vernans* Some around Kota Kinabalu, more along the Kinabatangan.

**Thick-billed Green Pigeon** *Treron curvirostra* Picked up a few in Danum through the scope.

**Green Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula aenea* Abundant around Kota Kinabalu, especially at Tg Aru.

**Mountain Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula badia* Some seen well on Mount Kinabalu.

**Short-toed Coucal** ◊ *Centropus rectunguis* As usual, heard only at Danum. We gave it a good shot though! **(H)**

**Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis* Heard in the palm oil plantations near the Kinabatangan. **(H)**

**Lesser Coucal** *Centropus bengalensis* Also heard in the palm oil near the Kinabatangan. **(H)**

**Bornean Ground Cuckoo** ◊ *Carpococcyx radiceus* Ridiculously good looks calling on a log at the Kinabatangan.

**Raffles's Malkoha** *Rhinorthis chlorophaea* Seen a few times in the lowlands.

**Red-billed Malkoha** *Zanclostomus javanicus* Our best looks were of one at Danum on our second-last day.

**Chestnut-breasted Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus curvirostris* Seen well at Sepilok, noted at Danum.

**Violet Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus* Some brief perched views were nice at Danum – seen in flight daily.



Dark Hawk-Cuckoos are easy to hear on Mount Kinabalu at this time of year, but we got lucky to see this one munching caterpillars!

**Banded Bay Cuckoo** *Cacomantis sonneratii* Heard in the lowlands. (H)  
**Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus* Often heard, with one seen on the Kinabatangan, another in Danum.  
**Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo** *Surniculus lugubris* Commonly heard, good looks of one at Gomantong.  
**Moustached Hawk-Cuckoo** ◊ *Hierococcyx vagans* Finally heard and taped in a responsive bird on the Kinabatangan.  
**Dark Hawk-Cuckoo** ◊ *Hierococcyx bocki* Great looks at a bird feasting on caterpillars at Timphon Gate.  
**Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus* Heard often in the lowlands, and a brief look at Danum as it switched trees.  
**Sunda Cuckoo** *Cuculus lepidus* Great looks at one calling above the road on Kinabalu.  
**Oriental Bay Owl** *Phodilus badius* Heard on multiple occasions, brief looks at Sepilok and on the Kinabatangan.  
**Reddish Scops Owl** ◊ *Otus rufescens* Heard only this time, on the Kinabatangan and at Danum. (H)  
**Mountain Scops Owl** *Otus spilocephalus* It took a while, but we did nail views of this tricky one on Kinabalu.  
**Sunda Scops Owl** *Otus lempiji* Good looks at eye-level on our first night of spotlighting near Kota Kinabalu.  
**Barred Eagle-Owl** ◊ *Bubo sumatranus* Two birds showing superbly near Kota Kinabalu.  
**Buffy Fish Owl** *Ketupa ketupu* Multiple birds along the Kinabatangan at night.  
**Brown Wood Owl (Bornean W O)** *Strix leptogrammica* Seen at point-blank above our heads on the Kinabatangan.  
**Collared Owlet** ◊ (Sunda O) *Glaucidium [brodiei] sylvaticum* Just one heard distantly on Kinabalu. (H)  
**Large Frogmouth** ◊ *Batrachostomus auritus* Nice looks on the Kinabatangan early one morning.  
**Gould's Frogmouth** ◊ *Batrachostomus stellatus* Stellar close-ups without much effort at all in Danum!  
**Sunda Frogmouth** ◊ *Batrachostomus cornutus* One male taped in on the Danum entrance road.  
**Malaysian Eared Nightjar** *Lyncornis temminckii* One heard flying above our boat on the Kinabatangan pre-dawn. (H)  
**Grey-rumped Treeswift** *Hemiprocne longipennis* Numerous at Sepilok in particular.  
**Whiskered Treeswift** *Hemiprocne comata* A fantastic bird this one, quite common in Danum.  
**Plume-toed Swiftlet** *Collocalia affinis* Abundant in the lowlands.  
**Bornean Swiftlet** ◊ *Collocalia dodgei* Some studied at the highest reaches of Kinabalu.  
**Mossy-nest Swiftlet** ◊ *Aerodramus salangana* Some on their green mossy nests in Gomantong.  
**Black-nest Swiftlet** ◊ *Aerodramus maximus* Some on their dark grey or black nests in Gomantong.  
**Edible-nest Swiftlet** *Aerodramus fuciphagus* Just five on pure white nests in a tiny alcove in Gomantong.  
**Silver-rumped Spinetail (S-r Swift)** *Rhaphidura leucopygialis* Common in Danum.  
**House Swift** *Apus nipalensis* One in transit near Sepilok. (NL)



