

BORNEO

SEPTEMBER 1-20, 2010*

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Please note that tour dates differ slightly from the 2010 catalog

A shadow emerges, and from the forest's cathedral-like embrace, one of its most beloved inhabitants, the “Old Man of the Forest” appears. The orangutan, clothed in long, reddish hair and bejeweled with wreaths of leathery dewlaps, conveys a primeval aura of power and dignity. Suddenly, from the forest floor, a loud bugling “kawow” announces the start of another day and the spectacular Great Argus Pheasant's extraordinary display. A flight of “juggernauts” thunders by, seeking fruit with which to feed their entombed mates. And, the forest's choir heralds a tropical dawn in these most ancient of realms. Somewhat startled by our presence, the great red ape snatches her offspring from our unfamiliar, staring eyes and retreats once more into the mists.

The tropical dipterocarp forests of Borneo are among the world's oldest, supporting a diversity of animal and plant life, surpassed only by the lowland communities of the Amazon Basin. Notwithstanding, the sheer number of mega-charismatic species that inhabit the lowland forests of Borneo, species such as Bornean pygmy elephant, Bornean orangutan, proboscis monkey, Bornean clouded leopard and several species of gigantic hornbills endow these forests and their visitors with arguably the single most exciting tropical rainforest experience on our planet.

The thrill of exploring these magnificent forests cannot be overstated AND we will do so from the comfort of the finest and most beautiful lodge in the whole of Southeast Asia. Borneo Rainforest Lodge, located in the heart of the Danum Valley, Sabah is set in the midst of some of the most magnificent lowland rainforest remaining on the island of Borneo. Our four days, five nights will give us an enviable chance to enjoy something of the incredible richness of this tropical forest haven. As we have found on previous tours, just getting away from the lodge veranda is a major undertaking as cosmic Black-and-red Broadbills dazzle us and White-crowned Shamas sing to us virtually from the balcony. “Barely had we stepped a couple of meters from the lodge than we had encountered our first orangutan, a sub-adult male feeding greedily immediately above the trail.” And so it went. The days at Danum are so filled with wonders that to reiterate them all would take many pages. Hopefully the highlights listed in the next section will do our time there some justice. It isn't only the birds and mammals. Just being in such a wonderfully peaceful place in the presence of such pristine forest, dwarfed by truly gigantic trees is a humbling and soul-rejuvenating experience; the constant array of big colorful butterflies constantly distract us—and not just briefly. For these leaders, Danum is the epitome of why we love birding in the tropics. Long may Danum and its forests persist.

Towering over the surrounding landscape, the awe inspiring granite peak of Mt. Kinabalu has long lured travelers and naturalists alike to explore her lush, cloud-enshrouded forests. The highest landmark between New Guinea and the Himalayas, Mt. Kinabalu is virtually an island, and as such, supports a number of extremely local endemics. From attractively appointed cabins, which look out over the forest to the mountain, we will search among huge moss clad sentinels, giant pitcher plants

and blooming rhododendrons for a number of specialties such as the Crimson-headed Wood-Partridge, Whitehead's Trogon, Golden-naped and Mountain barbets, the sumptuous Whitehead's Broadbill, Mountain Wren-Babbler, Sunda Laughingthrush, diminutive Bornean Stubtail and Whitehead's Spiderhunter.

Borneo—the very name conjures images of teeming jungles and a profusion of strange and little known creatures. You will not be disappointed. Flying frogs, gliding snakes, orchid-like praying mantis, goggle-eyed tarsiers and hairy Sumatran rhinos characterize this fabulous island. Its birds are no less exciting, with a host of apparently rare and little known endemics, in addition to a plethora of pheasants, pigeons, parakeets, cuckoos, trogons, kingfishers, hornbills, barbets, woodpeckers, broadbills, bulbuls, babblers and sunbirds. Our tour will focus on three areas: The Danum Valley; the magnificent Mt. Kinabalu Park and the Kinabatangan River.

September 1-3, Days 1-3: Fly USA to Kota Kinabalu (BKI), Borneo. Most flights from the United States arrive into Kota Kinabalu late in the evening or in the very early morning hours. Please plan to arrive on September 3rd as this will be your first night of hotel stay in Borneo. We recommend flying in a day early due to misconnects and weather related flight delays this time of year. Upon arrival at the airport, you will be met by a representative of our ground agent and escorted to our hotel. Your tour leaders will meet with the group in the hotel lobby bar area at 6:30 p.m. for pre-dinner drinks and a preliminary get together. Dinner will follow at approximately 7:00 p.m.

