

## Borneo

Jun 7, 2012 to Jun 24, 2012  
Rose Ann Rowlett & Hamit Suban



*Sunrise over craggy Mt. Kinabalu, as seen from our doorsteps at the Hill Lodge inside Kinabalu Park. (Photo by tour participant Fred Dalbey)*

It was another fabulous tour to Borneo! As always, it was different from all previous tours in many of the specifics, from the weather (windy and rainy in the highlands this trip; surprisingly dry in the lowlands) to some of the birds and other critters observed. But there is great overlap among many of the spectacular basics from one tour to the next. And we had another wonderful sampling of the best of Borneo.

In our efforts to overcome jetlag, we all arrived early and managed to get in a little extra birding pre-tour. Most folks went to Manukan Island for a morning, and we all went to the KK Wetland the day before the tour started, seeing a handful of species we wouldn't see on our official tour route. I've included those species in the list below since most folks in the group were experiencing Asian birding for the first time. Our most exciting encounter was with a pair of White-breasted Waterhens duetting as we watched at close range.

We began officially in the Crocker Range, where we saw a number of highland endemics, from the usually very tough Whitehead's Spiderhunter to Mountain and Bornean barbets, Bornean Bulbul, Bornean Leafbird, and endearing flocks of Chestnut-crested Yuhinas, not to mention the non-endemic but dramatic Long-tailed Broadbill. It was a nice start despite the rain that set in early.

At Gungung Kinabalu, Borneo's center of endemism, we had wonderful luck with such specialties as the gorgeous Whitehead's Trogon (a very photogenic pair on our second morning!), the tough Cave Swiftlet, the shy White-crowned (Bornean) Forktail, and such skulkers as Bornean Stubtail (singing away!) and Mountain Wren-Babbler (at our feet!). Whitehead's Broadbill was quite uncooperative, as were the partridges. Nor did we encounter the little-known Everett's Thrush, despite having spent time in the area of the second-known nest for the species, the juvenile from which had fledged the day before! But most of the to-be-expected endemics fell into place, and we had a wonderful Rafflesia experience (at Poring) and saw four species of pitcher plants, including (for the Mesilau group) the world's largest. Along Bukit Ular one

group had a marvelous look at a Fruit-hunter while the other group enjoyed a mammal highlight: a Masked Palm Civet that was discovered as a small puff of hair through a hole in the canopy! And we all marveled at the 8" wingspan of the Atlas Moth (with snake heads on each upper wingtip!) that Fred and Sonia found near their room.

Our introduction to tropical lowland forest was at Sepilok, where we spent a morning on the RDC canopy walkway, enjoying a range of representative Asian species, from our first hornbills and Black-naped Monarchs to Raffles's Malkohas, Red-bearded Bee-eater, and Giant Squirrels. Then one of the highlights of the trip came with something uniquely Bornean: a party of three bizarrely wonderful Bornean Bristleheads, representing a monotypic family endemic to Borneo, which approached from a distance right into the nearest trees at eye level. What a show!

That afternoon we would continue to Gomantong Cave, where we scoped out each of the echo-locating swiftlets on their nests and marveled at the "creepy" scutigera centipedes, in clusters on the walls of the cave. Back outside we watched an Orangutan mother with baby, several groups of the endemic Red Leaf Monkey sharing treetop vistas with Bushy-crested Hornbills while discrete clouds of Wrinkle-lipped Bats began drifting overhead, attracting crepuscular Bat Hawks that would swoop through the swarms and emerge with their dinner. It was a lovely evening, and we reached Sukau under clear skies.

We had mostly clear, warm weather in the Kinabatangan this visit. We birded by boat, morning, late afternoon, and one evening, and we worked in some time on the boardwalk immediately behind our lodge. Highlights included, by day on the rivers: good looks at multiple Storm's & Lesser Adjutant storks, nesting White-fronted Falconets, striking Wrinkled, Rhinoceros, and White-crowned hornbills, a 12-foot Estuarine Crocodile, afternoon gatherings of long-nosed, big-bellied Proboscis Monkeys, and watching a herd of 15-20 Bornean Pygmy Elephants grazing on "elephant grass" on the banks of the Kinabatangan. Right at our lodge we enjoyed great scope views of a singing Striped Wren-Babbler, a noisy and animated flock of Dusky Broadbills, and giant Tokay Geckos, with big green eyes, that hunted insects by night above the walkway. By starlight on our river cruise, we saw sleeping Blue-eared and Stork-billed kingfishers, Black-and-red Broadbills huddled shoulder to shoulder (see Dave's cover photo), a foraging pair of Buffy Fish-Owls, and a Reticulated Python.

After a fine morning of birding along the Gomantong entrance road--with Black-headed Pitta, dynamite trogons, and a terrific array of babblers--we settled into Borneo Rainforest Lodge, our extraordinary base for five days of birding in the heart of the tallest tropical rainforest on Earth (see Sherry's cover photo).

Among our diverse favorites at BRL, in roughly phylogenetic order, were: that surprise Gould's Frogmouth that we spotlighted, taped, and photographed as it sang from a vine right beside our truck!; the very confiding Whiskered Treeswifts and Blue-throated Bee-eaters that so often accompanied our meals or lined up along the cables of the lower canopy walkway; the Rufous-backed Kingfisher that we found by night as a puff of blue, black, pink, and orange on its roost (two different nights!) and then watched hunting just off the dining area; the tiny Gray-and-buff Woodpeckers with the tall, curved crests and the even smaller Rufous Piculets that came so close in the canopy walkway; the family of dramatically patterned Black-and-yellow Broadbills we watched eye-to-eye, with their soft-pink underparts and bright blue bills; those spiffy Blue-headed Pittas and the wonderfully cooperative Hooded Pitta that responded so well to playback; that white-morph male Asian Paradise-Flycatcher with its long tail plumes that circled around us repeatedly for fabulous views; and the endemic, brown race of the shy Crested Jay whose machine-gun voice disclosed its location as it circled us along the road. And I can't fail to mention just a few of the outstanding "other critters" that afforded us such excitement, especially the tiny Plain Pygmy Squirrels that dashed about on the banisters and tree trunks; that fabulous Colugo we spotlighted halfway up a tall tree trunk; and, maybe best of all, that big Bornean Horned Frog, the epitome of dead-leaf mimicry, that was new for all but Hamit.

It was fun reliving the trip while annotating the list that follows. Hopefully, it'll serve to bring back memories for you guys of some of your additional favorites.

It is a bit sobering to realize how many of the species we saw are considered either Endangered, Vulnerable, or Near Threatened by Birdlife International and the IUCN Red List. We'll hope that our visit will contribute a bit toward their longterm preservation.

In the annotations below, I've used RDC for Rainforest Discovery Centre and BRL for Borneo Rainforest Lodge. By a Sundaland specialty, we mean a species whose range is generally restricted to the Thai-Malay peninsula, Borneo, Sumatra, and Java, all of which were connected during the last ice age. The eastern boundary of Sundaland is Wallace's Line, a deep-water trench between Borneo and Sulawesi and between Bali and Lombok, east of which is Wallacea/Australasia. Many of

the birds of Borneo, as marked with an S on the checklist, are Sundaland specialties.

Taxonomy follows the Clements checklist with online updates by Cornell. To access the Clements checklist, go to <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/clementschecklist>, where you can download it and check for additional updates.

We thank Karen (our fgi tour manager), Borneo Eco Tours (our ground operator), our great local guides (Hazwan, Wangkong, and Paul), our captains (especially Danny & Jolius), our boatmen, and the staffs of our wonderful lodgings throughout the tour. Special thanks to everyone for sharing such a bounty of terrific photos, some of which will be used in the text of the triplist. Credits for cover photos go to Fred Dalbey (Atlas moth), Dave Harvey (White-breasted Waterhens, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Black-and-yellow Broadbill), Sherry Nelson (vista from the BRL canopy walkway, group photo), and Jan Nordenberg (Orangutan, Proboscis Monkey). The Whitehead's Trogon, Rajah Pitcher Plant, and Bornean Pygmy Elephant were mine.

Thanks, too, to each of you guys for coming and for making the trip a success. We had a grand time!

--Rose Ann (& Hamit)

For more information about this tour, including future departures, visit our website at [www.fieldguides.com](http://www.fieldguides.com). And to see this same triplist online, go to <http://www.fieldguides.com/triplists/bor12bLIST.pdf> and you will find the list in its entirety.

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## KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

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## BIRDS

### *Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)*

**WANDERING WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna arcuata*) – A group of ca. 9 ducks, including one duckling (evidence of breeding), were seen nicely on a lake between Sandakan and Gomantong. Some of you had seen this species in Australia. [N]

### *Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)*

**RED-BREASTED PARTRIDGE** (*Arborophila hyperythra*) – Heard (repeatedly) by all; we were very close to a pair along the upper Bukit Ular trail at Kinabalu, but I'm afraid it was seen only by RAR. [E\*]

**CHESTNUT-NECKLACED PARTRIDGE** (*Arborophila charltonii*) – Seen on our first morning in the Kinabatangan, along the banks of the Menanggul, where one bird was lured into view with playback.

**CRIMSON-HEADED PARTRIDGE** (*Haematortyx sanguiniceps*) – Heard often, but usually quite distantly. [E\*]

**CRESTED FIREBACK** (*Lophura ignita nobilis*) – We had missed them the afternoon of our arrival to BRL, and we were told they had not been around the lodge recently. Fortunately, we encountered a pair as we walked out the entrance road our first morning at BRL. They flushed into dense roadside shrubbery, but responded well to playback of their alarm notes, creeping into view for all. Note the endemic Bornean race *nobilis*, with the central tail feathers cinnamon-buff (instead of white).

### *Ciconiidae (Storks)*

**STORM'S STORK** (*Ciconia stormi*) – Classified as Endangered (with a population of fewer than 500 birds) by the IUCN, this small stork is one of the real specialties of the Kinabatangan, which is considered its world stronghold. We were quite lucky this trip, seeing 4 to 5 birds per day, both perched and flying! That's in an area where a breeding population of only 40+ birds was censused between 1999 and 2002. With increased fragmentation of their habitat, the species has declined throughout its limited range, mostly in Borneo and Sumatra.

**LESSER ADJUTANT** (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) – We saw 3 birds circling on a thermal, high above the Menanggul, on our first morning at Sukau, and then at least 6 flying over the Kinabatangan the following day, some of them offering fairly close views. This species is more common well downriver, close to the coast.

### *Anhingidae (Anhingas)*

**ORIENTAL DARTER** (*Anhinga melanogaster*) – Fairly common in the Kinabatangan.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**CINNAMON BITTERN** (*Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*) – We had great scope views of a bird that flushed up along the highway through the palm plantations en route to Gomantong. It's a locally common breeder in Borneo.

**PURPLE HERON** (*Ardea purpurea*) – Seen very well pre-tour in the KK Wetland, where there was a breeding colony; and in small numbers in the Kinabatangan.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Fairly common and widespread.

**INTERMEDIATE EGRET** (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) – Seen well on our pre-tour morning at the KK Wetland, where we could see that the gape extended only as far as the eye--and not beyond (as it does in Great Egret).

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – Seen in the KK area.

**PACIFIC REEF-HERON** (*Egretta sacra*) – Several were seen during our dinner(s) at the delicious Indian food restaurant on the waterfront in KK.

**STRIATED HERON** (*Butorides striata*) – A few along the coast in the KK area.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – A few birds in the KK area, including one that landed below our dining table overlooking the S. China Sea.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**JERDON'S BAZA** (*Aviceda jerdoni*) – One bird, with quite a crest, along the Kinabatangan River.

**BAT HAWK** (*Macheiramphus alcinus*) – We watched this big-eyed specialist in dramatic pursuit of bats emerging from the Gomantong caves and saw one bird perched as we were leaving. The species is widespread but local, occurring in Africa, Australasia, and SE Asia. The Borneo birds belong to the nominate race.

**BRAHMINY KITE** (*Haliastur indus*) – Fairly common and widespread, especially in secondary habitats.

**WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – First seen from our dinner table on the KK waterfront, this species was also seen in the Kinabatangan.

