



GONDWANA *Guides*

Specialising in small group and private birdwatching tours
in Australia, Sabah, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea



Tour details...

Price

A\$7800* per person twin-share
Sole use A\$1400.

Inclusions

- All accommodation - Sukau Rainforest Lodge, Tabin Wildlife Resort and the Borneo Rainforest Lodge at Danum Valley are all award-winning facilities.
- All meals
- Transport within Sabah
- Experienced Tour Leader
- Specialist Local Guides
- Entry Feeds

Exclusions

- Travel Insurance / drinks including extra water (water is provided with meals) / camera fees that are required at some locations / international airfares to and from Sabah

Maximum Group Size 10 Guests + 1 Tour Leader

*price subject to change

SABAH *Birding Tour*

9 - 25 MAY 2018 (16 nights)

YOUR TOUR...

Sabah, a Malaysian State on the northern tip of Borneo, is renowned for its remarkable fauna and flora, including its rich bird life. Sabah's varied topography ranging from the 4095m high Mt Kinabalu to vast floodplains and the coast and islands creates a huge diversity of habitats all in a tropical setting. A total of 622 resident and migratory species have been recorded on the island of Borneo which is the world's third largest island. Of these 32 species are endemic and 24 are found on either the hill slopes of Sabah or its montane forests. Most other species are of Asian origin but Australian birders will see some old friends. There are also more than 15,000 species of plants including over 3000 tree species, 2500 orchids, 50 carnivorous pitcher plants and the world's largest flower Rafflesia. It is thought that around 3000 plant species are endemic including all 155 Dipterocarps, which are some of the tallest rainforest trees in the world. These massive trees dominate Sabah's lowland rainforest physically and ecologically. Borneo's location on the Asian side of the Wallace Line is never more evident than when studying the over 220 mammal species. Bornean Elephants, Orang Utan, Gibbons, Proboscis Monkeys, Leaf Monkeys, Deer, Rhinoceros, Sun Bears, Otters, Civets, Squirrels, Clouded Leopards and other cats are all found in Sabah's forests and rivers.

If that wasn't enough there are also the reptiles and amphibians and the incredible insects. The sounds of the Bornean forests are unlike any other especially on dusk when the 6 o'clock Cicadas start their brief but extraordinary performance. Borneo is home to many 'flying animals' including squirrels, Colugo, snakes, lizards and frogs.

Our journey through Sabah takes us to the montane forests of Mt Kinabalu and the surrounding hills, across the island to the lowland forests at the Sepilok Rainforest Discovery Centre, up the mighty Kinabatangan River to Sukau, through the huge Gomantong Caves to see the Swiftlets and their edible nests and the evening exodus of millions of bats, to the beautiful mountain stream and mud volcano at Tabin Wildlife Reserve, the largest reserve in Sabah, and finally to the spectacular rainforests in Danum Valley Conservation Area which features a 170m long canopy walkway.

***gondwana*guides.com.au**



YOUR GUIDE...

Barry Davies is an experienced Naturalist, Environmental Interpreter, Tour Guide and Tour Leader and is a Certified EcoGuide with Ecotourism Australia.

In 2005 and 2009 he was Australian EcoGuide of the Year. Barry has specialised in organising and leading bird watching, natural history, cultural and walking tours in every state and territory of Australia & New Zealand, Norfolk Is, New Guinea and Sabah (Borneo). He has led tours for Wildside Birding Tours (USA), Birding Ecotours (SA), Sunrise Birding Tours (USA), Zoothera Birding Tours (GB), Cheepers Birding Tours (USA), International Park Tours (AUS), Auswalk (AUS), Zegrahm Eco Tours (USA), Asian Transpacific Journeys (USA) and for Gondwana Guides. He is also a field lecturer with the University of Georgia Athens (USA) and other American universities for their study abroad programmes in Australia.



Tour Summary...

DAY 1: MAY 9 - ARRIVE IN KOTA KINABALU

Flights from Australia to Kota Kinabalu, the capital of Sabah, go via Kuala Lumpur or Singapore. If you don't want to make a stopover in these locations it is best to take a night flight from an Australian airport late on the 25th and connect with a flight to Kota Kinabalu early on the 26th. The best flights now seem to be via Singapore Airlines to Singapore then Silk Air to Kota Kinabalu. You will be met at the airport by our local operator, Borneo Eco Tours, and transferred to the Dreamtel Hotel. During the afternoon we will start bird watching by visiting a local beach to look for the rare Blue-naped Parrot, Long-tailed Parakeet, Pink-necked Green Pigeon, Magpie Robin, Lesser Coucal, Olive-backed and Brown-throated Sunbird, Yellow-vented Bulbul, Common Iora, Rufous-tailed Tailorbird, Glossy Swiftlet and lots of old friends along the shore including Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Common Sandpiper, Reef Egret and White-breasted Woodswallow.