NIGHT: Shangri La Tanjung Aru Beach Hotel, Kota Kinabalu

September 4, Day 4: AM Kota Belud Area; PM Tanjung Aru Beach Hotel Grounds. We must depart **early** this morning for the drive north to the coastal wetlands of Kota Belud and the Tempasuk Plain. Although largely altered by agriculture, these wetlands, associated scrub, and swamp forests support many species, which we are unlikely to encounter elsewhere: with a bit of luck Cinnamon, Yellow and perhaps Black bitterns; four species of egrets; Purple Heron; possibly Slaty-breasted Rail; White-browed Crake; Watercock; Oriental Pratincole – breeds occasionally; Long-toed Stint; Little and Pink-necked green-pigeons, Lesser Coucal; Asian Palm-Swift; Blue-throated Bee-eater; Sunda Woodpecker; Paddyfield Pipit; Pied Triller; White-breasted Woodswallow; Flyeater; Ashy Tailorbird; Pied Fantail; Striated Grassbird; Mangrove Blue-Flycatcher; Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker; Olive-backed Sunbird; Asian Glossy-Starling; and Dusky and Chestnut munias. With a bit of luck we may find the recently discovered Grass-Owl (not on the bird list) or what was once regarded as a vagrant to Borneo, Black-winged Stilt.

As the day begins to heat up and bird activity declines, we will gradually wind our way back to our lovely hotel in Kota Kinabalu. During the cool of the late afternoon we will explore the grounds of the hotel where we hope to encounter gorgeous Pink-necked Green-Pigeons, Green Imperial-Pigeon, the very localized and attractive Blue-naped Parrot, Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker, possibly Pied Triller, and the distinctive, endemic race of Oriental Magpie-Robin, among others.

NIGHT: Shangri La Tanjung Aru Beach Hotel, Kota Kinabalu

September 5, Day 5: AM Birding Crocker Range National Park; PM Drive to Kinabalu Park. This morning we will depart early for the lovely drive into Crocker Range National Park. Although access to this large reserve is notably sparse, we should be able to locate a handful of endemics and other specialties that are difficult to find within or absent from Kinabalu Park. With a bit of luck we may encounter the diminutive Pygmy White-eye in addition to Mountain Barbet and the rather uncommon but attractive Bornean Barbet. We may also see the peculiar-sounding Whitehead's Spiderhunter and mono-typic Mountain Blackeye. In addition, if we are very lucky we may also see a *Rafflesia* in flower; however, this is a rare event and often requires a long and rather steep walk. Some of the other birds we may encounter include Jerdon's Baza, Mountain Imperial-Pigeon, Ruddy (uncommon) and Little cuckoo-doves, Gold-whiskered Barbet, Bornean Leafbird, Flavescent Bulbul, Orange-headed Thrush (uncommon), and the glorious Temminck's Sunbird.

NIGHT: Fairy Garden Resort, Kundasang, Sabah

September 6-8, Days 6-8: Mt. Kinabalu National Park. Mt. Kinabalu is the highest mountain between the Himalayas and the Snow Mountains of New Guinea. This huge granite massif rises over 13,000 feet and totally dominates the surrounding landscape. Functioning as an ecological island, it supports a wealth of biota not found elsewhere, or only shared with one or two nearby Bornean mountains. For example, over half the plants above 3,300 feet elevation are endemic. There are approximately 1,200 species of orchids on the mountain, no less than nine species of pitcher plant (*Nepenthes* spp.), including the world's largest, which is reputed to be capable of holding a quart of water! True montane forest commences above ca. 3,300 feet, and is characterized by gnarled, stunted trees (including many rhododendrons – 24 species!) encrusted with mosses, lichens, and orchids. They are nourished by the frequent mists and high rainfall. Finally, above the tree-line, there is an open, subalpine area of bushes and dwarf shrubs below the formidable crags and gigantic rock buttresses of the summit.