*This exquisite male Diard's Trogon perched right by the path for us at Sepilok!*

**Red-naped Trogon *Harpactes kasumba*** It was overdue, but we had great looks at Danum on our fourth day.

**Diard's Trogon *Harpactes diardii*** Seen multiple times, most beautifully at Sepilok.

**Whitehead's Trogon** ♦ *Harpactes whiteheadi* Two (different?) males seen in the lower reaches of Kinabalu.

**Scarlet-rumped Trogon *Harpactes duvaucelii*** One flashy male above the boat on the Kinabatangan.

**Oriental Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*** Common, especially along the Kinabatangan.

**Banded Kingfisher** ♦ (Black-faced K) *Lacedo [pulchella] melanops* One female just before lunch on our last day.

**Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*** Noted in Danum and along the Kinabatangan.

**Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris*** Great looks of one bird in particular at Lok Kwai.

**Blue-eared Kingfisher *Alcedo meninting*** Spotlit at Sepilok, and common along the Kinabatangan.

**Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (Rufous-backed K) *Ceyx [erithaca] rufidorsa*** Great looks of a perched bird at Poring.

**Red-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctyornis amictus*** One seen well along the Danum entrance road.

**Blue-throated Bee-eater *Merops viridis*** Regular between Sepilok and Danum.

**White-crowned Hornbill** ♦ *Berenicornis comatus* Four birds showing particularly nicely on the Kinabatangan.

**Rhinoceros Hornbill *Buceros rhinoceros*** Regularly seen whooshing overhead – a cracking bird!

**Helmeted Hornbill** ♦ *Rhinoplax vigil* A pair enjoyed at length above the road in Danum. Heard most days there.

**Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris*** Common on the Kinabatangan.

**Black Hornbill *Anthracoceros malayanus*** One male at Sepilok, more on the Kinabatangan and at Danum.

**Bushy-crested Hornbill *Anorrhinus galeritus*** Nice eye-level views from the walkway at Sepilok, noted elsewhere.

**Wreathed Hornbill *Rhyticeros undulatus*** In flight over the Kinabatangan, perched in the scope at Danum.

**Wrinkled Hornbill** ♦ *Rhabdotorrhinus corrugatus* Fairly common in the afternoon on the Kinabatangan.



One last excellent low-down barbet – this one is a Red-throated Barbet from the Crocker Ranges!

**Golden-whiskered Barbet** ♦ (Golden-faced B) *Psilopogon [chrysopogon] chrysopsis* One seen at Danum.

**Red-throated Barbet *Psilopogon mystacophanos*** Two showing very well in the Crocker Range, some at Danum.

**Mountain Barbet** ♦ *Psilopogon monticola* Great looks at this endemic in the Crocker Range.

**Yellow-crowned Barbet *Psilopogon henricii*** Rare eye-level views of this one from the Danum canopy walkway.

**Golden-naped Barbet** ♦ *Psilopogon pulcherrimus* This montane endemic was seen a few times on Mount Kinabalu.

**Blue-eared Barbet *Psilopogon duvaucelii*** Commonly heard, seen best at Sepilok.

**Bornean Barbet** ♦ *Psilopogon eximius* Tricky in the Crocker Ranges, but everyone saw it in the scope eventually.

**Brown Barbet** ♦ (Bornean B B) *Caloramphus fuliginosus* First seen at Sepilok, great views on the Kinabatangan.



*Checker-throated Woodpeckers are not uncommon on Kinabalu, but seeing one well takes patience!*