**LESSER FISH-EAGLE** (*Ichthyophaga humilis*) – Seen well by Hamit's boat-group along the Menanggul and later by all along the Tenangang. Ron saw one along the Danum R at BRL as well. Considered Near Threatened by the IUCN.

**GRAY-HEADED FISH-EAGLE** (*Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*) – The bigger one, with the black tail band; seen well along the Kinabatangan.

**CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE** (*Spilornis cheela*) – Seen first from the Sepilok RDC tower, and then in the Kinabatangan, along the Gomantong road, and at BRL.

**CRESTED GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter trivirgatus*) – Also fairly common, this species was seen first along the Menanggul and then several times along the road at BRL.

**BLACK EAGLE** (*Ictinaetus malayensis*) – It was a real treat to watch this long-winged eagle sailing below us (!) from the vista point in Kinabalu Park. We later saw it at BRL as well.

**RUFOUS-BELLIED EAGLE** (*Lophotriorchis kienerii*) – Our first was a distant bird circling above the RDC canopy walkway, but we later had good views of an adult over the Tenangang; it was also seen at BRL.

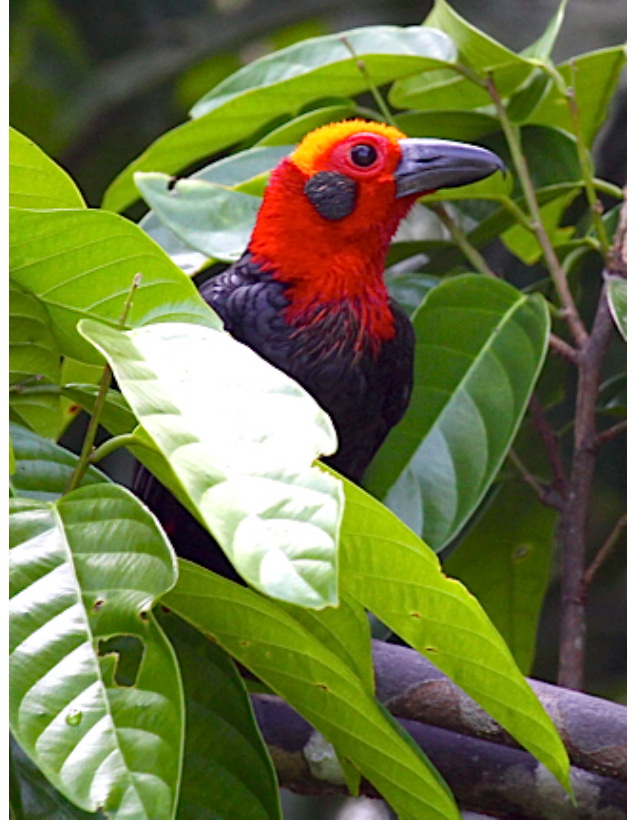
**CHANGEABLE HAWK-EAGLE** (*Nisaetus cirrhatus*) – We saw one bird near a nest that was active in March along the Menanggul River; another was flying above the Gomantong entrance road.

**BLYTH'S HAWK-EAGLE** (*Nisaetus alboniger*) – Birds were seen nicely on two different days, first near the Tambunan Rafflesia Center, and then (by the Mesilau group) over "the hole" at Kinabalu Park.

**WALLACE'S HAWK-EAGLE** (*Nisaetus nanus*) – Seen along the Menanggul and then downriver along the Kinabatangan, where two birds were perched in the sunset on our way back upriver to Sukau.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**WHITE-FRONTED FALCONET** (*Microhierax latifrons*) – Considered Near Threatened, this tiny raptor can be easily



*We had eye-to-eye views of the bizarre Bornean Bristlehead, representing a monotypic family endemic to Borneo. (Photo by tour participant Dave Harvey)*

overlooked. We were lucky to have seen a pair near an active nest hole, along the big Kinabatangan. We later saw another male along the Gomantong entrance road. [E]

### Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN** (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) – What a show! That first pair, at the KK Wetlands on our pre-tour trip, emerged from dense cover and duetted as we watched (and photographed!) them (see Dave's cover photo). The species is fairly common and widespread, being glimpsed subsequently on various occasions along our tour route.

### Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

**WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – Pre-tour in the bays and marshes near KK; apparently some non-breeders overwinter. [b]

### Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – In towns and villages. [I]

**SPOTTED DOVE** (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Common and widespread in non-forested areas.

**RUDDY CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia emiliana*) – We pointed out one quick fly-by, which some folks got on, from our vista point along the trail above Poring Hot Springs. A slope specialist of lower montane forest, this Sundaland specialty is quite scarce on our route.

**LITTLE CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia ruficeps*) – But this smaller relative of the last species is fairly common, especially in the montane forest, and we had great looks, starting at the Tambunan Rafflesia Centre and then also at Kinabalu.

**EMERALD DOVE** (*Chalcophaps indica*) – Heard along the Menanggul and glimpsed flying across the river in the Kinabatangan by one boat-group; fortunately, this one is a very widespread species.

**ZEBRA DOVE** (*Geopelia striata*) – KK area. [I]

**LITTLE GREEN-PIGEON** (*Treron olax*) – We had nice looks at this small Sundaland specialty in the Kinabatangan and then saw only fly-overs at BRL.

**PINK-NECKED PIGEON** (*Treron vernans*) – Seen well by the pre-tour Manukan Island contingent--which was most everyone!--and by Rich on his walk along the wooded hill above KK.

**CINNAMON-HEADED PIGEON** (*Treron fulvicollis*) – One male was sitting up with other pigeons in the Kinabatangan; seen at least by some.

**JAMBU FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus jambu*) – A fly-over near our lodge in Kinabalu Park; and then seen out the BRL entrance road by one group (on 21 Jun).

**GREEN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula aenea*) – Seen by some around KK or Manukan Island pre-tour, this was the common big pigeon of the lowlands. We had nice views in good light along the Kinabatangan and at BRL.

**MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula badia*) – First seen flying over well above the Tambunan Rafflesia Center, this big montane pigeon was best seen flying over our bungalows in Kinabalu Park.

### Psittacidae (Parrots)

**LONG-TAILED PARAKEET** (*Psittacula longicauda*) – This Sundaland specialty was seen flying past the RDC canopy walkway, at least by some.

**BLUE-CROWNED HANGING-PARROT** (*Loriculus galgulus*) – Seen (when heard) as a midget fly-by on many occasions in the lowlands before we all finally managed great scope views at BRL, first out the entrance road, and then from the canopy walkway, where we watched it come to bathe.

### Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**MALAYSIAN HAWK-CUCKOO** (*Hierococcyx fugax*) – A Sundaland specialty, this one was seen by some folks with RAR & Wang along the Jacuzzi Trail, where it flew overhead in response to playback, stopping briefly for a few with craned necks; mostly it was heard.

**SUNDA CUCKOO** (*Cuculus lepidus*) – Calling above our lodge in Kinabalu Park, but it wouldn't come down this trip. [\*]

**BANDED BAY CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis sonneratii*) – Half the group scoped this one as it sang repeatedly from the tip top of a canopy tree above the BRL canopy walkway late one afternoon. It was singing again on our last morning, but it never showed well.

**PLAINTIVE CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis merulinus*) – By contrast, this little cuckoo turned up regularly (for great views!) just outside the dining area at BRL. It was first seen at Sepilok.

**VIOLET CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus*) – This little beauty was engaged in flight displays several times

during our visit. We saw it well along the Sukau boardwalk (for some) and then at BRL, along the entrance road and from the canopy walkway.

**ASIAN DRONGO-CUCKOO** (*Surniculus lugubris*) – Widespread but not calling much during our visit, this species was first seen (by all) along the Menanggul, and then (by one group) from the BRL canopy walkway, where it was quite responsive, and looking quite like a drongo!

**ASIAN KOEL** (*Eudynamys scolopaceus*) – One probable breeder was heard from the mangrove boardwalk through the KK Wetlands pre-tour. [\*]

**BLACK-BELLIED MALKOHA** (*Phaenicophaeus diardi*) – This Sundaland specialty was seen at BRL both from the canopy and along the entrance road.

**RAFFLES'S MALKOHA** (*Phaenicophaeus chlorophaeus*) – Reminiscent of the Squirrel Cuckoo of the neotropics, this handsome Sundaland specialty was seen well repeatedly, starting with our vista point above Poring Hot Springs.

**RED-BILLED MALKOHA** (*Phaenicophaeus javanicus*) – Another Sundaland specialty, this one was seen only once--on 22 June at BRL.

**CHESTNUT-BREASTED MALKOHA** (*Phaenicophaeus curvirostris*) – First seen at the RDC tower, this handsome Sundaland specialty was later seen extremely well, especially from the BRL canopy walkway.

**BORNEAN GROUND-CUCKOO** (*Carpococcyx radiatus*) – I was afraid we had used up our luck on this one for awhile! While we did manage to hear it calling, and seemingly in response to playback, along the Tenangang, it wouldn't come close. Then Wang's group on the Hornbill Trail our final morning at BRL heard one at closer range, but where they couldn't see it. Sorry! [E\*]

**GREATER COUCAL** (*Centropus sinensis*) – Common and widespread, this one is always heard more often than seen; but it was seen well by all along the Tenangang, where it walked along the bank.

**LESSER COUCAL** (*Centropus bengalensis*) – Two birds were seen flying over the wet fields among palm plantations en route to Gomantong from Sukau.

#### *Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)*

**ORIENTAL BAY-OWL** (*Phodilus badius*) – Heard wonderfully along the Menanggul, under starry skies, on our night cruise; a great sound, but sorry we couldn't see them. (They're typically quite a project, especially if you can't walk up on them, i.e., especially from a boat!) [\*]

#### *Strigidae (Owls)*

**REDDISH SCOPS-OWL** (*Otus rufescens*) – Another night bird we've not encountered before on the Borneo tour, this species was calling vigorously on a starry night well out the entrance road to BRL. It responded to playback by flying across the road but was unseen--and wouldn't move again. Maybe next year...? [\*]

**MOUNTAIN SCOPS-OWL** (*Otus spilocephalus*) – Calling very little--and only during the wee hours of one or two calmer nights--during our visit to Kinabalu. [\*]

**BUFFY FISH-OWL** (*Ketupa ketupu*) – We had great studies of this one! We watched a pair hunting across the Kinabatangan from Sukau Rainforest Lodge, where several folks got good photos of a bird atop a shed.

**BROWN WOOD-OWL** (*Strix leptogrammica*) – We had a great view of this beauty on our BRL night walk, when we spotlighted a bird near the staff quarters.

**BROWN HAWK-OWL** (*Ninox scutulata*) – I stumbled into a pair of these pre-dawn, just outside my bungalow at Sepilok Nature Resort. They stuck around just long enough for the folks in the nearest cabins (Dave, Maureen, & Jan) to see them before it got too light and they retreated toward a more distant roost, no doubt.

#### *Podargidae (Frogmouths)*

**LARGE FROGMOUTH** (*Batrachostomus auritus*) – We heard the electrifying calls of this rare (and beautiful!) frogmouth on our night cruise along the Menanggul. It sang repeatedly on that starry night but wouldn't move into view. Sorry! This was the first time we've ever heard it on the tour--and the first time I've EVER heard it. [\*]



*Our greatest surprise of the trip was encountering this rarely seen Gould's Frogmouth along the BRL entrance road on one of our night drives. (Photo by tour participant Fred Dalbey)*

**GOULD'S FROGMOUTH** (*Batrachostomus stellatus*) – As if to compensate for our having missed seeing the Large Frogmouth, luck (and Hamit's spotting skill!) offered up another rare frogmouth that we've not had before on the Borneo tour! And this one sat right beside our night-drive truck along the BRL entrance road, allowing some great photos (including Fred Dalbey's cover photo) and even called before leaving, allowing me to record its call. A fabulous night-birding experience!

Apodidae (Swifts)

**SILVER-RUMPED NEEDLETAIL** (*Rhaphidura leucopygialis*) – Fairly common and widespread in the lowlands, starting with Poring (over the parking lot) and, especially nicely, at the Sepilok Nature Resort, where they dipped to drink from the lake beside our breakfast area.