The magnificent Kinabalu Park encompasses an area of 300 square miles and ranges in altitude from 1,000 to 13,455 feet, although the greater portion of the area lies above 4,000 feet. We will be accommodated in a comfortable inn, a short distance from the park headquarters, at approximately 5,100 feet. Most mornings the view across the forest to the peak is crystal clear, providing one of the most spectacular scenic views in Southeast Asia. Approximately 300 species of birds have been recorded from the park including a number of extremely local endemics. We will bird along forest lined roads and forest trails in search of these specialties. **Be aware that birding here can be extremely slow, BUT the rewards** Although the purpose of most people visiting the park is to climb to the summit, we can see nearly, if not all, the species well below that elevation. Characteristically of mountains, it can suddenly become very chilly and wet, and participants are advised to bring along warm clothes and wet weather gear.

We have three full days to sample some of Kinabalu's biological diversity, concentrating on mid-montane elevations and above, where we are likely to encounter Kinabalu's greatest degree of endemism. We can drive up to 6,100 feet and walk down the road in order to see canopy species, but we will also explore narrow forest trails to enjoy the full lushness of these forests and some of the more secretive denizens. On one morning we will depart early in time to arrive at dawn Poring Hot Springs. This intriguing area has a superb canopy walkway in addition to providing us access to an elevation and habitat that is otherwise difficult to explore in Borneo. With a bit of luck we may turn up several species we are unlikely to encounter elsewhere on the tour.

Birds we may encounter on Mt. Kinabalu include Kinabalu Serpent-Eagle; Mountain Imperial-Pigeon; Little Cuckoo-Dove; Mountain Scops-Owl, if we are very lucky; Whitehead's Trogon – lovely but very elusive; Golden-naped and Mountain barbets; Checker-throated and Maroon woodpeckers; the fabulous Whitehead's Broadbill; Sunda Cuckoo-shrike; Gray-throated Minivet; Flavescent Bubul; Ashy and Hair-crested drongos; Black-and-crimson Oriole; Short-tailed Green Magpie; Bornean Treepie; Mountain Wren-Babbler; Gray-throated Babbler; Sunda, Chestnut-capped and Bare-headed laughing-thrushes; White-browed Shrike-Babbler; Chestnut-crested Yuhina – often in huge flocks; Mountain Leaf and Yellow-breasted warblers; Mountain Tailorbird; Sunda Bush-Warbler; White-throated Fantail; the endemics Eye-browed Flycatcher plus Indigo, Snowy-browed and Little Pied flycatchers; Bornean Whistler; Black-sided Flowerpecker; Temminck's Sunbird; Whitehead's Spiderhunter; and Black-capped White-eye. We may also encounter some of Kinabalu's more elusive species such as Red-breasted and Crimson-headed partridges, Fruithunter, Everett's Thrush and Bornean Stubtail. If time permits, we will walk to higher elevations where we may find Island Thrush and Kinabalu Friendly-Warbler. Mt. Kinabalu also harbors a number of interesting although infrequently seen mammals including Malay weasel - a gorgeous orange and white predator; two species of flying squirrels; and Whitehead's pygmy-squirrel – with ear-tufts nearly as long as its body; in addition to a variety of other squirrels and tree-shrews.

NIGHTS: Fairy Garden Resort, Kundasang, Sabah

September 9, Day 9: Morning Kinabalu Park; Afternoon Drive to Kota Kinabalu and Fly to Sandakan. After a final morning's birding, we will depart after lunch and gradually make our way back to Kota Kinabalu for our

flight to Sandakan. Once the capital of Sabah, Sandakan is a bustling port with an imposing harbor and is still the major commercial center for such forest products as rattan, timber, and birds' nests (birds' nest soup).

NIGHT: Sabah Hotel, Sabah

September 10, Day 10: Sepilok Rainforest Discovery Centre. Until recently we have shied away from Sepilok because of its very restrictive and overly touristic operation. However, the recent establishment of the Rainforest Discovery Centre and its superb canopy towers and walkways, which offer a fine system of well established trails and the opportunity for some very good night-walks, has put this once loved birding destination firmly back on the map. Undoubtedly this will be a superb start to our exploration of Borneo's magnificent lowland forests. The walkway is built of steel and consequently very stable and thus unusually good for birding and photography. We will work this facility in addition to the trails and forest edge in our search for Borneo's birds, mammals and other wildlife. However, this is now THE site for the incomparable Bornean Bristlehead – one of the weirdest and most exotic looking of all Borneo's endemic birds, and we will be making a special effort to find this very elusive species. For those who wish there will be an opportunity for a forest night-walk during which we may encounter Slow Loris, Brown Hawk-Owl and with patience at least one species of Asian Frogmouth.