- Rufous Piculet** *Sasia abnormis* One at Sepilok in some scrubby bamboo, another at Danum.
- Grey-and-buff Woodpecker** *Hemicircus [concretus] sordidus* Just one perched on a dead snag at Sepilok.
- White-bellied Woodpecker** *Dryocopus javensis* Splendidly close-up views of a male on the Kinabatangan.
- Banded Woodpecker** *Chrysophlegma miniaceum* Multiple individuals at Sepilok.
- Checker-throated Woodpecker (C-t Yellownape)** *Chrysophlegma [mentale] humii* Multiple birds on Kinabalu.
- Olive-backed Woodpecker** ♦ *Dinopium rafflesii* Magnificent views of a responsive male in Danum.
- Maroon Woodpecker** *Blythipicus rubiginosus* Noted on Kinabalu and in Danum.
- Orange-backed Woodpecker** *Reinwardtipicus validus* Just one family group seen twice in Danum.
- Rufous Woodpecker** *Micropternus brachyurus* Briefly in the canopy at Sepilok, more on the Kinabatangan.
- Buff-rumped Woodpecker** *Meiglyptes [tristis] grammithorax* Just one at Danum on the entrance road.
- Buff-necked Woodpecker** *Meiglyptes tukki* Quite a few at Sepilok this year.
- Great Slaty Woodpecker** *Mulleripicus pulverulentus* Two perched up at length on a dead tree at Sepilok.
- White-fronted Falconet** ♦ *Microhierax latifrons* Two much appreciated individuals on the Kinabatangan.
- Blue-rumped Parrot** *Psittinus cyanurus* At least a dozen flyovers during late afternoons at Danum.
- Blue-naped Parrot** ♦ *Tanygnathus lucionensis* A handful at Tg Aru Beach as usual.
- Long-tailed Parakeet** ♦ *Psittacula longicauda* Stupendous looks at Tg Aru.
- Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot** *Loriculus galgulus* Perched looks on the Kinabatangan, and in Danum.
- Green Broadbill** *Calyptomena viridis* One male fortuitously appeared on one of the trails at Danum.
- Whitehead's Broadbill** ♦ *Calyptomena whiteheadi* Two of these fluorescent gems seen twice near their nest.
- Black-and-red Broadbill** *Cymbirhynchus macrorhynchos* These pretty birds were seen along the Kinabatangan.
- Long-tailed Broadbill** *Psarisomus dalhousiae* Two on our first birding session in the Crocker Range.
- Banded Broadbill** *Eurylaimus javanicus* Two seen very well at Poring, heard elsewhere.
- Black-and-yellow Broadbill** *Eurylaimus ochromalus* One of the common sounds in Borneo, seen well at Sepilok.
- Dusky Broadbill** *Corydon sumatranus* One big noisy flock along the river in Danum.
- Blue-headed Pitta** ♦ *Hydrornis baudii* Multiple observations of this endemic stunner in Danum.
- Blue-banded Pitta** ♦ *Erythropitta arquata* We gave it a shot, but heard only this time. Easier in Sarawak. (H)
- Black-crowned Pitta** ♦ *Erythropitta ussheri* Heard in Danum, but stupendous views at midday on the Kinabatangan.
- Hooded Pitta** ♦ (Western H P) *Pitta sordida* Two individuals along the Kinabatangan performed nicely.