**BROWN-BACKED NEEDLETAIL** (*Hirundapus giganteus*) – Seen well by some out the BRL entrance road (22 Jun) and by others from the canopy tower (our final morn at BRL).

**WATERFALL SWIFT** (*Hydrochous gigas*) – This poorly known rarity was seen again this trip over the Poring Hot Springs parking lot late in the afternoon. I realize shapes and wingbeats of swifts are an acquired taste, but we all managed to study the variations visible that evening among the many swiftlets, swifts, and visible in the sunset sky. And this notch-tailed species, which was larger than the echo-locating swiftlets but smaller than the treeswifts, was a good find. A.k.a. Giant Swiftlet, It is considered Near Threatened.

**GLOSSY SWIFTLET** (*Collocalia esculenta*) – Seen every day of the trip, this commonest swiftlet was nesting under the eaves of various structures. Unlike the echo-locating swiftlets of the genus *Aerodramus*, this species needs some light for nesting, thus building under eaves or near the mouth of caves. [N]

**CAVE SWIFTLET (BORNEAN)** (*Collocalia linchi dodgei*) – Endemic to the mountains of Borneo (mostly to upper Kinabalu), the race *dodgei* of this swiftlet (otherwise known from Sumatra, Java, Bali, & Lombok) is considered a full species, Bornean Swiftlet, by some authors. It differs from Glossy Swiftlet by the green (rather than bluish) gloss to its plumage and by the absence of a feather tuft on its hind toe, a feature seen only in the hand. Thanks to Andy Boyce & Adam Mitchell, of the bird research team working at Kinabalu, we got to see this difficult-to-identify species on natural nests, where adults were flying in to feed rather hefty nestlings. We could make out a green gloss, but we accepted Andy's word that the birds nesting there had been handheld and verified as *dodgei*. Special thanks to Andy & Adam! [N]

**MOSSY-NEST SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus salangana*) – One of the three similar, echo-locating swiftlets that nest inside Gomantong Cave; they're so similar, in fact, that they are not reliably separated unless seen on their distinctive nests. This species builds a cup nest of sticks glued together with saliva and covered with moss, often placed on a small ledge, sometimes at low elevation. Their nests contain too much foreign material to be edible and hence are not harvested. We saw them well inside the cave. [N]

**BLACK-NEST SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus maximus*) – The Black-nest Cave at Gomantong was named for this species, and indeed it was the most abundant nester during our visit. Their nests, harvested at least twice a year, are shallow cups of their own dark feathers glued together with their own saliva. There were masses of them clustered together on the very vertical walls of the cave, all blackish in appearance. Teams of workers clean these nests up for the market, and we saw their nests for sale in the KK airport.

**EDIBLE-NEST SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus fuciphagus*) – On a couple of vertical walls, between clusters of black nests, were a few clusters of shallow, gleaming, white cups. A number of these were occupied by birds, the Edible-nest Swiftlets, essentially identical to the Black-nest Swiftlets but ID'd by their nests. Composed almost entirely of the birds' saliva, the beautiful little nests of the Edible-nest Swiftlet are the most highly prized for the Chinese delicacy, bird's-nest soup. The packages of 6 nests that we examined in the KK international airport were priced at 580RM, or about \$188 U.S.! Despite the nest harvesting--once just after they're built (when the birds will surely re-nest), and then after the nestlings have fledged--the Gomantong Caves are said to have supported a healthy population of swiftlets for centuries, traced to the times of the Chinese Emperor. Today the caves are administered by Sabah's Wildlife Department, who licenses contractors who hire the locals to harvest the nests by hand, using rattan ladders, ropes, and poles, as well as great skill and caution. We were told that the first harvest of the year had been completed in February.

**HOUSE SWIFT** (*Apus nipalensis*) – Seen by some right in KK, both from our hotel rooms and on our pre-tour excursions.

Hemiprocnidae (Treeswifts)

**GRAY-RUMPED TREESWIFT** (*Hemiproctus longipennis*) – Seen nicely in flight several times, especially over the parking lot at Poring and over the lake at Sepilok Nature Resort.

**WHISKERED TREESWIFT** (*Hemiproctus comata*) – A real favorite, this handsome and confiding treeswift was a regular presence at BRL, where it often had lunch with us and sat on the guywires of the BRL canopy walkway.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

**RED-NAPED TROGON** (*Harpactes kasumba*) – Considered Near Threatened, this Sundaland beauty was seen well by all along the Gomantong road, and then again at BRL (Jacuzzi Trail). Big and handsome!

**DIARD'S TROGON** (*Harpactes diardii*) – Another handsome Sundaland specialty, it was seen well by all at BRL.

**WHITEHEAD'S TROGON** (*Harpactes whiteheadi*) – Perhaps the most beautiful of the Bornean endemics, a pair of this species was seen well by all on our second morning afield at Kinabalu Park, when Danny summoned us as we returned from the Bukit Ular trail--to see the male he had found, right beside the road! Fantastic views and photo ops! This can be one of the toughest of the specialties to encounter, and it's always among the most-wanted. [E]

**SCARLET-RUMPED TROGON** (*Harpactes duvaucelii*) – Like a miniature version of the Red-naped Trogon, this Sundaland beauty was seen well by all on the Gomantong road, and then by some at BRL. Our Gomantong male had a bit of a scraggly hairdo.

#### Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

**BLUE-EARED KINGFISHER** (*Alcedo meninting*) – Seen well in the Kinabatangan, including by spotlight on a night roost.

**BLUE-BANDED KINGFISHER** (*Alcedo euryzona*) – Seen only by Dave, as it flew away from the bridge over the stream along the road at BRL, its distinctively colored rump and lower back shining pale blue.

**RUFOUS-BACKED KINGFISHER** (*Ceyx rufidorsa*) – What a cutie! Our first one was a fluffy orange and blue-black ball on a roost perch along the BRL Nature Trail, where we refound a couple of nights later. In the meantime, we all saw a confiding bird that perched and foraged off the dining area, especially after a shower one afternoon. It was also seen by various folks as they went to and from their rooms at BRL.

**BANDED KINGFISHER** (*Lacedo pulchella*) – BRL [\*]

**STORK-BILLED KINGFISHER** (*Pelargopsis capensis*) – This big, noisy beauty was first seen along the mangrove boardwalk on our pre-tour excursion to the KK Wetlands, then repeatedly and quite well by day and night (see Dave's cover photo) in the Kinabatangan.

**RUDDY KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon coromanda*) – This difficult-to-see species responded to playback along the Menanggul, flying out and along the river, its distinctive ruddiness evident to all.

**COLLARED KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus chloris*) – Seen pre-tour at the KK Wetlands and then near Poring and along the roads Sandakan/Sukau/Gomantong/Lahad Datu.

#### Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

**RED-BEARDED BEE-EATER** (*Nyctyornis amictus*) – A fabulous--and very different--bee-eater, it was scoped from the new extension to the RDC canopy walkway; seen again by some along the BRL road.

**BLUE-THROATED BEE-EATER** (*Merops viridis*) – Seen first in the KK Wetlands, this confiding beauty was our almost constant companion at BRL, where they were still nesting in holes in the small sandy mounds along the Danum River floodplain. [N]

#### Coraciidae (Rollers)

**DOLLARBIRD** (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – In the Kinabatangan and at Gomantong.

#### Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

**ORIENTAL PIED-HORNBILL** (*Anthracoceros albirostris*) – Our first were from the RDC walkway; then it was the commonest hornbill along the rivers in the Kinabatangan, but it was absent from the primary forest at BRL.

**BLACK HORNBILL** (*Anthracoceros malayanus*) – Considered Near Threatened, this noisy Sundaland specialty was our first hornbill--at Sepilok. We then saw them daily in the Kinabatangan, and also in small numbers at BRL. We saw male



*The male Whitehead's Trogon, seen here on Mt. Kinabalu, is one of Borneo's most handsome endemics. We had leisurely views of this one. (Photo by guide Hamit Suban)*



variants (with the white brow) on a number of occasions.

**RHINOCEROS HORNBILL** (*Buceros rhinoceros*) – Also considered Near Threatened, this dramatic hornbill may be the handsomest of the hornbills. We saw them well in the Kinabatangan and at BRL, where they were seen in especially nice light on our final morning afield.

**HELMETED HORNBILL** (*Buceros vigil*) – This, the most bizarre of the hornbills, was calling a fair amount during our visit. But there were no fruiting figs that were attracting them close to the BRL road or the canopy walkway, where it's easiest to see them. Instead, we tracked down calling birds along the BRL trails (Belian & East trails), one group seeing one well, the other group seeing one only in flight. Most of the same group (sorry!) saw another out the entrance road on 22 Jun. We all laughed repeatedly at its long, maniacal song as we made numerous attempts to call it in. It too is a Sundaland specialty that is considered Near Threatened.

**BUSHY-CRESTED HORNBILL** (*Anorrhinus galeritus*) – Usually the commonest of the hornbills in the lowland rainforest, this social species was seen first in the late afternoon at our Gomantong bat emergence vista, where a large group came in to roost. Also seen well in the Kinabatangan and at BRL.

**WHITE-CROWNED HORNBILL** (*Aceros comatus*) – This scarce Sundaland specialty is usually the hardest to see, but we were lucky this trip to have seen a group of 3 birds along the Tenangang, where they were being chased away by Oriental Pied-Hornbills. It has another haunting call. Also considered Near Threatened.

**WRINKLED HORNBILL** (*Aceros corrugatus*) – We saw more than our share of this Near Threatened, Sundaland specialty, both in the Kinabatangan and even at BRL (where two flew over on 19 Jun).

**WREATHED HORNBILL** (*Aceros undulatus*) – This big hornbill, more widespread than most and responsible for the loudest whooshing sound in flight, is generally scarce on this tour in March and more conspicuous later in the year, when most of the figs they prefer are in fruit. They travel long distances to good fruiting trees, sometimes gathering in large groups at a fruit bonanza. But this June they were generally scarce throughout. We saw only three pairs, all flying over at BRL, where one group saw most of them well; fortunately, it was the opposite group from the one that saw the Helmeted well.

#### Megalaimidae (Asian Barbets)

**BROWN BARBET** (*Calorhamphus fuliginosus*) – This aberrant, monotypic barbet is another Sundaland specialty, the Bornean birds having red legs and feet. We saw them well on several occasions, first at the RDC walkway (for some), and then several times at BRL. I think in the end everyone caught up with this one.

**GOLD-WHISKERED BARBET** (*Megalaima chrysopogon*) – Sherry alone had seen it at Tambunan, but we all saw this Sundaland specialty well from our vista point along the trail at Poring, where we called one in close for scope views. It was heard widely thereafter and seen again from the BRL canopy walkway.

**RED-THROATED BARBET** (*Megalaima mystacophanos*) – Another Sundaland specialty, this one was seen well by all at Gomantong and then by some from the BRL canopy tower.

**MOUNTAIN BARBET** (*Megalaima monticola*) – We had good looks at this lower-montane endemic along the road at Tambunan Rafflesia Center. This was the one that stops to take a breath after delivering a long series of notes and then continues. [E]

**YELLOW-CROWNED BARBET** (*Megalaima henricii*) – The toughest barbet to see, it too is a Sundaland specialty that was seen exceptionally well in the scopes from the highest canopy platform along the BRL canopy walkway--where three birds were hanging out at a (presumed) nest hole that was being worked on by one or two birds. [N]

**GOLDEN-NAPED BARBET** (*Megalaima pulcherrima*) – A Kinabalu/Crocker Range endemic, it was heard more often than seen. The Summit Trail folks had good looks on their climb, and the rest of us caught up with it in a fruiting tree along the road below the Timpohon gate. [E]

**BLUE-EARED BARBET** (*Megalaima australis*) – A more widespread species, this one was seen very well from the first RDC canopy tower when we called a responsive bird into some bare branches nearby. It was heard at each lowland locality and seen again a couple of times at BRL. What an elaborate and colorful face pattern! [N]

**BORNEAN BARBET** (*Megalaima eximia*) – The lower montane replacement of the last species, it is a generally tough endemic, especially if it's not singing much. It was a struggle to locate this one, but we finally succeeded in getting views of a singing bird near the Tambunan Rafflesia Center. [E]

#### Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**RUFOUS PICULET** (*Sasia abnormis*) – Seen well from the canopy walkway at BRL, where it had a nest and seemed to have fledged a juve; both adult and youngster were seen well by all (and photographed!). It's another Sundaland specialty. [N]

**GRAY-CAPPED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos canicapillus*) – Seen only as it flew overhead, calling, by the group that

was in the BRL canopy walkway with RAR the morning of 19 June.