NIGHT: Sabah Hotel, Sabah

September 11, Day 11: AM Sandakan; PM Boat from Sandakan to Abai Lodge. This morning we will enjoy a rare sleep-in before visiting the very moving Australian War Memorial and spectacular Chinese temple with its superb view over Sandakan Bay. After a sumptuous lunch we will make our way down to Sandakan harbour to board our boat, which will take us up the Kinabatangan River, navigating our way through a vast area of mangroves and Nipa Palm before reaching our destination at the newly built and very attractive Abai Lodge. Located in a notably rich area of lowland swamp forest Abai Lodge hosts a very fine boardwalk which enables ideal access to the interior of this difficult habitat. There should be an opportunity to make an initial exploration along this trail during the late afternoon and again on a night walk. During David's scouting trip to this lodge, a sub-adult orangutan took up residence in a flowering tree right next to his room along with an exciting mix of sunbirds and flower peckers; along the boardwalk David found a nesting Wallace's Hawk-Eagle; a very confident Ruddy Kingfisher; enjoyed great looks at a Sunda colugo (a peculiar nocturnal mammal that can glide on a petagial membrane) and a superb Buffy Fish-Owl.

NIGHT: Abai Lodge, Sabah

September 12, Day 12: Kinabatangan River Area. Based at Abai Lodge, we have a number of options including an early departure down river to explore an extensive system of mangrove forest where we may encounter such specialties as Cinnamon-headed Pigeon, Sunda Woodpecker, Mangrove Blue-Flycatcher, Mangrove Whistler and Copper-throated Sunbird. Other options include working a very attractive forest-lined oxbow lake and tributary leading from the main river where we should have a good chance of the globally endangered Storm's Stork.

After lunch we will pack up and head up river by boat to Sukau Rainforest Lodge. This boat trip is often a good opportunity to see a nice selection of hornbills in addition to Brahminy Kites, White-bellied Sea-Eagles, Lesser Adjutants and possibly Bornean pygmy elephants.

NIGHT: Sukau Rainforest Lodge, Sabah

September 13, Day 13: Oxbow Lake and Menanggol River. Early this morning, with dawn just touching the sky, we will slip quietly into a forest-lined creek that fringes the Kinabatangan, Sabah's largest river. Here we will search for such specialties as Lesser Fish-Eagle, the very handsome Black-and-red Broadbill, possibly the uncommon White-crested Hornbill, Diard's Trogon, Blue-eared and Stork-billed kingfishers, Rhinoceros Hornbill, Hooded Pitta and White-breasted Babbler. This is also a superb area for the strange and rather localized Bornean endemic proboscis monkey in addition to otters and bearded pigs. We will make a special effort to locate this fascinating primate and anything else that our local guides have recently discovered. VENT has also had good luck with the

near mythical Bornean Ground-Cuckoo with groups being treated to superb views of this huge but very shy bird on our 2008, 2007 and 2005 tours. Hopefully we can repeat this performance on our 2010 tour. As the day heats up and bird activity decreases, we'll return to our accommodations to relax and *siesta*.

During the afternoon we will work the main river which can be excellent for hornbills and hopefully bathing herds of Bornean pygmy elephants as well as exploring a nearby oxbow lake.

NIGHT: Sukau Rainforest Lodge, Sabah

September 14, Day 14: AM Gomantong Caves; Afternoon Drive to Borneo Rainforest Lodge. This morning we will make an early **pre-dawn** visit to the Gomantong Forest Reserve. Although a relatively small reserve, the paved drive in and the boardwalk into the caves passes through some very bird-rich, mature secondary and selectively logged forest. We will have an opportunity to seek out a number of species of interest including Hooded Pitta, Black-capped Babbler, possibly Short-tailed Frogmouth and if we are very lucky, Wallace's Hawk-Eagle. We will also visit the spectacular Gomantong Cave, probably Sabah's largest cave system. Gomantong penetrates far inside a massive limestone outcrop and is home to literally millions of swiftlets and bats. This cool world of perpetual darkness supports a distinctive ecosystem with components ranging from long-legged centipedes to nesting Black-nest, White-nest and Mossy-nest swiftlets. These swiftlet species you can only confidently identify by their distinctive nest structures. We may also visit this site at dusk to watch as spectacular numbers of bats smoke forth from the caves only to be pounced upon by waiting Bat Hawks and Peregrine Falcons. We will return to our lodge for lunch and to pack up before departing for the world famous Danum Valley and the very lovely Borneo Rainforest Lodge.