**Black-winged Flycatcher-shrike** *Hemipus hirundinaceus* Noted at Sepilok and on the Kinabatangan.

**Large Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis virgatus* Just two in a feeding flock at Danum.

**Rufous-winged Philentoma** *Philentoma pyrhoptera* Seen a few times along the trails in Danum.

**Maroon-breasted Philentoma** *Philentoma velata* A superb male at Danum gave lovely views along the road.

**Bornean Bristlehead** ◊ *Pityriasis gymnocephala* The biggest frustration of the tour – heard only at Danum. (H)

**White-breasted Woodswallow** *Artamus leucorhynchus* Common around Kota Kinabalu.

**Green lora** *Aegithina viridissima* Two very cooperative individuals at Sepilok, showing at eye-level!

**Fiery Minivet** ◊ *Pericrocotus igneus* Some at Sepilok.

**Grey-chinned Minivet (Grey-throated M)** *Pericrocotus [solaris] montanus* Noted almost daily on Kinabalu.

**Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus speciosus* Just one at Sepilok.

**Sunda Cuckooshrike** ◊ *Coracina larvata* Small numbers on Mount Kinabalu.

**Pied Triller** *Lalage nigra* Best seen on our first day around Kota Kinabalu.

**Lesser Cuckooshrike** *Lalage fimbriata* Two in Danum showed well, others head.

**Bornean Whistler** ◊ *Pachycephala hypoxantha* Regular in feeding flocks on Kinabalu.

**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* One in farmland near Kinabalu of the endemic Bornean race.

**White-bellied Erpornis** *Erpornis zantholeuca* Some on our first afternoon at Kinabalu, not seen again until Danum.

**Blyth's Shrike-babbler** *Pteruthius aeralatus* Multiple birds on Mount Kinabalu.

**Dark-throated Oriole** *Oriolus xanthonotus* One in Danum on the entrance road.

**Black-and-crimson Oriole** ◊ *Oriolus cruentus* Quite common in the Crocker Range on our first day in the mountains.

**Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Daily on Kinabalu.

**Bronzed Drongo** *Dicrurus aeneus* Two singletons in Danum.

**Hair-crested Drongo (Bornean Spangled D, B Blue D)** *Dicrurus [hottentottus] borneensis* Regular on Kinabalu.

**Greater Racket-tailed Drongo (G Racquet-t D)** *Dicrurus paradiseus* Some seen in the lowlands, often heard.

**White-throated Fantail** *Rhipidura albicollis* Nice views in the Crocker Ranges and on Kinabalu.

**Malaysian Pied Fantail (Sunda P F)** *Rhipidura javanica* Noted around Kota Kinabalu and at Gomantong.

**Spotted Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura perlata* Lovely views at Gomantong and in Danum.

**Black-naped Monarch** *Hypothymis azurea* Regularly observed in lowland forest.

**Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher (Asian P F)** *Terpsiphone affinis* Some lovely white morphs in Danum.

**Crested Jay (Jay Shrike)** *Platylophus galericulatus* Brief looks at this skulker in Danum on our last day.



*The endemic Charlotte's Bulbul is a recent split from the similar Buff-vented Bulbul of Peninsula Malaysia.*

**Black Magpie** ◊ (Bornean B M) *Platysmurus [leucopterus] aterrimus* Some excellent views in Danum.

**Bornean Green Magpie** ◊ *Cissa jefferyi* Quite common and very striking on Kinabalu.

**Bornean Treepie** ◊ *Dendrocitta cinerascens* Regularly encountered on Kinabalu.

**Slender-billed Crow** *Corvus enca* Noted throughout the lowlands.

**Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Two on our last day in Danum.

**Straw-headed Bulbul** ◊ *Pycnonotus zeylanicus* Critically endangered, seen on the Kinabatangan, heard in Danum.

**Black-headed Bulbul** *Pycnonotus atriceps* Common in the lowlands.

**Bornean Bulbul** ◊ *Pycnonotus montis* A handful located in the Crocker Range.

**Puff-backed Bulbul** ◊ *Pycnonotus eutilotus* Heard in Danum a few times, good looks at two on a trail.

**Flavescent Bulbul** ◊ (Pale-faced B) *Pycnonotus [flavescens] leucops* A handful of this distinct form on Kinabalu.

**Yellow-vented Bulbul** (Sunda Y-v B) *Pycnonotus [goiavier] analis* Common throughout.

**Cream-eyed Bulbul** ◊ *Pycnonotus pseudosimplex* One of this newly described species in Danum.

**Cream-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus simplex* The common bulbul seen most days in the lowlands.

**Asian Red-eyed Bulbul** *Pycnonotus brunneus* Similar to Cream-vented, some identified at Gomantong and Danum.

**Spectacled Bulbul** *Pycnonotus erythrophthalmos* Fairly common in the lowlands.

**Finsch's Bulbul** ◊ *Alophoixus finschii* Two at Danum on our first afternoon.

**Ochraceous Bulbul** ◊ (Chestnut-vented B) *Alophoixus [ochraceus] ruficrissus* Common in the highlands.

**Grey-cheeked Bulbul** ◊ (Guttural B) *Alophoixus [bres] gutturalis* Some at Poring, and at Danum.

**Yellow-bellied Bulbul** *Alophoixus phaeocephalus* Noted a Sepilok and at Danum.

**Hairy-backed Bulbul** ◊ (Sabah H-b B) *Tricholestes [criniger] viridis* Some at Poring, Sepilok, and Danum.

**Charlotte's Bulbul** ◊ (Buff-vented B) *Iole charlottae* Good numbers of this newly split endemic in Danum.

**Streaked Bulbul** *Ixos malaccensis* Two at Poring in a big bulbul congregation.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* Noted throughout.

**Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica* Noted throughout.

**Mountain Tailorbird** (M Leaftoiler) *Phyllergates cucullatus* Some on Mount Kinabalu.

**Sunda Bush Warbler** *Horornis vulcanius* Great looks at one bold individual on Kinabalu.

**Bornean Stubtail** ◊ *Urosphena whiteheadi* Often heard, some great looks at one on the path.

**Yellow-breasted Warbler** *Phylloscopus montis* Abundant on Kinabalu in most feeding flocks.



While the endemic Friendly Bush Warbler is still off-limits after the 2015 earthquake, we had excellent views of Sunda Bush Warbler!

**Mountain Leaf Warbler (M Warbler)** *Phylloscopus trivirgatus* Regularly on Kinabalu.  
**Striated Grassbird** *Megalurus palustris* A few in the fields near Papar.  
**Yellow-bellied Prinia** ◊ (Bornean P) *Prinia [flaviventris] latrunculus* Common throughout the lowlands.  
**Dark-necked Tailorbird** *Orthotomus atrogularis* Some seen well in Danum.  
**Rufous-tailed Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sericeus* Best seen at Poring, others elsewhere.  
**Ashy Tailorbird** *Orthotomus ruficeps* Common throughout.  
**Chestnut-backed Scimitar Babbler** ◊ (Sunda S B) *Pomatorhinus [montanus] bornensis* Good looks at Poring.  
**Grey-throated Babbler (Montane B)** *Stachyris [nigriceps] larvata* Abundant in the mountains.  
**Grey-headed Babbler** *Stachyris poliocephala* Just one bird searched out at Poring.  
**Chestnut-rumped Babbler** *Stachyris maculata* Tricky to see well, but eventually got one in the open at Danum.  
**Black-throated Babbler** ◊ *Stachyris nigricollis* Heard in a dense thicket at Gomantong, couldn't get a view. (H)  
**Chestnut-winged Babbler** ◊ (Grey-hooded B) *Stachyris [erythroptera] bicolor* Some at Sepilok and Danum.  
**Rufous-fronted Babbler** ◊ (Sunda Leaf B) *Stachyridopsis [rufifrons] poliogaster* Seen well at Danum.  
**Bold-striped Tit-Babbler** ◊ *Macronus bornensis* Seen well at Danum.  
**Fluffy-backed Tit-Babbler** *Macronus ptilosus* Excellent views of this attractive bird at Poring.  
**Brown Fulvetta** ◊ (Bornean F) *Alcippe [brunneicauda] eriphaea* Abundant in Danum.  
**Bornean Wren-Babbler** ◊ *Ptilocichla leucogrammica* One individual coaxed out in Danum for great views.  
**Black-throated Wren-Babbler** ◊ *Napothera atrigularis* A family party showed uncharacteristically well in Danum.  
**Mountain Wren-Babbler** ◊ *Napothera crassa* Some very friendly parties on Mount Kinabalu.  
**Horsfield's Babbler** ◊ *Malacocincla [sepiaria] rufiventris* Just a few in Danum.  
**Short-tailed Babbler** ◊ (Leaflitter B) *Malacocincla malaccensis* A single individual was seen by the group in Danum.  
**Moustached Babbler** ◊ (Sabah M B) *Malacopteron [magnirostre] cinereocapilla* Some at Poring, more in Danum.  
**Sooty-capped Babbler** *Malacopteron affine* Good looks at this somewhat arboreal species in Danum.  
**Scaly-crowned Babbler** *Malacopteron cinereum* Two at Gomantong, then more at Danum.  
**Rufous-crowned Babbler** *Malacopteron magnum* First seen at Poring, then again in babbler-capital Danum!  
**White-chested Babbler** *Trichastoma rostratum* Common along the Kinabatangan.  
**Ferruginous Babbler** *Trichastoma bicolor* A few nice views of this pretty babbler in Danum.  
**Striped Wren-Babbler** *Kenopia striata* This one is a real looker, we had three foraging by the path in Danum.



