

Wild Borneo! Endemic Birding & Nature Species List | Sept. 30 – Oct. 14, 2025 with Naturalist Journeys



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You've heard it before: "Wow, what an amazing tour!" But what distinguishes one amazing tour from another? What makes a tour truly world-class or the proverbial 'trip of a lifetime'? Our 2025 tour to Malaysian Borneo found 36 of the island's 63 endemic birds. We saw 32 mammal species, including an amazing 24 endemics. Elephants, hornbills, orangutans, and an astonishing 18 raptor species. From the highest peak in southeastern Asia to massive trees that pierce the sky. All of these things define a world-class nature experience.

Below I have listed the birds, mammals, herptiles, and other critters that we encountered this year in Borneo. The abundance of special wildlife on the world's third largest island will reveal itself here. We will return next year, giving you the chance to experience Borneo for yourself. Treat yourself to world-class nature!

KEY

(E) = Borneo Endemic

(e) = Borneo Endemic subspecies

K River = Main stem Kinabatangan River

IUCN = International Union for the Conservation of Nature & Natural Resources

LBPS = Labuk Bay Proboscis Monkey Sanctuary

MSW3 = Mammal Species of the World, 3rd Edition

RDC = Rainforest Discovery Center in Sepilok

SBCC = Sepilok Sun Bear Conservation Center

SORC = Sepilok Orangutan Rehab Center

SRL = Sukau Rainforest Lodge

TWR = Tabin Wildlife Reserve

BIRDS (254 species)

Borneo offers a broad tropical birding experience with repeated looks at many special birds. Endemics abound, and this year we found more than half of the 60+ occurring on the island. On the first day alone, we found 18 endemic birds! Besides the endemic species, we encountered dozens of Greater Sunda specialty birds, those that only occur in Borneo, Java, Sumatra, and peninsular Malaysia. Among these were some of our 39 Bornean endemic subspecies—combined with the endemic species, that makes 75 endemics out of 254 total birds, almost one-third of our final tally. We averaged about 50 species per day—though a modest number for the tropics, it makes the birding manageable and fulfilling for all levels of birder.

We enjoyed our most diverse birding at the Tabin Wildlife Reserve, where we found 71 species on a single day, including five hornbills and two endemic pittas. Special bird experiences abounded. We watched three Great Slaty Woodpeckers—the world’s largest—calling and displaying very close to the road; their elaborate spread-wing display accentuates their massive size. We found four endemic Mountain Serpent-Eagles, a species that is easy to miss in the mountains. We’ll never forget our Whitehead’s Trogon experience, when we spotted a pair of birds just as the sky burst into a massive downpour. We found 36 Rhinoceros Hornbills, the most iconic of member this family among Borneo’s diverse cultures. And a small flock of the Borneo ‘grail bird’, the Bornean Bristlehead—representing an endemic and monotypic family—fed right over our heads at the Sepilok Orangutan sanctuary.

Click the link below to access the master eBird trip report. Once you reach the report, you will first see the list of the 254 species we encountered, in taxonomic order. Clicking on the name of any species will take you to the eBird reference page for that bird. Clicking the green icons to the right will show you checklists from all the birding spots where each species was encountered, and these listings link to the checklists themselves. Back on the main page, you can access the complete set of 56 checklists from the tour by clicking the blue box at the top.

[Wild Borneo! | Sept. 30 – Oct. 14, 2025 | eBird Trip Report](#)

MAMMALS: Class Mammalia — (32) species total

Taxonomy below follows iNaturalist, with additional references from Phillipps & Phillipps, Mammals Species of the World, 3rd Edition (MSW3), and others. Conservation statuses from iucnredlist.org; those species with no status listed are of Least Concern. If no subspecies is listed, the species is considered monotypic.

ELEPHANTS: ORDER PROBOSCIDEA, FAMILY ELEPHANTIDAE

“Bornean Pygmy” Sumatran Elephant (? , see below) *Elephas maximus* (ssp. *sumatranus*?) — (2)

We enjoyed a couple of fun elephant encounters, both heard and seen. Our first occurred when we were standing at the Lipad mud “volcano” at Tabin Wildlife Reserve. We were curiously learning about the mud, minerals, and gasses that well up to the surface here, when we heard a loud trumpeting from just inside the edge of the jungle, followed by the sound of crashing trees. Our guide reacted immediately, and he swiftly ushered us away from the open area and back down the trail to the vehicles. From the call, he determined that this was an adult male, and Tabin safety protocol dictates that all persons nearby must immediately get to safety to avoid any danger. We missed the visual, but it was an exciting encounter nonetheless! The second time was the charm, when—from our boat—we watched two young males drinking and feeding around a mud puddle on the shore of the K River. One of the most iconic wildlife sightings from Borneo.