NIGHT: Borneo Rainforest Lodge, Sabah

September 15-18, Days 15-18: Danum Valley. Danum Valley is a vast area of rolling lowland forest set aside as a reserve by the Sabah Foundation. The area is known to still harbor a population of the critically endangered Sumatran or hairy rhinoceros (you are very unlikely to actually see one), as well as a healthy population of Bornean orangutans (we have a good chance of seeing these spectacular primates). An extensive system of tracks and access roads are ideal for night drives where we may also encounter Bornean pygmy elephants, a variety of civets and linsangs, and with a great deal of luck, the enigmatic Bornean clouded leopard (closest living relative to the extinct saber-toothed tiger). We may even find the impressive Buffy Fish-Owl.

We have four full days in which to explore these magnificent lowland dipterocarp forests. Some of the birds we may see include Bat Hawk; Crested Goshawk; White-fronted Falconet; Crested Wood-Partridge – very tough; Crested Fireback; Great Argus; Pink-necked, Thick-billed, Little, and Large green-pigeons; Blue-crowned Hanging-Parrot; Moustached (rare at this time of the year) and Malaysian hawk-cuckoos; Indian, Violet, Rusty-breasted, and Banded Bay cuckoos; Asian Drongo-Cuckoo; five species of malkohas; Diard's, Scarlet-rumped and Red-naped trogons – all spectacular but elusive; Rufous-backed Dwarf and Rufous-collared kingfishers – both deep forest dwellers; Red-bearded Bee-eater; White-crowned (elusive), Wrinkled, Wreathed, Malaysian Black, Rhinoceros and Helmeted hornbills (surely one of the greatest of Oriental birding spectacles); Gold-whiskered, Red-throated, Blue-eared, and Brown barbets; Rufous Piculet; Banded, Crimson-winged, Olive-backed (rare), White-bellied, Buff-rumped, Buff-necked, Maroon, and Orange-backed woodpeckers; Blue-headed and Black-crowned pittas – two of the most beautiful members of this notoriously difficult to see family; Banded, Green, Black-and-yellow, and Dusky broadbills; Fiery and Scarlet minivets; Spectacled, Hairy-backed, Cream-vented, Buff-vented, Streaked, and perhaps Finsch's bulbuls; Greater Racket-tailed Drongo; Dark-throated Oriole; Black-capped, Short-tailed, White-chested, Ferruginous, Horsfield's, Moustached, Sooty-capped, Gray-headed, Black-throated, and Chestnut-winged babbler; Striped and Black-throated wren-babblers – wonderful songsters that are sometimes remarkably confiding but at other times are the very devil to see; Asian Fairy-Bluebird; Crested Jay (shy); Black Magpie; Large-billed and Bornean blue-flycatchers; Gray-breasted Jungle-Flycatcher; Hill Myna; Red-throated, Purple-naped, and Crimson sunbirds; Little, Bornean, Gray-breasted, Yellow-eared, and Long-billed spider hunters – they rarely eat spiders; Scarlet-breasted, Scarlet-backed, Yellow-rumped, Yellow-breasted, and Orange-bellied flower peckers; and the endemic Dusky Munia.

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We will also make a special effort to find some of Borneo's most elusive specialties such as Wallace's Hawk-Eagle; Chestnut-necklaced Partridge; the spectacular endemic Bornean Ground-Cuckoo – rediscovered by David Bishop on our 2002 tour; Bay Owl; Large Frogmouth; Giant Pitta – extremely rare and elusive, nevertheless this is probably THE place to look for this species; Blue-banded Pitta – a real tough bird to find, however, this is without doubt one of the real jewels of the Orient; Bornean Wren-Babbler, and with a bit of luck, the incomparable Bornean Bristlehead.

NIGHTS: Borneo Rainforest Lodge, Sabah

September 19, Day 19: Fly to Kota Kinabalu. This morning, we will sadly take our leave of the Borneo Rainforest Lodge and drive and bird our way to the coastal township of Lahad Datu from whence we will take a mid-afternoon flight to Kota Kinabalu for our farewell dinner.