*Sunda Laughingthrush is a regularly encountered species on Mount Kinabalu.*

**Temminck's Babbler** ◊ *Pellorneum pyrogenys* Somewhat challenging this year, but eventually seen on Kinabalu.  
**Black-capped Babbler** ◊ (Bornean B-c B) *Pellorneum [capistratum] capistratoides* Excellent views at Gomantong.  
**Sunda Laughingthrush** ◊ *Garrulax palliatus* Regularly encountered on Mount Kinabalu.  
**Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush** ◊ *Garrulax treacheri* Common in feeding flocks on Mount Kinabalu.  
**Bare-headed Laughingthrush** ◊ *Garrulax calvus* Seen at least four times on Kinabalu, but always sneaky!  
**Chestnut-crested Yuhina** ◊ *Yuhina everetti* Abundant in large swirling flocks on Kinabalu.  
**Pygmy White-eye** ◊ (P Ibon, P Heleia) *Oculocincta squamifrons* A small party observed well in the Crocker Range.  
**Mountain Blackeye** ◊ *Chlorocharis emiliae* With upper levels of Kinabalu now closed, we worked hard for this one!  
**Black-capped White-eye** ◊ *Zosterops atricapilla* Many on Kinabalu, with one flock finally including the above species!  
**Asian Fairy-bluebird** *Irena puella* A few individuals in Danum, both males and females.  
**Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** *Sitta frontalis* Nice looks at Sepilok, and at the Gomantong carpark!  
**Asian Glossy Starling** *Aplonis panayensis* Noted around Kota Kinabalu.  
**Common Hill Myna** *Gracula religiosa* Noted throughout the lowlands, best on the Kinabatangan.  
**Javan Myna (introduced)** *Acridotheres javanicus* A regular roadside bird between Sepilok and Lahad Datu.  
**Everett's Thrush** ◊ *Zoothera everetti* A superbly confiding bird on the upper slopes of Kinabalu.  
**Eyebrowed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* One found flicking leaves off the trail one morning on Kinabalu.  
**Fruithunter** ◊ *Chlamydochaera jefferyi* We only heard this endemic once as it passed by in thick fog – frustrating! (H)  
**Oriental Magpie-Robin (Black M R)** *Copsychus [sularis] amoenus* Regularly encountered.  
**Rufous-tailed Shama** ◊ *Copsychus pyrrropygus* Heard a few times in Danum, eventually seen well on a trail.  
**White-crowned Shama** ◊ *Copsychus stricklandii* Regularly heard, seen well at Poring and in Danum.  
**Dark-sided Flycatcher (Siberian F)** *Muscicapa sibirica* Some in Mount Kinabalu, another in Danum.  
**Brown-streaked Flycatcher (Umber F)** *Muscicapa [williamsoni] umbrosa* This rarity was seen in Danum.  
**Pale Blue Flycatcher** ◊ *Cyornis [unicolor] harterti* Can be difficult to pin down, but one performed nicely in Danum.  
**Sunda Blue Flycatcher** ◊ (Large-billed B F) *Cyornis caeruleatus* One male very nicely perched at Danum.  
**Bornean Blue Flycatcher** ◊ *Cyornis superbus* Positively numerous in Danum by voice, but seen well only twice.  
**Malaysian Blue Flycatcher** ◊ *Cyornis turcosus* Common along the Kinabatangan.



Malaysian Blue Flycatchers (left) ply the shoreline of the Kinabatangan River, but the canopy-dwelling "Umber" Brown-streaked Flycatcher (right) is a very rarely observed bird. It will likely be split off as a Sundaic endemic in the near future.



*Grey-chested Jungle Flycatcher is a fairly unobtrusive species which we were lucky to find in Danum this year.*

- Grey-chested Jungle Flycatcher** ◊ *Cyornis umbratilis* One in Danum was a good pickup.  
**Blue-and-white Flycatcher** *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* Two in the Crocker Ranges, one on Kinabalu.  
**Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassinus* Just one this year in Danum.  
**Indigo Flycatcher** ◊ (Rufous-vented F) *Eumyias [indigo] ruficrissa* Fairly common on Kinabalu.  
**White-browed Shortwing** ◊ (Bornean S) *Brachypteryx [montana] erythrogyna* Pending split, seen well on Kinabalu.  
**Eyebrowed Jungle Flycatcher** ◊ *Vauriella gularis* Taxonomic enigma, the name should change soon! Seen Kinabalu.  
**Chestnut-naped Forktail** ◊ *Enicurus ruficapillus* Superb looks at this beautiful species on the road at Danum.  
**White-crowned Forktail** ◊ *Enicurus leschenaulti* Two at Danum showing well on the road.  
**Bornean Forktail** ◊ *Enicurus borneensis* A few observations along the stream at Kinabalu HQ.