The Bornean endemic subspecies was first described in 1950, but it was later thought to be a feral population from purported introductions to the island in the 18th century. However, in 2003, the species was proposed to be returned to subspecies status based on DNA evidence showing Pleistocene colonization. The authors of MSW3, however, did not retain the subspecies designation because of the minimal morphological differences between this form and those from Sumatra; hence the nomenclature

used here. Regardless of the taxonomic distinction of the Bornean population, all Asian elephants (E. maximus) are listed as Endangered by the IUCN.

GREAT APES: ORDER PRIMATES, FAMILY HOMINIDAE, SUBFAMILY PONGINAE

“Northeast” Bornean Orangutan (E) *Pongo pygmaeus* ssp. *morio* — (4)

We first found Borneo’s endemic “man of the forest” at the SRL boardwalk, where a mother and baby fed on figs in a large fruiting tree—which, incidentally, also hosted several hornbill species. We saw another individual on our boat ride between Sukau and Sandakan, but our closest looks came at the SORC nursery, where we watched several mother-baby pairs and two mature males. Surprisingly, no orangutans appeared later, during the scheduled feeding at the main SORC platform.

The Bornean orangutan is listed as Critically Endangered.

GIBBONS: FAMILY HYLOBATIDAE

Northern (“North Bornean”) Gray Gibbon (E/e) *Hylobates muelleri/funereus* — (5)

We saw our first gibbons at TWR, including a small troupe that crossed the river behind—and then over—our cabins. We heard the spooky gibbon calls daily at Tabin and then again at RDC.

There seems to be some uncertainty about the taxonomy and nomenclature of this form, but regardless of these issues, it is endemic to northern Borneo and is listed as Endangered by IUCN.

OLD WORLD MONKEYS: FAMILY CERCOPITHECIDAE, SUBFAMILIES CERCOPITHECINAE & COLOBINAE

“Common” Long-tailed Macaque *Macaca fascicularis* ssp. *fascicularis* — (9)

Seen daily away from the mountains. This species was the least bold of the two, though we saw several troupes, including mothers carrying babies on their bellies. Macaques never fail to provide a spectacle.

Despite the abundance of Bornean populations, range-wide the species is listed as endangered.

Southern Pig-tailed Macaque *Macaca nemestrina* — (11)

This macaque seemed equally as common as the Long-tailed, but a few individuals were quite bold, including one that seemed a little too comfortable in the dining room at Tabin Resort. We also had to be wary of this species at SRL. We were a little surprised to find a few Pig-tailed at Kinabalu Park, when we were near the upper limit of the species’ range.

As with the Long-tailed, Bornean populations are common, but the species is listed as endangered.

Proboscis Monkey (E) *Nasalis larvatus* — (4)

The strange, endemic proboscis monkeys were a regular presence along the Tenegang, Mabul, and K Rivers, often in family and bachelor groups, but they were totally absent during our visit to LBPS.

Also listed as endangered by the IUCN.

Silvery Lutung (Silvered Leaf Monkey/Langur) *Trachypithecus cristatus* ssp. *cristatus* — (2)

We enjoyed nice looks at this “lutung” twice from the SRL boardwalk.

The nomenclature of this species seems to be in flux, with Lutung possibly the most recently accepted name; regardless, the nominate subspecies is listed as Vulnerable.

“Davis’s” Maroon Leaf Monkey/Langur (Red Leaf Monkey) (E) *Presbytis rubicunda* ssp. *chrysea* — (3)

We were fortunate to see this beautiful endemic three times, once at Gomantong Cave and twice from the canopy walkway at RDC.

Monkeys of this genus are commonly called “Surilis”, but this species retains the older name of “Leaf Monkey” or “Langur”, depending on the source. The Bornean endemic species is listed as Vulnerable by IUCN, but this Sabahan subspecies does not have enough data for a distinct listing.

Sabah Grizzled Langur (E) *Presbytis sabana* — (3)

We were fortunate to see this beautiful endemic three times, once at Gomantong Cave and twice from the canopy walkway at RDC.