This evening we will have dinner at a local restaurant. The dinner is included in the tariff but not the other meals on this day.

DAY 2: MAY 10 - KOTA KINABALU – KINABALU PARK

We will be picked up from our hotel by our local operator, Borneo Eco Tours and driven the 88 km to Kinabalu National Park, Malaysia's first World Heritage Site. The 75,400 hectare Kinabalu National Park is a dramatic landscape dominated by the 4095m peak of Mt Kinabalu. The park encompasses a range of habitats from the lowland rainforest at 550m around Poring Hot Springs, to the lower montane forests at 1500m around the Park Headquarters, the montane forests higher up then sub-alpine forest which eventually peters out on the exposed granite of the summit plateau. Kinabalu Park is home to over 300 species of birds of which 58 are strictly montane species and 17 are endemic to Borneo. (NB. Climbing to the top of Mt Kinabalu is not included in the itinerary).

Accommodation for following 4 nights in Kinabalu National Park in Hill Lodge. All meals included.





DAY 3 - 5: MAY 11 TO MAY 13 - KINABALU NATIONAL PARK

We will spend 3 full days birding in Kinabalu Park.

Birds we hope to see in Kinabalu Park include White-throated Fantail, Yellow-breasted Warbler, Kinabalu Friendly Warbler, Mountain Leaf-Warblers, Grey-throated Babbler, Borneo Whistling Thrush, Chestnut-capped Laughing-thrush, Chestnut-crested Yuhina, Temminck's Sunbird, Sunda Whistling Thrush, Black Laughing-thrush, Black-breasted Triller, Indigo Flycatcher, Golden-napped Barbet, Whitehead's Trogon, Whitehead's Spiderhunter, Mountain Blackeye, Bornean Stubtail (Endemic), Crimson-head Partridge, Red-breasted Partridge, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Ochraceous Bulbul, White-browed Shortwing, Mountain Blackbird, Ashy Drongo, Short-tailed Magpies, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Bar-winged Cuckoo-shrike, Whitehead's Broadbill, Blue-winged Leafbird, Bornean Barbets and other Woodpeckers, Warblers, Trogons, Bulbuls, Besra and Flycatchers.

DAY 6: MAY 14 - PORING – SEPILOK

We will have an early breakfast then spend some of the morning bird watching around Poring before departing on overland journey to Sandakan on the north-east coast (approximately 4 hours drive).

Poring is home to Banded Broadbill, Diard's Trogon, Gold-whiskered Barbet, Bornean Ibon, Blue-banded Pitta, Bold-strip Tit-Babbler, White-bellied Woodpecker, Brown Barbet, Thick-Billed Spiderhunter, White-browed Shama, Dusky Munia, Siberian Blue Robin, Crested Jay, Wreathed Hornbill, Scaly-breasted Bulbul, Banded Kingfisher, White-fronted Falconet (the world's smallest raptor) and other Bulbuls, Broadbills, Babbler and Flowerpeckers. Also at Poring we hope to see *Rafflesia keithi*, one of the world's largest and smelliest flowers

In Sandakan we will visit the very moving Memorial Park at the former Prisoner of War camp from which the Japanese forced marched Australian and British soldiers to Ranau (near Poring) during 1945. About 2500 prisoners left Sandakan in 3 separate groups. Six Australian prisoners who escaped were the only survivors. We continue to nearby Sepilok where we stay for 2 nights at the Sepilok Nature Resort which is adjacent to the Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre. During the evening we go on a nocturnal walk in the surrounding rainforest looking for Slow Loris, Tarsiers, Mouse Deer, Civets and other mammals. All meals are included.

DAY 7: MAY 15 - RAINFOREST DISCOVERY CENTRE

We will spend all day looking for wildlife at the Rainforest Discovery Centre in the Kabili-Sepilok Forest Reserve. The centre is renowned as the best place to see Bornean Bristlehead which is the sole member of a family endemic to Borneo and therefore of special interest to bird watchers. Facilities at the Discovery Centre include a 347m long canopy walk and plant discovery garden which specialises in plants from Borneo.

At the Rainforest Discovery Centre we hope to see Bornean Bristlehead, Diard's Trogon, Banded Kingfisher, Chestnut-collared Kingfisher, Hooded Pitta, Black-headed Pitta, Scarlet Minivet, Red-bearded Bee-Eater, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, White-bellied Munia, Indian Cuckoo, White Fronted Falconet, Oriental Dwarf Kingfishers, Scarlet-rumped Trogon, Red-Naped Trogon, Asian Fairy-Bluebird, Great Slaty Woodpecker, White-bellied Woodpecker, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, as well as other Bee-eaters, Bulbuls, Flowerpeckers, Sunbird, Drongos and Hornbills.