*This Bornean Forktail on Kinabalu is one of the many birds which are taking part in a decade-long university study on longevity.*

**Bornean Whistling Thrush** ◊ *Myophonus borneensis* Regularly encountered on Kinabalu.  
**Narcissus Flycatcher** *Ficedula narcissina* One male in the Crocker Range, another in Danum.  
**Mugimaki Flycatcher** *Ficedula mugimaki* One male in the Crocker Range, and another on Kinabalu.  
**Rufous-chested Flycatcher** ◊ *Ficedula dumetoria* Just the one in Danum.  
**Snowy-browed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hyperythra* Regularly encountered on Kinabalu.  
**Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni* A common sound in the forests of Kinabalu, some seen well.  
**Pygmy Flycatcher (P Blue F)** *Muscicapella hodgsoni* One pair building a nest by the road showed very nicely.  
**Greater Green Leafbird** *Chloropsis sonnerati* Picked up a nice female in Danum showing diagnostic features!  
**Lesser Green Leafbird** *Chloropsis cyanopogon* Noted a few times, seen best in Danum.  
**Bornean Leafbird** ◊ *Chloropsis kinabaluensis* Only one individual this year, early in the morning at Crocker.  
**Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker** *Prionochilus maculatus* Noted a few individuals in Danum.  
**Yellow-rumped Flowerpecker** ◊ *Prionochilus xanthopygius* This endemic was seen well at Sepilok and Danum.  
**Orange-bellied Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum trigonostigma* Common throughout – keep an eye on the taxonomy!  
**Black-sided Flowerpecker** ◊ *Dicaeum monticulum* None for two days, but in the end saw multiple birds on Kinabalu.



Another Bornean endemic, this Yellow-rumped Flowerpecker was picking small worms out of these flower near our lodge in Danum.

**Ruby-cheeked Sunbird** *Chalcoparia singalensis* Individuals at Sepilok, the Kinabatangan, and Danum.  
**Plain Sunbird** *Anthreptes simplex* Two individuals in Danum.  
**Brown-throated Sunbird** *Anthreptes malacensis* Seen very nicely from the canopy walkway at Sepilok.  
**Red-throated Sunbird** *Anthreptes rhodolaemus* Noted in the lowlands once or twice.  
**Purple-naped Sunbird** *Hypogramma hypogrammicum* Some in the forests of Danum.  
**Van Hasselt's Sunbird** *Leptocoma brasiliana* Two whizzing over at Gomantong and Danum. **(LO)**  
**Olive-backed Sunbird (Ornate S)** *Cinnyris [jugularis] ornatus* Only on our first day near Kota Kinabalu.  
**Crimson Sunbird (Lesser C S)** *Aethopyga siparaja* Common around Sepilok and Danum.  
**Temminck's Sunbird** *Aethopyga temminckii* Fantastic looks in the Crocker Ranges, more on Kinabalu.  
**Little Spiderhunter** *Arachnothera longirostra* Common throughout, good looks at Danum.  
**Yellow-eared Spiderhunter** *Arachnothera chrysogenys* Only this partially eye-ringed species was seen.  
**Bornean Spiderhunter** ◊ *Arachnothera everetti* Great looks at Crocker, and more in Danum.  
**Whitehead's Spiderhunter** ◊ *Arachnothera juliae* I was getting worried, but three appeared in full view at Kinabalu.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow (introduced) *Passer montanus*** Noted in the lowlands.  
**Dusky Munia** ◊ *Lonchura fuscans* Quite common wherever grass was seeding.  
**Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*** Noted near Kota Kinabalu.  
**Chestnut Munia *Lonchura atricapilla*** Some near Kota Kinabalu, others on the drive in to Danum.  
**Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*** One in the Crocker Ranges.  
**Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*** Two on the Lahad Datu airstrip at the end of the tour.