**RUFOUS WOODPECKER** (*Celeus brachyurus*) – This widespread woodpecker, still placed in the same genus with all the blond, crested woodpeckers of the neotropics, was very cooperative beside the RDC canopy walkway, where it put in repeat appearances.

**WHITE-BELLIED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus javensis*) – Along the Menanggul. [\*]

**BANDED WOODPECKER** (*Picus miniaceus*) [\*]

**CRIMSON-WINGED WOODPECKER** (*Picus puniceus*) [\*]

**CHECKER-THROATED WOODPECKER** (*Picus mentalis*) – First seen at near our lodge at Kinabalu, where a male put in a brief appearance, this Sundaland specialty was seen again by some with a flock along the Mempening trail.

**MAROON WOODPECKER** (*Blythipicus rubiginosus*) – Another Sundaland woodpecker, this one was seen by some at Kinabalu, by some along the Menanggul, and by some at BRL.

**ORANGE-BACKED WOODPECKER** (*Reinwardtipicus validus*) – A pair of this fancy Sundaland specialty was seen by Hamit's group along the Silau-Silau at Kinabalu, another at Poring (by some), and one (briefly) from the RDC canopy walkway. Sorry that not everyone caught up with it.

**BUFF-RUMPED WOODPECKER** (*Meiglyptes tristis*) – We all saw this one well from the RDC canopy walkway, then later several times at BRL, where one pair had a nest. It too is restricted to Sundaland. [N]

**BUFF-NECKED WOODPECKER** (*Meiglyptes tukki*) – Also a Sundaland specialty, this one considered Near Threatened; we saw a very close bird along the Menanggul from the boats, and it was also seen at BRL.

**GRAY-AND-BUFF WOODPECKER** (*Hemicircus concretus*) – What a fabulous little woodpecker! It's one of Asia's smallest woodpeckers and a Sundaland specialty to boot. We had several marvelous looks at it, including a close pair from the BRL canopy walkway. The male sat close-by, its tall crest erect and curled forward.

**GREAT SLATY WOODPECKER** (*Mulleripicus pulverulentus*) – From the smallest to the largest of Asian woodpeckers! This big woodpecker was seen in flight in the distance from the BRL canopy, then stopped on a distant tree, where we scoped it. Others along the BRL entrance road saw it fly over from there. It was seen again the following day by the group out the BRL entrance road.

#### *Calyptomenidae (African and Green Broadbills)*

**GREEN BROADBILL** (*Calyptomena viridis*) – Seen only by Wang's group along the Hornbill Trail at BRL on our final morning there. Another impressive Sundaland specialty!

**WHITEHEAD'S BROADBILL** (*Calyptomena whiteheadi*) – This fancy endemic was quite inconspicuous this trip, being seen only once briefly by Hamit, when it flew over the lower Bukit Ular trail. We heard a different bird from our lodge, calling at dawn one morning, but neither bird responded to playback, and it was never seen by the group. [E\*]

#### *Eurylaimidae (Asian and Grauer's Broadbills)*

**BLACK-AND-RED BROADBILL** (*Cymbirhynchus macrorhynchos*) – The typical Asian broadbills are exquisite too! This one, first seen on our way into the RDC, was seen especially well from our boats in the Kinabatangan. On our night cruise on the Kinabatangan, we saw one blue bill sticking out of a nest, as well as three sleeping broadbills, lined up shoulder to shoulder, two facing one direction and the third the opposite! What a colorful treat! [N]

**LONG-TAILED BROADBILL** (*Psarisomus dalhousiae*) – Fairly widespread, but what a bird! We saw a pair beautifully near Masakob Waterfall, where it was hanging out near a nest. [N]

**BANDED BROADBILL** (*Eurylaimus javanicus*) – This one was actively nesting too, its nest visible from the BRL canopy walkway, where we watched it entering and leaving its big nest, placed in the crotch of a canopy emergent. [N]

**BLACK-AND-YELLOW BROADBILL** (*Eurylaimus ochromalus*) – Could this extraordinary and confiding small broadbill be the fairest of them all? Certainly, the soft pink is a rare color in passerines. We saw several nests along the Menanggul and enjoyed them eye-to-eye from the canopy walkways (see Dave's cover photo). One two mornings, we saw a freshly fledged young from the BRL platform. [N]

**DUSKY BROADBILL** (*Corydon sumatranus*) – But this one has the biggest bill of all! We had a marvelous response to playback along the Sukau boardwalk, when a (presumed family) group of 6 birds dashed in repeatedly overhead at the slightest playback! Also seen at BRL.

#### *Pittidae (Pittas)*

**GIANT PITTA** (*Pitta caerulea*) – We heard this one on our final morning at BRL, but it was quite distant and wouldn't come in. [\*]

**BANDED PITTA (BORNEAN)** (*Pitta guajana schwaneri*) – It would seem that it takes some combination of rain and timing to awaken many of the pittas. On our first morning afield at BRL, we heard a Banded Pitta calling, walked across

the road to view into the forest, and flushed it from near our feet. Of course, it was seen only by a couple of folks nearby. We tried it on successive days, and we never heard it again!

**BLUE-HEADED PITTA** (*Pitta baudii*) – Seeing the male of this handsome endemic is always a highlight of the tour, and this year some saw it along the entrance to the BRL canopy walkway, and then everyone saw it along the Jacuzzi Trail. [E]

**BLACK-HEADED PITTA** (*Pitta ussheri*) – Another highlight was watching a male of this gorgeous endemic along the Gomantong entrance road, where a bird responded to playback and moved back and forth until all could see it. [E]

**HOODED PITTA** (*Pitta sordida*) – This colorful pitta was wonderfully responsive too, near the base of the BRL canopy walkway, where it sang from a perch as we scoped it (with one group) and then flew in to several nearby perches on our final morning with another group. Another aesthetic highlight!

*Acanthizidae (Thornbills and Allies)*

**GOLDEN-BELLIED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone sulphurea*) – Mostly heard, but a few folks got on a bird we spotted from the BRL canopy walkway.

*Prionopidae (Helmetshrikes and Allies)*

**LARGE WOODSHRIKE** (*Tephrodornis gularis*) – Seen nicely from the RDC canopy walkway.

**RUFOUS-WINGED PHILENTOMA** (*Philentoma pyrhoptra*) – Between birds seen along the Jacuzzi Trail and along the BRL entrance road, I think everyone managed a good look at this one. Both color morphs were seen. The philentomas are now considered relatives of the helmetshrikes and woodshrikes and placed in the family Prionopidae.

**MAROON-BREASTED PHILENTOMA** (*Philentoma velata*) – This fancier cousin of the last species was seen well from the BRL canopy and along the road. This one is restricted to Sundaland.

*Artamidae (Woodswallows)*

**WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW** (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) – The only woodswallow in Borneo, it was seen well in open country throughout.

*Pityriaseidae (Bristlehead)*

**BORNEAN BRISTLEHEAD** (*Pityriasis gymnocephala*) – One of the most distinctive birds of Borneo, it is now placed in its own family, the only bird family endemic to Borneo (and the only one in Borneo new to Ron!). We were particularly fortunate to have encountered them on our very first morning in the lowlands, at the RDC canopy walkway. After Hamit glimpsed a distant bird, we managed to get its attention with playback, and eventually three birds came in-very close, for wonderful views and photos! A real trip highlight. The generic name *Pityriasis* derives from the Greek *pituriasis*, meaning bran-like eruptions on the head, referring to the bare, bristle-covered head of this weirdly wonderful bird. Its closest relatives are thought to be the bushshrikes and vangas. Considered Near Threatened. [E]



*The handsome Blue-throated Bee-eater was nesting along the Danum River and foraging (successfully!) just outside our rooms.  
(Photo by tour participant Jan Nordenberg)*

*Aegithinidae (Ioras)*

**COMMON IORA** (*Aegithina tiphia*) – Seen best on our pre-tour excursion to the KK Wetlands, where pairs were displaying, rump feathers puffed as they chased about along the KK waterfront.

**GREEN IORA** (*Aegithina viridissima*) – Considered Near Threatened owing to habitat pressure, this Sundaland canopy specialist was seen well repeatedly, especially from the towers and walkways.

*Campephagidae (Cuckoo-shrikes)*

**SUNDA CUCKOO-SHRIKE** (*Coracina larvata*) – Another Sundaland specialty, it was seen well at Kinabalu Park.

**LESSER CUCKOO-SHRIKE** (*Coracina fimbriata*) – Its smaller cousin, also restricted to Sundaland, was seen by all at the RDC canopy walkway.

**PIED TRILLER** (*Lalage nigra*) – Seen very well on our pre-tour excursion, both along Likas Lagoon and on the mangrove boardwalk.

**FIERY MINIVET** (*Pericrocotus igneus*) – Another Sundaland specialty, it was best seen from the BRL towers and was fiery indeed! Also considered Near Threatened.

**SCARLET MINIVET** (*Pericrocotus flammeus*) – Along the Gomantong entrance road, we studied a distant male minivet through the scopes, and we could see the divided patches of red in the wings, making it a member of this elegant species.

**GRAY-CHINNED MINIVET** (*Pericrocotus solaris*) – The highland minivet, it was seen with foraging flocks at Tambunan and Kinabalu, usually traveling in pairs.

**BAR-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE** (*Hemipus picatus*) – Seen by some along the road near the Tambunan Rafflesia Center before the rain started.

**BLACK-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE** (*Hemipus hirundinaceus*) – The lowland counterpart of the last species, this one is a Sundaland specialty. It was seen in the Kinabatangan and then daily at BRL, best from the canopy walkway (where it was feeding fledglings). [N]

#### *Pachycephalidae (Whistlers and Allies)*

**MANGROVE WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala cinerea*) – This Manukan Island inhabitant was seen by some folks on their pre-tour excursion there.

**BORNEAN WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala hypoxantha*) – This montane endemic, with the strong song, was seen well repeatedly at Kinabalu Park. [E]

#### *Vireonidae (Vireos)*

**BLYTH'S SHRIKE-BABBLER (BLYTH'S)** (*Pteruthius aeralatus robinsoni*) – Formerly classified as subspecies of White-browed Shrike-Babbler, the aeralatus group (including robinsoni, of the highlands of Borneo) has been elevated to a full species, as Blyth's Shrike-Babbler. Recent genetic studies have shown that the shrike-babblers are more closely related to vireos than to the babblers (Timaliidae) and that the whole group needed reassessment; hence the changes. The aeralatus group occurs from N Pakistan to S China and through Sundaland. We saw a female of the Bornean subspecies along the road below the Timpohon gate on Kinabalu.

**WHITE-BELLIED ERPORNIS** (*Erpornis zantholeuca*) – Formerly called "White-bellied Yuhina," this species too was shown by genetic studies to be more closely related to vireos than to the real yuhinas, with which it shares its general morphology. We had eye-to-eye looks at a very responsive bird along the RDC canopy walkway.

#### *Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)*

**DARK-THROATED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus xanthonotus*) – Our first one was seen from the RDC walkway, after which we saw them at Gomantong and BRL, especially in the canopy; another Sundaland specialty that's considered Near Threatened.

**BLACK-AND-CRIMSON ORIOLE** (*Oriolus cruentus*) – Even more geographically restricted than the last species, this chunky highland oriole is found only on the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, and Borneo. We all had good looks at it near the Tambunan Rafflesia Center.

#### *Dicruridae (Drongos)*

**ASHY DRONGO** (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*) – Of the endemic race stigmatops, this handsome gray drongo was fairly common throughout the highlands.