DAY 8: MAY 16 - SEPILOK AND SUKAU

We get picked up after breakfast and continue birding around Sepilok until transferring to Sandakan at noon to travel to Sukau



by boat on Sabah's longest river, the Kinabatangan. Lower Kinabatangan is home to 210 species of birds and a range of mammals including Bornean Elephants, Orang Utan and Proboscis Monkeys. We check into the award winning Sukau Rainforest Lodge, named by National Geographic Adventure magazine in 2009 as one of the top 50 jungle lodges in the world, for three nights. All meals are included. Later in the afternoon we take an afternoon cruise looking for wildlife. For a preview of Sukau Lodge go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kl7yqHZc1Xs> This film was made during our 2015 tour so if you look carefully you might recognize some of the people. Bird species we hope to see in Sukau include Bornean Ground-Cuckoo, White-bellied Fish Eagle, Lesser Fish Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Wallace's Hawk Eagle, White-chested Babbler, Brown Barbet, Blue-eared Kingfishers, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Black-eared Kingfisher, Rufous-collared Kingfisher, Ruddy Kingfisher, Pied Fantail, Asian Paradise Flycatchers, Oriental Darter, Jerdon's Baza, Buffy Fish Owl, Brahminy Kite, White-fronted Falconet, Great Egret, Bornean Bristlehead, Black-and-yellow Broadbills, Bat Hawk, Oriental Bay Owl, Brown Wood Owl, Great-billed Heron, Blue-headed Pitta, Blue-winged Pitta, Hooded Pitta, Black-headed Pitta, Crested Fireback, Storm's Stork, Lesser Adjutant, Scarlet-rumped Trogon, Red-naped Trogon, Rhinoceros Hornbill, Helmeted Hornbill, Wrinkled Hornbill, Wreathed Hornbill, White-crowned Hornbill, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Bushy-crested Hornbill, Black Hornbill, Asian Fairy-Bluebird, Great Slaty Woodpecker, White-bellied Woodpecker and many others.

Possible mammals include Pygmy Elephant, Orang Utan, Proboscis Monkey, Grey and Red Leaf Monkeys, Short and Long-tailed Macaques, Oriental Small-clawed Otter, Squirrels and Civets.

DAY 9 AND 10: MAY 17 AND 18 - SUKAU

We will spend two full days doing morning and afternoon cruises looking for wildlife and go on a nocturnal cruise. We will also visit Gomantong Caves on one of these evenings to watch the exodus of bats and the Bat Hawks that prey on them. These caves are famous as the home of hundreds of thousands of Edible-nest and Black-nest Swiftlets. The nests of both species are harvested from the towering ceilings of these caves for the manufacture of bird's nest soup.

DAY 11: MAY 19 - SUKAU TO TABIN WILDLIFE RESERVE

After breakfast we drive to Lahad Datu the largest town in eastern Sabah. After lunch in Lahad Datu, we continue on to Tabin Wildlife Reserve where we check in for two nights at the Tabin Wildlife Resort. All meals are included. The drive to Tabin through the ubiquitous palm oil plantations gives no hint of rich diversity of plants and animals at Tabin. The reserve, the largest in Sabah and a critical conservation area, is a secondary rainforest managed by the Forestry Department. It is home to the critically endangered Sumatran Rhinoceros (which we are unlikely to see), Elephants and Orang Utan as well as many other mammals and about 260 species of birds. The secondary forest is shorter and more open than primary forest and makes it easier to see rainforest species. It is a particularly good place to see Hornbills with all 8 species present including the spectacular Rhinoceros Hornbill. At night we will drive along a road that separates the forest from an adjacent palm oil plantation to get views of Owls and nocturnal mammals including Flying Squirrels, Leopard Cats, Mouse-Deer and Civets. The resort is in a beautiful setting along a mountain stream and adjacent to a set of waterfalls. Some of the cabins are built over the stream and others overlooking the waterfall. One of the features of Tabin Reserve is the strange mud volcano which is used as a wallow by Elephants and Pigs.