*Sunda Stink Badgers proved common at Bilit Rainforest Lodge on the Kinabatangan after the lights had gone out for the night!*

## MAMMALS

**Total number of mammal species recorded: 33**

**Asian Elephant (Indian E) *Elephas maximus*** At least two dozen on the road in to Danum.  
**Mountain Treeshrew *Tupaia montana*** Quite common on Mount Kinabalu.  
**Philippine Slow Loris (Bornean S L) *Nycticebus menagensis*** One very cute individual on a night drive at Danum.  
**Crab-eating Macaque (Crab-eating M) *Macaca fascicularis*** Abundant along the Kinabatangan.  
**Southern Pig-tailed Macaque *Macaca nemestrina*** Some along the Kinabatangan.  
**Proboscis Monkey *Nasalis larvatus*** Many large family groups in the evenings along the Kinabatangan.  
**Maroon Langur (M Leaf Monkey, Red L M) *Presbytis rubicunda*** Some at Gomantong, and at Danum.  
**Silvered Langur (Silvered Langur, S Leaf Monkey) *Trachypithecus cristatus*** Just a few on the Kinabatangan.  
**Müller's Gibbon *Hylobates muelleri*** Heard throughout the lowlands, eventually seen in Danum.  
**Bornean Orangutan *Pongo pygmaeus*** One at Sepilok, another in Danum.  
**Short-tailed Gymnure (L Moonrat) *Hylomys suillus*** One foraging by the road in the afternoon on Kinabalu.  
**Thomas's Flying Squirrel *Aeromys thomasi*** One at Sepilok, another in Danum.  
**Kinabalu Squirrel *Callosciurus baluensis*** A few seen on, unsurprisingly, Mount Kinabalu.  
**Plantain Squirrel *Callosciurus notatus*** Just one on the Kinabatangan in some palm oil.  
**Borneo Black-banded Squirrel *Callosciurus orestes*** Some on Kinabalu.  
**Prevost's Squirrel *Callosciurus prevostii*** Common in the lowlands.  
**Bornean Mountain Ground Squirrel *Dremomys everetti*** Noted on Mount Kinabalu only.

**Least Pygmy Squirrel** *Exilisciurus exilis* Very cute, but somehow noisy! Noted on the Kinabatangan, and Danum.

**Tufted Pygmy Squirrel** *Exilisciurus whiteheadi* A really cool squirrel, seen a few times on Kinabalu.

**Common Giant Flying Squirrel** *Petaurista petaurista* Our best looks were at Danum, including a few glides!

**Pale Giant Squirrel (Cream-coloured G S)** *Ratufa affinis* A few at Sepilok in the afternoon.

**Tufted Ground Squirrel** *Rheithrosciurus macrotis* One of the rarest mammals in Borneo, we saw one in Danum.

**Horse-tailed Squirrel** *Sundasciurus hippurus* One in Danum, a bit like a tiny Tufted Ground Squirrel!

**Jentink's Squirrel** *Sundasciurus jentinki* Some on Mount Kinabalu.

**Masked Palm Civet** *Paguma larvata* One briefly on Kinabalu.

**Common Palm Civet** *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* One on the Kinabatangan, one at Danum.

**Malay Civet** *Viverra zibetha* One on our last night drive at Danum.

**Sunda Stink-badger (Malay Badger)** *Mydaus javanensis* Two in the grounds of Bilit Rainforest Lodge at night.

**Smooth-coated Otter** *Lutrogale perspicillata* Two of these fairly rare otters on the Kinabatangan.

**Lesser Oriental Chevrotain (L Mouse-Deer)** *Tragulid kanchil* On the Kinabatangan, and in Danum.

**Greater Oriental Chevrotain (G Malay Chevrotain)** *Tragulus napu* A larger, browner species, seen once at Danum.

**Sambar** *Rusa unicolor* Two on the roadside at Danum during a night drive.

**Wrinkle-lipped Free-tailed Bat** *Chaerephon plicatus* Millions exiting Gomantong Caves at dusk.



*Birding in the forests of Malaysian Borneo is certainly one of the best wildlife experiences to be had in Asia!*