**BRONZED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus aeneus*) – Seen nicely at BRL.

**HAIR-CRESTED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus hottentottus*) – This one with the extremely curled tail was seen first at our stop to try for Pygmy White-eye en route to Kinabalu Park, then several times at Kinabalu.

**GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus paradiseus brachyphorus*) – Fanciest of the drongos, this one was scoped from the RDC Trogon Tower, where an adult was feeding a fledgling. Their varied song was often heard from the BRL canopy walkway. [N]

#### *Rhipiduridae (Fantails)*

**WHITE-THROATED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura albicollis*) – The common and confiding fantail of the highlands.

**PIED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura javanica*) – The common and confiding fantail of the lowlands.

**SPOTTED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura perlata*) – But this Sundaland specialty is scarce by comparison. Pairs were seen from the BRL walkway and nearby road on three different days, usually in association with a flock.

#### *Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)*

**BLACK-NAPED MONARCH** (*Hypothymis azurea*) – This handsome monarch was seen nicely in the lowlands, from RDC to BRL. At the RDC walkway, a female was feeding a fledgling. The adult male is a real knockout! [N]

**ASIAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER** (*Terpsiphone paradisi*) – We all had fabulous views of a cooperative long-tailed male from the BRL canopy walkway, and it was a real favorite. Most of the adult males in Borneo are stunning white-morph birds.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**CRESTED JAY** (*Platylophus galericulatus coronatus*) – This secretive Sundaland specialty was seen by all along the road at BRL, when we stopped for the Chestnut-naped Forktail. The race *coronatus*, brown instead of blue-black, is restricted to Borneo and Sumatra.

**BLACK MAGPIE** (*Platysmurus leucopterus aterrimus*) – The all-black race, endemic to Borneo, is a good candidate for a split from birds of the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra. On this trip they were seen by some along the road at BRL. The one along the Jacuzzi Trail was not very cooperative, and Dave may have been the only one who got on it.

**SHORT-TAILED MAGPIE** (*Cissa thalassina*) – This stunning corvid, found only in Borneo and Java, was a real favorite at Kinabalu, where we watched it at close range (very near our lodge) and thrilled to its varied--and loud!--repertoire of songs.

**BORNEAN TREEPIE** (*Dendrocitta cinerascens*) – This distinctive specialty was seen daily in the highlands, from Tambunan Rafflesia Center through our stay at Kinabalu. [E]

**SLENDER-BILLED CROW** (*Corvus enca*) – Encountered daily in the lowlands.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**PACIFIC SWALLOW** (*Hirundo tahitica*) – Common throughout and seen nesting in various places, especially under the eaves at BRL. [N]

*Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers)*

**GRAY-HEADED CANARY-FLYCATCHER** (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*) – This widespread species is uncommon at BRL, where we encountered it only once: It was seen by the "couples group" with RAR & Wang on the Belian Trail at BRL.

*Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**VELVET-FRONTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta frontalis*) – Seen briefly by some from the RDC canopy tower, where it got away. Then we all saw two birds working the tall trunks off the BRL entrance road on our final afternoon there.

*Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)*

**PUFF-BACKED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus eutilotus*) – Seen by most on our first morning at BRL, when we all walked out the entrance road.

**BLACK-HEADED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus atriceps*) – Seen first at our stop between the Tambunan Rafflesia Center and Kinabalu Park and then on three days at BRL.

**BORNEAN BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus montis*) – As split from Black-crested Bulbul, this yellow-throated, dark-eyed bulbul inhabits the lower montane forests of north-central Borneo. We watched it along the road near the Tambunan Rafflesia Center. [E]

**FLAVESCENT BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus flavescens leucops*) – The pale-faced race *leucops*, elevated to full-species status by some, is restricted to the mountains of north-central Borneo. The Summit Trail group saw it well on their hike up Mt Kinabalu.

**YELLOW-VENTED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus goiavier*) – Common and widespread in disturbed habitats of the lowlands.

**OLIVE-WINGED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus plumosus*) – Fairly common in secondary woodland throughout the lowlands.

**CREAM-VENTED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus simplex*) – Seen by some at BRL on 19 June.

**RED-EYED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus brunneus*) – This Sundaland bulbul, common throughout the lowlands, had a slightly orange-tinted red eye.

**SPECTACLED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus erythrophthalmos*) – Fairly common in the lowland forests and seen well at BRL, especially from the canopy walkway. Another Sundaland specialty.

**HAIRY-BACKED BULBUL** (*Tricholestes criniger*) – This distinctive bulbul, with the big yellow eyering and the whiny call, was seen well repeatedly, first from the RDC walkway, then on the Menanggul and along the Sukau boardwalk, and then repeatedly at BRL, where it was feeding fledglings. Another Sundaland specialty. [N]

**FINSCH'S BULBUL** (*Alophoixus finschii*) – This generally scarce Sundaland specialty, considered Near Threatened, was surprisingly conspicuous this trip; it was seen daily at BRL, including from the canopy walkway (where I hadn't seen it before).

**OCHRACEOUS BULBUL** (*Alophoixus ochraceus*) – This big, puff-throated, montane bulbul was seen well several times at Kinabalu after our initial great views of responsive birds at our stop between Tambunan Rafflesia Center and Ranau.

**GRAY-CHEEKED BULBUL** (*Alophoixus bres*) – The lowland counterpart of the last species, this puffy-throated bulbul was seen well several times at BRL.

**YELLOW-BELLIED BULBUL** (*Alophoixus phaeocephalus*) – We all saw this pretty Sundaland bulbul along the BRL entrance road on our first morning there, when we walked out the road together.

**BUFF-VENTED BULBUL** (*Iole olivacea*) – This was the big one with the pale iris, seen at RDC and BRL. It's another Sundaland bulbul that is considered Near Threatened.

**STREAKED BULBUL** (*Ixos malaccensis*) – This Near Threatened Sundaland specialty was seen well from the RDC canopy walkway, where two birds were flycatching from the treetops.

#### Cettiidae (Bush-Warblers and Allies)

**BORNEAN STUBTAIL** (*Urosphena whiteheadi*) – What a cutie! Its yellow mouth lining is quite exposed as it opens its mouth widely to sing. And its song competes with that of a Blackpoll Warbler to test a birder's hearing! Our good looks were along the Bukit Ular trail, where everyone watched it singing and hopping along in the leaf litter. Note that it too is a Whitehead's endemic. [E]

**YELLOW-BELLIED WARBLER** (*Abroscopus superciliaris*) – This was the bamboo specialist (with the sweet song) that was seen well by all when a pair came in close near the Tambunan Rafflesia Center as we stood under the picnic rain shelter.

**MOUNTAIN TAILORBIRD** (*Phyllergates cucullatus*) – Another real cutie, but not actually a tailorbird; now placed in the Cettiidae. It was seen well at Kinabalu, especially near the garbage cans just down the road from the Timponon gate.

**SUNDA BUSH-WARBLER** (*Cettia vulcania*) – This one was the friendly bush-warbler this trip, and we saw them well repeatedly at Kinabalu. As implied by its name, this is another Sundaland specialty.

#### Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)

**MOUNTAIN WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus trivirgatus*) – A.k.a. Mountain Leaf-Warbler, this one was quite common at Kinabalu, where it was seen well.

**YELLOW-BREASTED WARBLER** (*Seicercus montis*) – This charming Sundaland warbler, with the high-pitched song, was quite common with small-bird parties at Kinabalu.

#### Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

**FRIENDLY BUSH-WARBLER** (*Bradypterus accentor*) – The Summit Trail group managed to hear it on the windy day they climbed Mt. Kinabalu, but it wouldn't come close. Now placed in the Locustellidae, along with the grassbirds. [E\*]

**STRIATED GRASSBIRD** (*Megalurus palustris*) – Seen well in the palm plantation country between Sukau and Gomantong, where it sang from the wires.

#### Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

**DARK-NECKED TAILORBIRD** (*Orthotomus atrogularis*) – We called in some very responsive birds along the Gomantong entrance road, and then some saw it at BRL as well.

**RUFOUS-TAILED TAILORBIRD** (*Orthotomus sericeus*) – We had lovely looks at these endearing tailorbirds, starting at Sukau Rainforest Lodge. They were also common around our chalets at BRL.

**ASHY TAILORBIRD** (*Orthotomus ruficeps*) – Almost equally endearing, it too was common in the lowlands. Our first were on our pre-tour excursion to the KK Wetlands.

**YELLOW-BELLIED PRINIA** (*Prinia flaviventris*) – This one is widespread in the more open areas of the lowlands, where we heard it regularly. The Mesilau group had good looks at birds in the agricultural fields near Kundusang, and everyone caught up with it at BRL, where we called one in close after the rain (and our party at Jack's). A roosting bird was spotlighted on one of our night drives as well.

#### Zosteropidae (Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies)

**CHESTNUT-CRESTED YUHINA** (*Yuhina everetti*) – Common and captivating, tight flocks of these little yuhinas were regular in the montane forest edge at Tambunan and Kinabalu. [E]

**PYGMY WHITE-EYE** (*Oculocincta squamifrons*) – This little, rather nondescript endemic warranted a stop on our route between Tambunan and Ranau, where one bird blasted back and forth a few times, allowing only the quickest views. But they were then seen twice at BRL, the last a little foraging flock along the entrance road. Most folks react by asking: "Is that all there is?" [E]

**MOUNTAIN BLACK-EYE** (*Chlorocharis emiliae*) – This higher-elevation endemic, rarely seen below the Timponon gate, was spotted by Hazwan eating the pathside red berries, where we looked for Golden-naped Barbets. A pair then cooperated by feeding on brilliant orange berries in the understory nearby, where we all saw it well. It belongs to a

monotypic genus and is not very like other white-eyes. [E]

**BLACK-CAPPED WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops atricapilla*) – This Sundaland specialty is a common species in montane Borneo, where we saw them repeatedly at Tambunan and Kinabalu.

*Pellorneidae (Fulvettas and Ground Babblers)*

**BROWN FULVETTA** (*Alcippe brunneicauda*) – Yet another Sundaland specialty that is considered Near Threatened; it was seen eye-to-eye at BRL.

**BLACK-THROATED WREN-BABBLER** (*Turdinus atrigularis*) – What a songster! Ultimately, everyone had good looks at this big, skulking wren-babbler that was singing enthusiastically below the start of the BRL canopy walkway. Considered Near Threatened. [E]

**HORSFIELD'S BABBLER** (*Malacocincla sepiaria*) – This Sundaland specialty was seen quite well by all at Gomantong, where it was singing spontaneously. Also seen at BRL.

**SHORT-TAILED BABBLER** (*Malacocincla malaccensis*) – Yet another Sundaland babbler, it was seen well at BRL, when it responded to playback along the entrance road on our first morning afield there.

**STRIPED WREN-BABBLER** (*Kenopia striata*) – What great scope views of that singing bird along the Sukau boardwalk! Another Sundaland specialty.

**TEMMINCK'S BABBLER** (*Pellorneum pyrrogenys*) – Yet another skulking babbler confined to Sundaland, this one is a highlander. Some folks got on it as it responded (poorly!) to playback along the road above our lodgings at Kinabalu Park.

**BLACK-CAPPED BABBLER** (*Pellorneum capistratum*) – Heard from the Sukau boardwalk, this one wouldn't play. The "couples group" with RAR on the Jacuzzi Trail had a nice look at a responsive bird at BRL. Like most of the babblers we saw, it's another Sundaland specialty.

**WHITE-CHESTED BABBLER** (*Trichastoma rostratum*) – Preferring to forage right at the edge of the water, this Sundaland specialty was seen (and heard!) quite well along the Menanggul and the Tenangang in the Kinabatangan. As common as it is along the waterways of the Kinabatangan, it's hard to believe that it is considered Near Threatened.

**FERRUGINOUS BABBLER** (*Trichastoma bicolor*) – Seen well by all along the Gomantong road, this Sundaland specialty is fairly common in the lowlands. We saw additional birds at BRL.

**MOUSTACHED BABBLER** (*Malacopteron magnirostre*) – With a nice duet, or sometimes a chorus of a whole family group, this Sundaland babbler was seen well by all from a lower tower of the BRL canopy walkway.