NIGHT: Shangri La Tanjung Aru Beach Hotel, Kota Kinabalu

September 20, Day 20: International Flights for Home. Participants may schedule their flights home at any time today from Kota Kinabalu. Check-out time from the hotel is noon.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to extend your stay or arrive early, please contact the VENT office at least **four months** prior to your departure date. These arrangements may range from an extra night at the initial hotel of the tour to a week or more extension including accommodations and transfers. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

TOUR LEADER: David Bishop

David Bishop loves his vocation and cannot imagine anything better than exploring wild and beautiful places in Asia and the Pacific in the company of friends and clients. He has spent much of the past 33 years studying the birds and natural history of the Oriental region, in addition to New Guinea, the Southwest Pacific, and most recently Central Asia. David was once a police officer amid the streets of London's West End, but has emerged as an acknowledged authority on the birds of these exotic regions. His enthusiasm for these places and their birds is contagious. This, along with his skills in locating wildlife, sharing what he sees with others, and conversing with local people in their native language, ensures you the very finest quality tour. David has undertaken a number of expeditions to survey the birds and other wildlife of previously unexplored regions throughout New Guinea (largely together with Jared Diamond) and the Oriental Region. This has resulted in a number of exciting discoveries and rediscoveries including the incomparable Wallace's Standardwing, a bizarre bird-of-paradise. Some of the results of this work, together with observations gained during the VENT tours he leads, have been published in the scientific and semi-popular literature to which David is a regular contributor. In July 1997, David, together with Brian Coates, published *A Guide to the Birds of Wallacea (Sulawesi, the Moluccas, and Lesser Sundas)*, and David is currently working on other book projects. David lives with his wife and daughter (his son currently resides in England) in the attractive university town of Armidale, NSW, Australia.

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 8 participants.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$8,155** per person in double occupancy from Kota Kinabalu. This includes all meals beginning with dinner on Day 3 to dinner on Day 19, lodging during the tour, all internal transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. The tour fee does not include round trip flights to Kota Kinabalu, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$1,010**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations or if you prefer to share, but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you. Please note

that singles are limited at Borneo Rainforest Lodge. We will do our best to accommodate you, but singles are not guaranteed for these nights.

FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of a tour departure. Prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While VENT will do everything possible to maintain the original price of the tour, if fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to implement a fuel surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In most cases, these additional fuel costs are being passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers who reserve the right, in their agreements to provide services for VENT, to raise their prices due to significant changes in fuel costs.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: Again, in the uncertain, often volatile global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are being passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Cancellation penalties and refunds are based on the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$250** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions. ***We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.***

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$250*
Fewer than 120 days before departure date	No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE: A brochure and application form for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. **We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. VENT recommends Travel Insured International as our preferred insurance provider.** Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available, however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering.** Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as work-related cancellation, medical upgrade, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause among others. **Contact Travel Insured International prior to registration for details.** Not all insurance providers provide the same levels of coverage. If you purchase insurance through a company other than Travel Insured International, please be advised that rules and stipulations may be different.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please read your itinerary carefully to see whether or not your tour/cruise requires MANDATORY Medical Insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation/repatriation during the trip.

This coverage is included in the Worldwide Trip Protector plan offered by Travel Insured International. If you do not choose to purchase the insurance through Travel Insured International, you will need to do so through another insurance provider. A good website for information and acquisition of emergency evacuation/repatriation insurance is: www.insuremytrip.com.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

CLIMATE: Most of our time will be spent in tropical lowland and montane forest. The lowlands are generally warm and humid except during the early morning and at night. However, much of the time we spend in the lowlands will be in the shade of the forest. On Mt. Kinabalu it can be quite cool, and night-time temperatures can fall below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. We will most certainly encounter some rain.

CLOTHING: Remember that dark-browns, dark-blues and dark-greens are less likely to startle birds and mammals. **PLEASE, no bright colors or loud, crackling plastics.** Bring light-weight and predominantly cotton or new 'nylon' field clothing, a warm sweater, a hat with a good brim to keep the sun off while you are seated in a canoe, a waterproof poncho, jacket or the like, a small collapsible umbrella (**essential**) and comfortable boots with rugged soles – tennis shoes are NOT sufficient for this trip AND some people may like to consider lugging rubber boots with them. The trails can be muddy sometimes and they do help to repel leeches. Even flat trails can become slippery when wet. You should also have relatively thick socks to cushion your feet during long walks. It is ideal that you buy them calf-length so that you can tuck the bottoms of your trousers into them as protection against "bugs." A dressier outfit such as a sport coat, dress or pant suit may be more presentable at the Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan hotels. LEECH socks are very useful at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge and Poring Hot Springs and can be obtained there or from our ground-agents Borneo Eco Tours.