*Originally described as a distinct species in 1893, this taxon was then lumped with and considered a subspecies of Hose’s Langur. Today, this species only occurs in eastern Sabah and extreme northeastern Kalamantan, with Hose’s Langur (*P. hosei*) to the west and southwest and Miller’s Langur (*P. canicrus*) to the south, all Bornean endemics. The IUCN lists both the Sabah and Miller’s as endangered.*

TARSIERS: FAMILY Tarsiidae

“Bornean” Horsefield’s Tarsier (e) *Cephalopachus bancanus* ssp. *borneanus* — (1)

It’s always a delight to see this tiny, big-eyed, crafty (it has been recorded catching and eating bats and birds head-first!) primate. We had one fun encounter, when our guide at the RDC found a Tarsier during our night walk in the reserve. Most of the group watched it spring from tree to tree in search of its favorite prey, large insects. I’m hoping someday to see one catch bat!

*Nearly all 14 tarsier species are listed at some level of threat by the IUCN. The Bornean subspecies and its parent, *C. bancanus*, are considered Vulnerable.*

LORISES: FAMILY Lorisidae, SUBFAMILY Lorisinae, GENUS *NYCTICEBUS* (SLOW LORISES)

Philippine Slow Loris (E) *Nycticebus menagensis* — (1)

Just a few minutes before finding the Tarsier at RDC, our local guide shined the spotlight on a tree just off the main path, and we had drop-dead looks at this amazing endemic species, which is considered “scarce” in Borneo. It climbed the tree as if it were a miniature sloth, slowly but deliberately, as we all stood there with our jaws dropped.

*The complicated taxonomy of the slow lorises has evolved—so to speak—considerably since 1770, when the first species was described. Each century brought newly proposed species, but by 2003, MSW3 had the genus down to 3 species. Today, the genus comprises eight distinct species, with three in Borneo: the Bornean (*N. borneanus*), mostly restricted to c. Kalamantan; the Kayan (*N. kayan*), occurring in the highlands of Sabah, n. Sarawak, and n. Kalamantan; and the present species, the Philippine Slow Loris, which is widespread at lower elevations in the northern half of Borneo. The IUCN lists these three species as Vulnerable, with the other five *Nycticebus* spp. as Endangered or Critically Endangered.*

SQUIRRELS: ORDER Rodentia; FAMILY Sciuridae; SUBFAMILIES Ratufinae, Sciurinae, Callosciurinae

“Cream-colored” Pale Giant Squirrel (e) *Ratufa affinis baramensis* — (3)

We found this massive squirrel (one of the world’s largest) twice in the mountains and then once from the canopy walkway at RDC.

One of four races endemic to Borneo, this one restricted to Sabah. Rangewide, the species is listed as

Near Threatened.

Red Giant Flying Squirrel (e) *Petaurista petaurista nigrescens* — (2)

We enjoyed two fun experiences with the red giant. We came upon the first squirrel during our drive back to the lodge one evening at Tabin. This was a surprise encounter (maybe not for the local guide!), and we were thrilled to watch him soar across the road and among the trees. The second event was the traditional one on our first night at RDC, when we watch the squirrels emerge from their installed boxes. *As with the above species, this is one of four subspecies endemic to Borneo, with this one also restricted to Sabah.*

Black Flying Squirrel (e) *Aeromys tephromelas phaeomelas* — (1)

A well-known resident individual popped out of its cavity right on cue during the evening canopy walk at RDC; super-cute critter, with bright pink nose and ears against the black fur. *This Borneo endemic subspecies is a bit of an enigma; the species overall is quite scarce, with several iNaturalist reports from Sabah, only a few from Peninsular Malaysia, and one from Sumatra. The only other species in this genus, Thomas's Flying Squirrel (*A. thomasi*), is endemic to Borneo.*

Tufted Pygmy Squirrel (E) *Exilisciurus whiteheadi* — (1)

Seen well on one morning at Mt. Kinabalu; also called "Whitehead's Pygmy Squirrel."
Endemic to the highlands of Borneo, and almost entirely found in Sabah.

Least Pygmy Squirrel (E) *Exilisciurus exilis* — (3)

First seen near the waterfall at Poring Hot Springs, and then a couple of times on the boardwalk at SRL. *Borneo endemic that is more common than the Tufted, due to a broader elevation range. The two pygmy squirrels here comprise two-thirds of their genus; the third is endemic to the southern Philippines.*

Plaintain Squirrel (e) *Callosciurus notatus suffusus* — (4)

First seen at Tabin, then fairly common at Sukau.
Species in this widespread genus are sometimes called the "beautiful squirrels".