**SOOTY-CAPPED BABBLER** (*Malacopteron affine*) – Seen well by all on our first morning at BRL, when we all walked out the entrance road. It too occurs only in Sundaland and is considered Near Threatened.

**SCALY-CROWNED BABBLER** (*Malacopteron cinereum*) – This was the smaller one with the pinkish legs that was seen by Wang's group on the BRL Hornbill Trail on our final morning afield.

**RUFOUS-CROWNED BABBLER** (*Malacopteron magnum*) – We had super looks at this species that came in close below us in response to playback from the BRL canopy tower; it was fairly big and had dark legs and no black scaling on its rufous crown. I think everyone caught up with it before we left BRL. Like so many of these babblers, it's found only in Sundaland and considered Near Threatened.

**MOUNTAIN WREN-BABBLER** (*Napothera crassa*) – Another confiding endemic, this one came in close for on group along the Bukit Ular trail and for others along the Mempening trail at Kinabalu. [E]

**BORNEAN WREN-BABBLER** (*Ptilochlora leucogrammica*) – This one wasn't singing much during our visit to BRL; we heard it on only one morning--off the entrance road. Playback definitely worked to bring it closer, but the situation for



*One of our favorite companions at Borneo Rainforest Lodge, this Whiskered Treeswift was the first of many we'd see.*

*(Photo by tour participant Dave Harvey)*

viewing was really tough and only Maureen got a clear view of it. Later attempts to rouse the same bird(s) were met with silence. Considered Vulnerable. [E]

### Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes)

**SUNDA LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Garrulax palliatus*) – Found only on Sumatra and Borneo, this is another real specialty of the trip, albeit reasonably common at Mt. Kinabalu. We had several good looks at big-bird flocks with this species being one of the primary components, especially along the road near our lodge.

**BARE-HEADED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Garrulax calvus*) – As split from Black Laughingthrush, this weirdly wonderful laughingthrush has become another Bornean endemic. I think Jan was the only one to see it well in the first flock, and Ron then found a small group up the Pandanus trail when he stayed back the morning of the Kinabalu climb. [E]

**CHESTNUT-CAPPED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (CHESTNUT-HOODED)** (*Garrulax mitratus treacheri*) – This race too is split by some authorities as Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush, in which case it would be another Bornean endemic of the north-central mountain ranges, where it is quite common (and seen well by all). It seemed to lead a number of big-bird flocks and was quite vocal during our visit.

### Timaliidae (Babblers)

**RUFOUS-FRONTED BABBLER** (*Stachyridopsis rufifrons*) – Seen well by all from the canopy walkway at BRL.

**BOLD-STRIPED TIT-BABBLER** (*Macronous bornensis*) – As recently split from Striped Tit-Babbler, this noisy babbler has become yet another Bornean endemic. We all saw it well, first as we awaited the bat emergence at Gomantong Caves, and then at Sukau and BRL, where it is quite common on the grounds near our rooms. [E]

**FLUFFY-BACKED TIT-BABBLER** (*Macronous ptilosus*) – This Near Threatened Sundaland specialty is among my favorite babblers. It was quite responsive to playback along the Gomantong entrance road, where we all managed to see its electric-blue eye ring, but it didn't erect its long back plumes this time. Also seen out the BRL entrance road by some.

**GRAY-THROATED BABBLER** (*Stachyris nigriceps*) – This Sundaland specialty was nicely cooperative in the highlands at Kinabalu, where it is fairly common.

**GRAY-HEADED BABBLER** (*Stachyris poliocephala*) – These Sundaland babblers were heard in the tangles above their bathing stream along the road one afternoon at BRL, but they wouldn't come out into view. [\*]

**BLACK-THROATED BABBLER** (*Stachyris nigricollis*) – This one was surprisingly cooperative along the Gomantong entrance road, expanding its blue gular pouches as it sang in response to playback. Also a Sundaland specialty that is considered Near Threatened.

**CHESTNUT-RUMPED BABBLER** (*Stachyris maculata*) – Heard several times at BRL, but they were seen only by the group with RAR & Hamit on our final morning afield there. Another Sundaland specialty that is considered Near Threatened.

**CHESTNUT-WINGED BABBLER** (*Stachyris erythroptera*) – Common and widespread in the lowlands, it was seen well along the road at BRL, where a pair duetted, the male inflating its blue pouch, as we watched; the mellow whistled song of this common Sundaland specialty is heard throughout the lowlands.

**CHESTNUT-BACKED SCIMITAR-BABBLER** (*Pomatorhinus montanus*) – We all had good looks at this Sundaland beauty along the boardwalk in to Gomantong Caves, and then the group with Paul in the BRL canopy walkway on our final morning afield had exceptional looks again.

### Irenidae (Fairy-bluebirds)

**ASIAN FAIRY-BLUEBIRD** (*Irena puella*) – Now representing a family of just two closely related species, this beauty is generally uncommon on our route. This trip we saw more than usual, first as a fly-by male at Poring, but perhaps the best from the BRL canopy walkway. Dynamite blue!

### Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

**ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN** (*Copsychus saularis*) – Quite common in edge habitats throughout the lowlands and foothills. The race we saw was adamsi, with mostly black underparts but white undertail coverts.

**RUFOUS-TAILED SHAMA** (*Copsychus pyropygus*) – A generally shy and uncommon resident of lowland rainforest, this Sundaland specialty was singing spontaneously during our visit to BRL, but it didn't respond well to playback, at one point flying across the road, where we glimpsed it naked-eye. We never got our bins on it, so it was essentially heard only. Considered Near Threatened. [\*]

**WHITE-RUMPED SHAMA (WHITE-CROWNED)** (*Copsychus malabaricus stricklandii*) – Common (by its lovely song) throughout the lowlands, but not always easily seen. We did have some nice views, perhaps best along the Sukau boardwalk, where we watched a pair attending a nest. Myers, Phillipps & Phillipps, and others split *stricklandii*, of Sabah and NE Kalimantan, as a separate species, White-crowned Shama, but Cornell retains it as a race of White-rumped in the



Clements checklist. [N]

- LONG-BILLED BLUE-FLYCATCHER** (*Cyornis caerulatus*) – This Sundaland blue-flycatcher, considered Vulnerable, was seen well by all along the trails at BRL, where we had some responsive birds.
- MALAYSIAN BLUE-FLYCATCHER** (*Cyornis turcosus*) – Fairly common along the Kinabatangan tributaries, this Near Threatened, Sundaland specialty was seen well there and then seen sleeping on a branch beside the Sukau boardwalk twice by darkness! We also watched a female feeding a fledgling along the Menanggul. [N]
- BORNEAN BLUE-FLYCATCHER** (*Cyornis superbus*) – We saw this endemic blue-flycatcher well several times at BRL, including once behind Jack's chalet and then, exceptionally well, along the road near the base of the canopy walkway when a male flew to the ground amidst three participants watching for pittas! [E]
- PYGMY BLUE-FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapella hodgsoni*) – This little beauty breeds at Kinabalu, but it's scarce. On this trip, it was seen twice, both times by Hamit's groups, first along the Silau-Silau our first morning, and then along the Bukit Ular trail on our final morning at Kinabalu.
- INDIGO FLYCATCHER** (*Eumyias indigo*) – A common breeder at Kinabalu, it was less conspicuous than usual this trip, but everyone managed good looks eventually.
- VERDITER FLYCATCHER** (*Eumyias thalassinus*) – Seen well by both groups with Hamit & Wang out the BRL entrance road, where a fledgling was being fed by an adult. [N]
- EYEBROWED JUNGLE-FLYCATCHER** (*Vauriella gularis*) – This unobtrusive endemic was seen nicely by all on our first morning at Kinabalu. [E]
- WHITE-BROWED SHORTWING** (*Brachypteryx montana*) – This songster was mostly heard, but seen by some at Kinabalu.
- BORNEAN WHISTLING-THRUSH** (*Myophonus borneensis*) – Perhaps the dullest of the heavy-set whistling-thrushes; we had great views of it at Kinabalu and Mesilau, where a spotted fledgling sat atop a building. [EN]
- WHITE-CROWNED FORKTAIL** (*Enicurus leschenaulti frontalis*) – This is the widespread lowland race, which some saw in flight along the Jacuzzi Trail at BRL.
- WHITE-CROWNED FORKTAIL** (*Enicurus leschenaulti borneensis*) – A.k.a. Bornean Forktail, this is the endemic, montane race, which is the one we saw along the Silau-Silau at Kinabalu, thanks to Hazwan. It has a longer tail and more white on the crown than the lowland birds, and recent molecular studies suggest that *borneensis* could be a distinct species, in which case it would become another Bornean endemic.
- CHESTNUT-NAPED FORKTAIL** (*Enicurus ruficapillus*) – This one was flushed up as we were all heading out the BRL entrance road by truck early one morning. Some folks, especially Deby, got good binocular views of it when we walked back along the road, and then the "singles group" saw it well along the nearby stream. It sang from close to the stream, making us think it was nesting nearby, but subsequent efforts for the "couples' group" failed to relocate it. It's a spiffy Sundaland specialty.
- LITTLE PIED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula westermanni*) – Several pairs of this widespread species were seen at Kinabalu, especially well behind Fred & Sonia's cabin, where they staked out a pair feeding fledglings for us! [N]
- SNOWY-BROWED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula hyperythra*) – Seen daily at Kinabalu, where a fledgling again represents breeding activity. [N]

#### *Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

- FRUIT-HUNTER** (*Chlamydochaera jefferyi*) – The uphill group on Bukit Ular on 14 June had lovely views of a male right above us, but it flew just before the downhill group reached it, doggone it! The nest that we had watched along the Mempening trail, thanks to a tip from Adam, turned out to have fledged a young Everett's Thrush (instead of a Fruit-hunter!) the day before we went to see it. [E]

#### *Sturnidae (Starlings)*

- ASIAN GLOSSY STARLING** (*Aplonis panayensis*) – A regular resident in disturbed habitats, from towns and gardens to palm plantations, this one is usually one of the first birds seen when folks arrive KK.
- COMMON HILL MYNA** (*Gracula religiosa*) – The only native myna in Borneo, it's also the handsomest. We saw pairs along the Kinabatangan and at BRL.
- JAVAN MYNA** (*Acridotheres javanicus*) – This was the one we saw at the Sepilok Nature Resort, where introduced birds have become established locally and expanded along roads through the palm plantations toward the coast. It would be hard to separate this species from Crested Myna from a moving bus, and since Crested is not known from the Sukau/Gomantong road, I removed that species that was thought to have been seen along the road. It may well have been seen by some folks right in KK, where it has colonized, however. [I]

Chloropseidae (Leafbirds)

**GREATER GREEN LEAFBIRD** (*Chloropsis sonnerati*) – The females are more easily distinguished than the males in the two look-alike green leafbirds. Some folks had nice views of females of this species, with the yellow throat and big yellow eyering, from the canopy walkway at BRL. When the two species are together, the size difference is notable as well. Both green leafbirds are Sundaland specialties.

**LESSER GREEN LEAFBIRD** (*Chloropsis cyanopogon*) – Seen first at Sepilok; we had repeated good views from the BRL canopy walkway, where it seemed common enough to be a distraction! Considered Near Threatened.

**BORNEAN LEAFBIRD** (*Chloropsis kinabaluensis*) – As split from Blue-winged Leafbird, another Bornean endemic; we saw pairs chasing in mid-air at the Rafflesia Center and noted the black masks/throats of the females, which Blue-winged females lack. Distracted by a spiderhunter, we abandoned the leafbirds, only to find the rain commencing afterward. Sorry! But some folks did get good looks. [E]

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

**YELLOW-BREASTED FLOWERPECKER** (*Prionochilus maculatus*) – This Sundaland specialty was seen well along the road at BRL.

**YELLOW-RUMPED FLOWERPECKER** (*Prionochilus xanthopygius*) – Often seen feeding near the last species, this handsome endemic was first seen at Gomantong, but seen best along the BRL entrance road. [E]

**ORANGE-BELLIED FLOWERPECKER** (*Dicaeum trigonostigma*) – First seen on our pre-tour excursion to the KK Wetlands, then at Poring and BRL. The males are quite striking!