Image courtesy of Borneo Eco Tours



Featured birds include all the Hornbills, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Blue-headed and Blue-banded Pitta, Dusky Munia, Black-throated and Bornean Wren-babblers, Bulwer's Pheasant, Brown Wood-owl, Buffy Fish-owl, Thick-billed, Long-billed and Grey-breasted Spiderhunter, Yellow-rumped and Orange-bellied Flowerpeckers, Grey-streaked and Malaysian Blue Flycatcher, Purple-throated and Plain Sunbird, Black-naped Monarch, Olive-backed Woodpecker, Oriental Pygmy Kingfisher, Crested Serpent Eagle and the Changeable Hawk Eagle.

DAY 12: MAY 20 – TABIN WILDLIFE RESERVE

We spend a full day looking for birds and other wildlife in the Tabin Wildlife Reserve.

DAY 13: MAY 21 - TABIN TO DANUM VALLEY CONSERVATION AREA

We transfer back to Lahad Datu then on to the spectacular Danum Valley Conservation Area where we check into the magnificent Borneo Rainforest Lodge. This remarkable lodge is owned by the Sabah Foundation, a not for profit conservation group that manages the Danum Valley Conservation Area and is involved in many conservation and education projects throughout Sabah. The forest here is primary rainforest and the lodge is built beside a river. More than 300 species of birds and 110 species of mammals have been recorded in Danum Valley. The evening chorus of frogs and insects here and in other locations is not only loud but also remarkably melodic. Of particular note is the Six o'clock Cicada named for the time it starts its bizarre chorus. All meals are included and they are the best ones we will have in Sabah.

Danum Valley is home to many species including Hornbills, Bornean Babbler, Black-throated Babblers, many Bulbuls, Giant Pitta, Black-and-crimson Pitta, Banded Pitta, Bornean Bristlehead, Great Argus Pheasant, Crested Fireback Pheasant, Chestnut-necklaced Partridge, Red-bearded Bee-eater, Red-napped Trogon, Diard's Trogon, Scarlet-rumped Trogon, Blue-rumped Parrot, Blue-crowned Hanging Parrots, Fiery Minivet, Large-billed Flycatchers, Malaysian Blue Flycatcher, Buffy Fish Owl, Brown Wood-owl, White Fronted Falconet, Whiskered Tree-swift, Crested Wood Partridge, Bornean Ground-cuckoo, and many others.

Other animals include Pygmy Elephants, Oran Utan, Bornean Gibbons, Red leaf Monkeys, Slow Loris, Western Tarsier, Colugo (Flying Lemur), Prevost's, Giant and Plantain Squirrels, Sambar Deer, Bornean Yellow Muntjac (Barking Deer), Pangolin, Wallace's Flying Frog, Flying Lizards, Bornean Forest Dragon and many other reptiles including a snake with the wonderful name of Feeding on Snail.

DAY 14 - 15: MAY 22 AND 23 - BORNEO RAINFOREST LODGE

We spend two full days looking for wildlife in the primary rainforest of the Danum Valley including visits to the 170m long canopy walkway and night walks and drives.

DAY 16: MAY 24 – DANUM VALLEY – KOTA KINABALU

We will go for our final walk in the morning before departing for Lahad Datu airport for our flight to Kota Kinabalu. Our final night will be back at the Dreamtel Hotel. All meals included.

DAY 17: MAY 25 - DEPARTURE TRANSFER TO AIRPORT

Departure transfer to airport (Breakfast included).



Climate...

Lowland Sabah is described as having a 'pleasant' tropical climate with an average daily temperature range of 23 C to 32 C. However, the humidity is always high especially in the rainforest areas. Whilst May is not the monsoon season and is one of the 'drier' months the average rainfall for May in all areas we are visiting is around 200mm so we can expect some rain. It will be cooler in the mountains in Kinabalu NP so you will need layers of clothing, but not many, to allow for that.

Notes...

All the locations are easily accessible by road or by boat and our lodgings are clean and comfortable.

Please note that travel insurance is essential and should include evacuation cover in case of medical emergencies. Gratuities are not encouraged in Malaysia but with so many American and European travellers the locals have come to expect them, unfortunately. Key personnel will be taken care of by your tour leader but if you want to tip hotel staff that is up to you.

NB: The species of birds and mammals listed are only some of the species we will see. A full list of birds and mammals will be supplied before departure so you can familiarise yourselves with the species.

More information...

Gondwana Guides specialises in organising and guiding small group birding tours and private guiding in Australia and overseas.

We are based near Lamington National Park an Important Birding Area (IBA) and world renowned location for rainforest species including Albert's Lyrebird, Regent Bowerbird and Paradise Riflebird.

Join us for a scheduled birding adventure or a private tour in Australia, Sabah, New Zealand, South Africa or Papua New Guinea.

For more information contact Barry on 0417 585 865, email barry@gondwanaguides.com.au or visit our website...

gondwanaguides.com.au