Prevost's Squirrel (e) *Callosciurus prevostii pluto* — (8) Our most common squirrel, seen from Danum to RDC.

One of our most commonly encountered squirrels, especially at low elevations. This subspecies shows a striking pelage, with black upperparts contrasting against an orange belly.
One of three subspecies endemic to Borneo, this one restricted to Sabah.

Ear-spot Squirrel (E) *Callosciurus adamsi* — (1)

Another one of the difficult tree squirrels; we came across this endemic at RDC.
Listed as Near Threatened by IUCN, and almost entirely restricted to Sabah.

Sculptor Squirrel (E) *Glyphotes simus* — (1)

We saw this ear-spotted endemic only once, on our first day in the Crocker Range, at Gunung Alab.
Severely range-restricted, montane Bornean endemic; also, a monotypic genus.

Bornean Mountain Ground Squirrel (E) *Sundasciurus everetti* — (1)

Best looks around the partridge feeding station at Gunung Alab.

Also very range-restricted to montane northern Borneo.

Jentink's Squirrel (E) *Sundasciurus jentinki jentinki* — (3)

Seen most days in the mountains.

We saw the northern nominate of the two endemic subspecies.

Brooke's Squirrel (E) *Sundasciurus brookei* — (2)

Yet another endemic tree squirrel; seen at Poring and then once around Kundasang.

In the end, we found seven of Borneo's 14 endemic squirrels, plus five endemic subspecies.

UNGULATES & RUMINANTS: ORDER ARTIODACTYLA, FAMILY TRAGULIDAE

Lesser Oriental Chevrotain *Tragulus kanchil* — (1)

Also known as 'Lesser Mouse Deer', we had a rare daytime view of this tiny ungulate scurrying through the jungle on our way to the mud 'volcano' at Tabin.

CARNIVORES: ORDER CARNIVORA; FAMILIES FELIDAE, MUSTELIDAE, URSIDAE, VIVERRIDAE

"Bornean" Sunda Leopard Cat (e) *Prionailurus javanensis borneoensis* — (2)

We had excellent looks at this gorgeous small feline on both our night drives at Tabin.

Bornean subspecies, though some authorities lump this one with the Sumatra subspecies.

"Southeast Asian" Small-clawed Otter *Aonyx cinerea concolor* — (2)

We enjoyed the ongoing otter show in the river at Tabin; families cavorted right behind our cabins.

"Southeastern" Smooth-coated Otter () *Lutrogale perspicillata perspicillata* — (1)

One seen 'up close and personal' on the K River.

"Bornean" Sunbear (e) *Helarctos malayanos euryspilus* — (1)

We only saw rehabbed sunbears at the SBCC, but it was still fun to see them in a natural setting.

The Bornean subspecies is widespread but rarely seen; species is listed as Vulnerable by IUCN and represents a monotypic genus.

Philippine (Island) Palm Civet *Paradoxurus philippinensis philippinensis* — (1)

We saw our only palm civet during a night walk at Tabin.

"Common Palm Civet" was recently split into five species.

"Bornean" Malay Civet (e) *Viverra zibetha zibetha* — (1)

Seen once by guide only at Tabin.

Bornean subspecies

BATS: ORDER CHIROPTERA; FAMILIES MOLOSSIDAE & PTEROPODIDAE

Wrinkle-lipped Bat *Mops plicatus plicatus* — (1)

Clouds of bats exited the Gomantong Caves in an evening rainshower.

Large Flying Fox (e) *Pteropus vampyrus natunae* — (3)

Seen twice at Tabin and then again on the K River.

Endemic Bornean subspecies, also on Natuna Is. Species listed as Endangered.

HEDGEHOGS: ORDER EULIPOTYPHILA, FAMILY ERINACEIDAE, SUBFAMILY GALERICINAE

Moonrat (e) *Echinosorex gymnurus albus* — (1)

During a night drive at Tabin, we saw this giant white rat running along a fencerow. Since there are no giant white rats, it had to be a Moonrat! A close cousin of the hedgehogs, this bizarre mammal is rarely seen, despite its white pelage.

Borneo hosts two subspecies, both of which are white; the nominate subspecies on Sumatra and the mainland is typically dark.