**BLACK-SIDED FLOWERPECKER** (*Dicaeum monticulum*) – Though it was first seen near the Rafflesia Center, our best views of this handsome montane endemic were at Kinabalu, especially in the melastome hedgerow just outside our lodgings. [E]

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

**RUBY-CHEEKED SUNBIRD** (*Chalcoparia singalensis*) – Seen first from the RDC canopy walkway, where a male cooperated nicely; then in the Kinabatangan, at Gomantong, and at BRL, where it was again seen at close range from the canopy walkway.

**PLAIN SUNBIRD** (*Anthreptes simplex*) – Appropriately named, these little guys are fairly inconspicuous, but they were more inconspicuous than usual this trip at BRL, where we finally caught up with them. Another Sundaland specialty.

**PLAIN-THROATED SUNBIRD** (*Anthreptes malacensis*) – Seen widely in gardens and secondary lowland lowland forest edge, this widespread sunbird was seen nicely at Manukan, KK, Poring, Sepilok, and near Gomantong.

**RED-THROATED SUNBIRD** (*Anthreptes rhodolaemus*) – A primary forest specialist confined to Sundaland, this scarce sunbird, seen first on our March tour, was seen again this trip at BRL--twice, such that everyone saw it! An inhabitant of primary rainforest, it's considered Near Threatened and decreasing.

**PURPLE-NAPED SUNBIRD** (*Hypogramma hypogrammicum*) – This understory sunbird, with the distinctive call note, is hard to see well since it's always flying through the forest. A male was seen well by most folks along the Gomantong road, where Ron spotted the nest as the female flew off. [N]

**VAN HASSELT'S SUNBIRD** (*Leptocoma brasiliana*) – Formerly known as Purple-throated Sunbird, this little sunbird was seen by one group at BRL on 20 June. Note that the Clements checklist follows others in splitting this species (which occurs from India to SE Asia and the Greater Sundas) from the Philippine bird, *L. sperata*. You might scratch your head, however, about the specific moniker "brasiliana."

**COPPER-THROATED SUNBIRD** (*Leptocoma calcostetha*) – A female of this coastal species, which we've never seen on our Borneo tour, was seen and photographed on Manukan Island by folks on a pre-tour excursion there. Good find!

**OLIVE-BACKED SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris jugularis*) – Common in disturbed habitats throughout and seen feeding fledglings.



*One of the most bizarre and exciting finds of the trip was this wonderful Bornean Horned Frog which Hamit spotted on our first night walk at BRL. A lifer even for Rose Ann! (Photo by guide Rose Ann Rowlett)*

## [N]

- EASTERN CRIMSON SUNBIRD** (*Aethopyga siparaja*) – This striking sunbird was seen first on the pre-tour Manukan Island excursion, then breathtakingly at the Poring parking lot, then later at Sepilok and BRL as well.
- TEMMINCK'S SUNBIRD** (*Aethopyga temminckii*) – This Sundaland specialty is a lower montane equivalent of the last species, though even more brilliant (if that's possible!). We saw it wonderfully at Kinabalu, especially in the hanging flowers outside the Liwagu dining room.
- LITTLE SPIDERHUNTER** (*Arachnothera longirostra*) – The commonest of the spiderhunters, this one was seen repeatedly, at Sukau and at BRL. Even then, it was heard more often than seen. We all had a particularly nice view of one at a flower off Jack's balcony at BRL.
- LONG-BILLED SPIDERHUNTER** (*Arachnothera robusta*) – We had good studies of this Sundaland specialty especially along the BRL entrance road, where we could compare it to other species of spiderhunters foraging in the same flowering tree. Its specific moniker is appropriate! Also seen from both RDC and BRL canopy walkways.
- SPECTACLED SPIDERHUNTER** (*Arachnothera flavigaster*) – Also a Sundaland specialty, this one was seen by all at BRL, where they foraged in the same flowers out the entrance road. This was the one with the very prominent yellow eyering and the smaller ear spot.
- YELLOW-EARED SPIDERHUNTER** (*Arachnothera chrysogenys*) – This was the one with the prominent ear spot and the narrower yellow eyering. We had some very nice looks at both these Sundaland specialties at BRL.
- STREAKY-BREASTED SPIDERHUNTER** (*Arachnothera affinis everetti*) – Apparently all the birds of Sabah belong to this taxon. According to Myers: "Previously this distinctive subspecies was treated as an endemic, Bornean Spiderhunter *A. everetti*, but *A. affinis* on Java and Bali shows many similarities and thus both taxa are better treated as one species *A. affinis* (*A. a. everetti* from Borneo, *A. a. affinis* from Java and Bali)." Sheldon, Moyle, & Kennard (Ornithology of Sabah, Ornith. Monog. 52, 2001) examined all the specimens from Sabah (from highlands and lowlands) and found only this species, and no *A. modesta*, Gray-breasted. We had repeated good looks at this specialty, first near the Rafflesia Center and then almost daily in the flowers near our chalets at BRL.
- WHITEHEAD'S SPIDERHUNTER** (*Arachnothera juliae*) – Yip! Yip! for having seen this, one of the toughest of the montane endemics, on our first official tour day, near Tambunan Rafflesia Center, where we saw at least two different birds well. It's quite a different spiderhunter! [E]

## Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

- ORIENTAL PIPIT** (*Anthus rufulus malayensis*) – This was the pipit at the Lahad Datu airport, our final new bird of the tour.

## Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

- EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** (*Passer montanus*) – Introduced in Borneo, but apparently doing quite well around human habitations throughout. [I]

## Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

- DUSKY MUNIA** (*Lonchura fuscans*) – Seen fairly widely, from KK to Poring to Sukau; but best at BRL, even from the dining table, where they were the only munia around--at the edge of primary forest. [E]
- CHESTNUT MUNIA** (*Lonchura atricapilla*) – An common resident in open areas throughout, it's a sharp-looking munia. We saw it first on the pre-tour excursions and then repeatedly during the tour.

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## MAMMALS

- COLUGO** (*Cynocephalus variegatus*) – What a fabulous critter! This exotic nocturnal mammal sails from tree to tree on "wings" of skin stretched among its limbs. We spotted one high on a tree trunk on our very first night drive at BRL. Belonging to the order Dermoptera, the Colugo has recently been shown to be our closest living relative outside of primates (see the following link for a short article on this and for a great photo of a Colugo with a baby sailing from one tree to another: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-491237/Our-closest-living-relative--rainforest-bat.html>).
- WRINKLE-LIPPED BAT** (*Tadarida [Chaerephon] plicata*) – The majority of the bats in the Gomantong Caves (where we had close looks) are of this species, which clearly provides ample prey for the Bat Hawks that gather each evening to feast. On our clear, breezy afternoon this trip, the bats were drifting off in separate little clouds, but in smaller numbers than usual. It was great fun to watch the Bat Hawks dive through the clouds!
- MOUNTAIN TREESHREW** (*Tupaia montana*) – This is the commonest montane treeshrew, seen by some at Kinabalu. These treeshrews provide the nitrogen needed by the world's largest pitcher plant. (See under Pitcher Plants in the Conclusions.) The Mesilau group also saw a tiny shrew-like critter that remains unidentified; it was moving under the

leaves at our feet! [E]

**CRAB-EATING MACAQUE** (*Macaca fascicularis*) – A.k.a. Long-tailed Macaque, it was common along the rivers in the Kinabatangan and roosting near our lodge at Sukau. What a ham!

**PIGTAIL MACAQUE** (*Macaca nemestrina*) – Seen in the Kinabatangan, where they regularly use the monkey bridges intended for the Orangutans.

**SILVERED LEAF MONKEY** (*Presbytis cristata*) – A.k.a. Silvered Langur. This species is a bit more widespread than the next, being found in peninsular Myanmar, Thailand, and Malaysia, as well as the Greater Sundas. We saw them in the Kinabatangan, where they were roosting by our lodge.

**RED LEAF MONKEY** (*Presbytis rubicunda*) – These lovely endemics were fairly common in the rainforests at Gomantong and BRL. To our surprise, one group also saw one (our first) along the Bukit Ular trail at Kinabalu, at ca. 6700'! [E]

**PROBOSCIS MONKEY** (*Nasalis larvatus*) – These fascinating monkeys with the great noses, fat bellies, and the long white tails (see Jan's cover photo) were another mammalian highlight along the Kinabatangan and its tributaries, where they gather to feed, socialize, and roost. By the way, the correct pronunciation for "proboscis" is with a soft s, as though there were no c, e.g., probossis. [E]

**GRAY GIBBON** (*Hylobates muelleri*) – Mostly heard, especially pre-dawn from across the river at BRL, but Paul managed to spot one distant animal that we could hear from along the BRL entrance road on our first morning there. It was in a distant fig, brachiating back and forth, showing best in the scopes only briefly before it would move behind dense foliage. Some folks got to see it, but it eventually disappeared. [E]

**ORANGUTAN** (*Pongo pygmaeus*) – Now usually called Bornean Orangutan, having been split from the larger Sumatran Orangutan. Our multiple encounters with this Endangered primate comprised another of the outstanding mammalian highlights of the trip (see Jan's cover photo). Our first was a mother with a baby along the boardwalk to the Gomantong caves. We would see more in the Kinabatangan and at stork-bil a total of 9, according to Mike, who counted them carefully! These nine included a big male that Wang found after noticing its backlit urine falling through the trees along the Jacuzzi Trail! We also observed several close sleeping platforms from the BRL canopy walkway. Orangutans average 73-180 lbs, with big males weighing 250 lbs or more. Considered Endangered by the IUCN Red List. [E]

**PALE GIANT SQUIRREL** (*Ratufa affinis*) – Generally considered a Sundaland specialty, of Near Threatened status, this big squirrel was seen well by some at Kinabalu Park, but by all of us from the RDC canopy towers.

**PREVOST'S SQUIRREL** (*Callosciurus prevostii*) – The common good-sized squirrel of the lowland rainforest, it was first seen at Poring and RDC and then seen daily at Sukau and BRL. They were particularly common in the trees close to the main lodge at BRL. The Bornean race is very dark with a chestnut belly.

**KINABALU SQUIRREL** (*Callosciurus baluensis*) – This big, scarce endemic was seen by the Summit Trail group on their climb up Kinabalu. [E]

**PLANTAIN SQUIRREL** (*Callosciurus notatus*) – Seen nicely at the KK Wetland and then several times elsewhere in the lowlands.

**BORNEAN BLACK-BANDED SQUIRREL** (*Callosciurus orestes*) – This was the one with the smaller, rounder white patch behind the ear, the striped sides, and whitish belly. We all saw this one well at Kinabalu. [E]

**JENTINK'S SQUIRREL** (*Sundasciurus jentinki*) – Seen our first morning, at the Tambunan Rafflesia Center. This one had white around the ears, a big white eye ring, and a whitish belly (with no stripes along the sides). It was fast-moving through the trees and is said to follow flocks of birds often. [E]

**SCULPTOR SQUIRREL** (*Glyphotes simus*) – We studied this one closely on our final morning at Kinabalu, examining the shape and placement of the ear spot and concluding it was an Ear-spot Squirrel, which is indeed quite similar. But further research disclosed that the very similar (but slightly smaller) Bornean Pygmy Squirrel, a.k.a. Red-bellied Sculptor Squirrel, replaces it in the highlands, occurring 1300-1700m (rather than in the Kinabalu foothills). We were around 1800m; so I think it was this species, which is also a Bornean endemic.

**PLAIN PYGMY SQUIRREL** (*Exilisciurus exilis*) – The endearing pygmy of the lowlands, it was seen regularly at Sukau and BRL, where it would run along the boardwalk banister near our rooms. [E]

**WHITEHEAD'S PYGMY SQUIRREL** (*Exilisciurus whiteheadi*) – The fanciest of the little squirrels, this one too is a montane Bornean endemic. Dave spotted it at the bottom of the Bukit Ular trail, and we were all lucky enough to see its fluffy white ear tufts. It's yet another of the 15 species named for John Whitehead, 19th Century British naturalist who explored N Borneo, especially Mt. Kinabalu. [E]

**RED GIANT FLYING SQUIRREL** (*Petaurista petaurista*) – Seen on 3 different nights on BRL night drives, this was the bigger flying squirrel, with an orange tint to its pelage and a black-tipped tail.

**THOMAS'S FLYING SQUIRREL** (*Aeromys thomasi*) – We had a great view of a pair of this endemic--and even got to see one sailing!--on our third BRL night drive. We could see that it did not have a black tip to the tail, and it's a bit more slender than the Red Giant, as well as being a darker rust. [E]

**SUNDA STINK BADGER** (*Mydaus javanensis*) – I can't resist adding this skunk-like critter, even though it was "smelled only" by the group. I did get to see one cross under the Sukau boardwalk at 5AM one sleepless morning.

**MASKED PALM CIVET** (*Paguma larvata*) – One of the mammalian highlights of the trip, for the downhill group along the Bukit Ular trail on 14 June, was seeing this impressive civet that Hamit spotted as a patch of fur in a treetop along the trail! Thanks to Fred Dalbey for the wonderful photo.

**BORNEAN PYGMY ELEPHANT** (*Elephas maximus borneensis*) – Another diurnal mammalian highlight was finding and watching a herd of 15-20 Bornean Pygmy Elephants feeding in the "elephant grass" along the banks of the Kinabatangan (see my cover photo). We had heard they had been seen upriver the day before. We headed upriver the following afternoon, and we found them strung out along the bank, where we got to watch as they came to the water's edge. There were adult males and females, and young. They are indeed smaller than their Indian cousins and can easily disappear in the tall grass. Though they are still considered a race of the larger Indian Elephant on our list, most authorities now elevate the smaller Bornean race to full-species status based on DNA evidence. We also noted their proportionately long tails. Yip! Yip!

**BEARDED PIG** (*Sus barbatus*) – One big Bearded Pig was seen disappearing along the bank of the Kinabatangan.

**GREATER MOUSE DEER** (*Tragulus napu*) – One of these miniature deer was seen, at least by the folks in front, along the BRL Nature Trail during our first night walk there.

**SAMBAR** (*Cervus unicolor*) – We saw a few females during our several night drives at BRL. Some individuals had what appeared to be angry wounds on their chests, which are explained by Wikipedia: "Adult males and pregnant or lactating females possess an unusual hairless, blood-red, spot located about half way down the underside of their throats. This sometimes oozes a white liquid, and is apparently glandular in nature."



*The colorful Nepenthes burbigeae was the first of four species of pitcher plants we saw along the Nepenthes Trail at Mesilau. (Photo by tour participant Deby Galloway)*

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

One of the joys of birding in Borneo is all the delightful distractions that come in varied and exotic forms from other parts of the animal kingdom. Our triplist database contains only birds and mammals, but we had a long list of additional write-ins, including a few plant species of exceptional interest. To mention a very few, emphasizing those that we were able to identify:

Among the plants:

--*Rafflesia keithii* - We traveled to Poring to see the flower of this fascinating Bornean endemic, the largest of its genus in Borneo and the second largest in the world. An endoparasite, it has no stems, leaves, or true roots, deriving its energy entirely from its host, a woody vine in the genus *Tetrastigma* (Vitaceae). We discussed how scientists and the Kinabalu Park staff work with locals to enhance the environmental conditions favorable to this rare and impressive flower, namely by making its host vine available for distribution on nearby private lands. It has worked well, increasing the probability of our encountering an ephemeral *Rafflesia* flower somewhere near Poring on our tour. This June we saw several buds and a fabulous blossom on its third day open. A recent study on *Rafflesia cantleyi* determined that the parasite was not only absorbing nutrients from its host, but was actually stealing genes! For details on this horizontal gene transfer, a rare

phenomenon among organisms more complex than bacteria, go to:  
<http://www.biomedcentral.com/presscenter/pressreleases/20120608>

--Carnivorous *Nepenthes* pitcher plants - The pitcher plant center of Borneo (and the world!) is upper-elevation Mt. Kinabalu. As an alternative to climbing the Summit Trail in search of Friendly Bush-Warbler, some of us drove to Mesilau, at 2000m, where we took a steep (but short) trail to see 4 different species of pitcher plants: *N. burbigae* (a colorful one!), *N. fusca* (a small one), *N. tentaculata* (the same one that was seen by the group birding the Summit Trail); and *N. rajah* (see my cover photo), a.k.a. Rajah Brooke's Pitcher Plant, the largest pitcher plant in the world, its pitcher holding up to 3.5 liters of liquid! Recent research has revealed the "evolutionary incentive" for high-elevation pitcher plants to have evolved bigger and bigger pitchers: It's to serve as a toilet for treeshrews! Treeshrews, which are common at these high elevations (where insects become increasingly scarce) are attracted by the sweet secretion on the underside of the pitcher's lid. To reach it, they climb onto the pitcher's sturdy rim, which fits them perfectly, and sip away, meanwhile defecating into the pitcher to mark their feeding territory--thus supplying all the nitrogen critical to these normally carnivorous plants. See the following link for a full explanation, with photos: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth\\_news/newsid\\_8552000/8552157.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth_news/newsid_8552000/8552157.stm)

Reptiles & amphibians of particular interest were:

--the Mangrove Skinks (*Emoia atrocostata*) that were skittering in the mud among the mangrove roots at the KK Wetland. This species is one of the few lizards besides geckos to colonize many Pacific islands, perhaps because they tolerate saltwater.

--Apparently the most common skink we encountered--the bronzy-brown one in the leaf litter throughout the lowlands--was what is often called "common sun skink" (*Eutropis multifasciatus*), formerly in the genus *Mabuya*. It occurs throughout the region.

--that 12' Estuarine Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) along the Kinabatangan that so blended with the mud around it that our cameras couldn't focus! The largest of all living reptiles, old males can reach an amazing 20' in length! Given its size, ours was probably a sexually mature male of 16 years or more. We also saw a small juvenile along the Menanggul.

--big Water Monitors (*Varanus salvator*), from the KK Wetlands to the Kinabatangan tributaries to the road into BRL

--the brilliant Green Crested Lizards (*Bronchocela cristatella*) that we saw several times, from our first day afield, to the Sukau boardwalk, to BRL, which can change their color to a darker gray or brown, especially when threatened

--small "flying lizards" of the genus *Draco* - They were seen at RDC and along the Menanggul.

--the giant Tokay Geckos (*Gekko gekko*) that were usually under the covered section of the boardwalk between the rooms and the dining area at Sukau Rainforest Lodge; these were the ones we heard throughout the lowlands, uttering the loud "gec-ko" or "to-kay" that slows down; it was for this species that the genus was named.

--the many (and various!) smaller geckos, from those positioned near each lamp along the BRL boardwalk to our chalets, one of which seems to have been some kind of "parachute gecko" with broad extensions on its toes and sides, to the one we found on our first night walk toward the staff quarters, which seems to have been some species of bent-toed gecko (though hard to pin down to species)

--that Mangrove (or Yellow-banded) Cat Snake (*Boiga dendrophila*), the shiny black snake with the bright-yellow bands that was so tightly coiled in a tree overhanging the Tenangang that we could hardly see it! Their diet consists of birds and their eggs, amphibians, lizards, other snakes, mouse deer (!), and treeshrews.

--the big, colorful Reticulated Python (*Python reticulatus*) that seemed frozen on the bank of the Kinabatangan one night. I guess I shouldn't really say "big," as they normally reach 10-20'!

--the Four-lined Tree Frog (*Polypedates leucomystax*)(a.k.a. White-lipped Tree Frog or Bush Frog) we spotlighted along the Sukau boardwalk and on a BRL night drive. Ours were fairly small ones, but the species can be over 5" long and is the world's largest treefrog. It's widespread, from s. Asia through Sundaland to Papua New Guinea and n. Australia.

--those richly yellow File-eared Tree Frogs (*Polypedates otitophus*) seen on our BRL night drive after the rain. They occur only in Sumatra and Borneo, ordinarily well above the ground. But they congregate over water to breed and lay their

fertilized eggs into a foam mass that will harden on the outside while remaining liquid on the inside, providing the tadpoles a suitable environment until the mass falls into the water below.

--the numerous Harlequin Flying Tree Frogs (*Rhacophorus pardalis*) seen at BRL after the rain, from both the night-drive truck and at the frog pond. This little frog spends most of its time in the canopy, only coming to the ground to breed in suitable streams and pools. It too is a foam nest builder, but it's one of the "flying" frogs, with extensive membranes between its toes to help it glide from branch to branch--and down to pools on the forest floor. It occurs in peninsular Malaysia, Sumatra, Borneo, and the Philippines. The more colorful individual with the irregular white spots on its back seems to be of this rather variable species too, perhaps a younger one?

--But that Bornean Horned Frog (*Megophrys nasuta*) that Hamit found on our first night walk along the BRL Nature Trail topped them all! The epitome of dead-leaf mimicry, this species preys on other inhabitants of the rainforest leaf litter: spiders, small rodents (!), lizards, and other frogs. It's not restricted to Borneo, but found throughout Sundaland.

Among the many invertebrates were some that simply must be remembered:

--the common Wood Nymph (*Idea stollii*) or Tree Nymph butterflies that floated tissue paper-like throughout the lowlands

--the striking black-and-yellow Common Birdwings (*Trioides helena*)

--the lovely black and chartreuse Rajah Brooke's Birdwings (*Trogonoptera brookiana*)

--the many other superb butterflies [see the following website to help ID some of your photos:

<http://www.learnaboutbutterflies.com/Malaysia%20thumbs.htm>]

--the impressive big moths attracted to lights throughout, including the big Lyssa moth (*Lyssa menoetus*), the 8" Atlas moth (*Attacus atlas*) at Fred & Sonia's bungalow at Kinabalu (see Fred's cover photo), and the other big Atlas we photographed at BRL. These are supposedly the same species, but the one at Kinabalu had far more snake's-head-like wingtips than the lowland one. It's a saturnid that's found in the tropics and subtropics of SE Asia and across the Malay archipelago. In Hong Kong the Cantonese name for it translates to "snake's head moth." It's considered the largest moth in the world based on total wing surface area.

--the fancy white Lantern Bug (*Pyrops sultana*, family Fulgoridae), with the deep red-and-orange snout-like head, that Ron & Deby photographed at BRL. Contrary to the belief of Linnaeus, who described several species, this inflated head process does not light up at night. These are sap suckers, which excrete excess sugars as droplets that certain ants have become specialized to collect!

--Which reminds me of the gigantic ants on the forest floor; and the long stream of termites (not ants!) that we watched going up the big walkway-supporting canopy emergent in the morning (and down in the afternoon).

--that wonderful black-and-orange Trilobite Beetle (*Duliticola paradoxa*; at Kinabalu) that retains its larval form even when sexually mature; that black-and-orange longhorn beetle (*Cerambycidae*; along Bukit Ular trail), and all the big black rhinoceros beetles, some with impressive horns; I haven't ID'd the many we photographed.

--that gigantic katydid we found dead at BRL, as well as the various living katydids of multiple species; all the big cicadas, walking sticks, praying mantids, and other amazing insects in the lowland rainforest

--the hordes of cockroaches and scutigera centipedes that decorated the walls of Gomantong Cave (and the one on the tree buttress at BRL!)

--those long, dark millipedes with bright orange legs; and short, fat Pill Millipedes (*Glomeris connexa*) that curl into a ball like a pillbug, both fairly common at BRL

--some wonderful spiders, including some big orb weavers, lots of "wolf spiders" with eyeshine, and that big arboreal tarantula (*Theraphosidae*) that Paul pointed out on our final night drive at BRL

--And did I mention the leeches at BRL? They weren't especially bad this year, and I saw only the more common Brown Leeches (*Haemadipsa zeylanica*) and none of the endemic Tiger Leeches (*haemadipsa picta*). Still, they informed our

fashion and left several of us with a "battle scar" (and an official leech certificate!) to show off at home.

Like Kinabalu itself, that's just the "tip of the batholith." There are LOTS of fabulous critters out there, and we encountered only a small (but wonderful!) sampling of them.

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**Totals for the tour: 281 bird taxa and 27 mammal taxa**