Taxonomy for all the critters below follows iNaturalist. For a display of photographed species, visit Steve's iNaturalist page by clicking the link at the bottom.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES: Classes Amphibia and Reptilia — (17) species total

FROGS: ORDER ANURA; FAMILIES HYLIDAE & RANIDAE

Borneo White-lipped Frog *Chalcorana raniceps* — (1)

Rough-sided Frog *Hylarana glandulosa* — (2)

Whipping Frogs *Polypedates* sp. — (1)

CROCODILES: ORDER ANURA; FAMILIES HYLIDAE & RANIDAE

Siamese Crocodile *Crocodylus siamensis*

LIZARDS: ORDER SQUAMATA; FAMILIES GEKKONIDAE, SCINCIDAE, AGAMIDAE, VARANIDAE

Asian House Gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus*

Mourning Gecko *Lepidodactylus lugubris*

Large Forest Gecko *Gekko smithii*

White-banded Narrow-disked Gecko *Gekko albofasciolatus*

Common Sun Skink *Eutropis multifasciata*

Rough Mabuya *Eutropis rudis*

Great Flying Dragon *Draco maximus*

Borneo Forest Dragon (Anglehead) *Gonocephalus borneensis*

'Indomalayan' Common Water Monitor *Varanus salvator macromaculatus*

SNAKES: ORDER SQUAMATA; FAMILIES COLUBRIDAE & VIPERIDAE

Gold-ringed Cat (Mangrove) Snake *Boiga dendrophila annectens*

Banded Flying (Twin-barred Tree) Snake *Chrysopelea pelias*

Brown Rat Snake *Ptyas fusca*

North Philippine Temple Pitviper *Tropidolaemus subannulatus*

MOTHS and BUTTERFLIES: Class Insecta, Order Lepidoptera

Swallowtail moth *Urapteroides astheniata*
Milky Tiger Moth *Areas galactina*
Common Cerulean *Jamides celeno lawasa*—Borneo endemic
Posie butterfly *Drupadia sp.*—Southeast Asian specialty
Bornean Clipper *Parthenos sylvia borneensis*—Endemic to Sabah
Chocolate Pansy *Junonia iphita iphita*
Dark Glassy Tiger *Parantica agleoides borneensis*—Borneo endemic
Norman's Lineblue *Nacaduba normani*—Endemic to Sabah and Sulawesi
Tiny Grass Blue *Zizula hylax*
Rustic butterfly *Cupha erymanthis*
Malayan Birdwing *Troides amphrysus flavicollis*—Borneo endemic
Common Tree Nymph *Idea stollia*—Greater Sunda specialty
Rajah's Brooke's Birdwing *Trogonoptera brookiana brookiana*—Borneo endemic

OTHER NOTABLE TAXA: Insects, Arachnids, Chilopods, and Diplopods

Asian Weaver Ant *Oecophylla smaragdina*
'Black-Legged' Giant Forest Ant *Dinomyrmex gigas gigas*—Greater Sunda specialty
Bihamata-group Fishhook Ants Complex *Polyrhachis bihamata*—Southeast Asia and PNG specialty
Brunnea-group Droptail Ant Complex *Myrmecaria brunnea*
Whitehead's Lantern Bug (E) *Pyrops whiteheadi*—Sabah endemic
Bark Mantises *Humbertiella sp.*
Giant cockroach *Rhabdoblatta sp.*
Common Parasol *Neurothemis fluctuans*—Southeast Asia specialty
Straight-edge Red Parasol *Neurothemis terminata*—Sunda and Philippine specialty
Orange Skimmer *Orthetrum testaceum*—Sunda and Philippine specialty
Giant Honey Bee *Apis dorsata*—India and Southeast Asia
Stick insect *Necroscia sp.*
Nasute termite (nest) *Lacessititermes sp.*—Southeast Asia specialty
Green Flea Beetle (E) *Myrcinoides viridis*—Mt. Kinabalu and Crocker Range endemic
Flat-faced Long-horned Beetle *Gnoma sp.*—Southeast Asia, Philippines, and PNG specialty
Sugarcane White Grub *Lepidiota stigma*—Southeast Asia specialty
True cricket *Nisitrus sp.*—Greater Sunda specialty
Batwing Cicada *Cryptotympana aquila*—Southeast Asia specialty
Cylindroid Tentweb Weaver *Cyrtophora cylindroides*—Southeast Asia specialty
Giant Golden Orbweaver *Nephila pilipes*
Asian Forest Scorpion *Heterometrus longimanus*—Greater Sunda specialty
Long-legged Centipede *Thereuopoda longicornis*
Paradoxical keeled millipede *Gigantomorpha sp.*—13 species, all Borneo endemics