CURRENCY: Ringgit (R) The Ringgit is often referred to as the Malaysian Dollar. Visa, MasterCard, Diners Club and American Express are widely accepted throughout Malaysia.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure is required for United States citizens to enter Malaysia. Visas are not required; a tourist visa will be issued upon arrival. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars (in your hand-luggage) that are in good condition along with a belt or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film or digital storage media, etc.). Your leader will have a LEICA spotting scope, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so (**we encourage you to do so**). Other items to bring should include a torch (flashlight or headlamp), water bottle or small canteen, alarm clock, sunglasses and suntan lotion. It is wise to carry several copies of a list of your expensive equipment for customs inspectors. This list should include a description of the object, including the serial number if possible, the place of purchase and the price. Visitors to Malaysia are rarely challenged about such equipment unless there appears to be an inordinate amount of it.

HEALTH: Kota Kinabalu and other major Malaysian cities are generally free from most diseases associated with the Far East. Tap water from the municipal water systems is considered safe. In smaller towns and rural areas, assume the water is unsafe and stick with bottled or boiled drinks. Bottled spring water is widely available. Sanitation throughout Malaysia is relatively very good compared to most tropical areas of the world. Most hot,

freshly cooked food should be safe, but peel fresh fruit and raw vegetables before eating and make sure meat is cooked thoroughly. Be sure to bring all necessary prescription drugs, as well as aspirin, antacids, and a supply of antihistamines should you develop a cold.

No vaccinations are required; however, cholera, typhoid and tetanus should be current. Gamma globulin may be taken to prevent hepatitis. Malaria is present, including the chloroquine-resistant strain. There are several options for malaria prophylaxis including Mefloquine (Lariam), Malarone, and Doxycycline. These medications are available by prescription only. Please consult your physician or local travel clinic for recommendations.

Insects such as mosquitoes, sand-flies and leeches can be a problem. This is best dealt with by wearing long-sleeved shirts of sufficient thickness and density of weave that the “bugs” cannot bite through, and long trousers tucked into long socks. We also recommend *CUTTER'S LOTION* in the squeeze bottle or pump-style *OFF*.

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (877) FYI-TRIP. You can check the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

LUGGAGE: One or two small duffel bags can be extremely useful for short trips, and can be packed within your luggage when not in use. As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars (always), a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Electricity - 220 volts, 50 cycles

Language - Malaysian, English, Hindi and Chinese

Time - 12½ to 13 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

SUGGESTED READING: Our website at www.ventbird.com offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com or www.buteobooks.com, which specializes in ornithology books. We also recommend Andrew Isles books for the Asia-Pacific region at <http://www.andrewisles.com/AndrewIsles/> for difficult to find and out of print books.

Alexander, J, Eliot, J. and D. Gardner. *Footprint Borneo*. Footprint books, Bristo, UK. 2006.

Beebe, W. *Pheasant Jungles*. New York, 1927. A wonderful account of this naturalist's travels collecting data for this fine book on the pheasants.

Cambon, M., Harper, D., Richmond, S. & R. Watkins. *Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei*. Lonely Planet, Melbourne, Australia. 2004. An excellent introductory guide to this fascinating region.

Caulfield, C. *In the Rainforest*. London: Heinemann, 1984. An exceptionally accurate and insightful account of who is doing what to our rainforests—and the repercussions.

Chapman, F.S. *The Jungle is Neutral*. London: Corgi books, 1949. The classic on jungle warfare during World War II in Malaysia.

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- Earl of Cranbrook (editor). *Malaysia*. Key Environment Series. Oxford: Pergamon Press in collaboration with I.U.C.N., 1986.
- Fauconnier, H. *The Soul of Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1965. A powerful invocation of the seduction of Malaysia.
- Hoi-Sen, Y. *Malaysian Butterflies: An Introduction*. Kuala Lumpur: Tropical Press, 1987.
- Hoi-Sen, Y. *Magnificent Plants*. Malaysia: Tropical Press, 1981.
- Luping, D.M., Wen, C.L. and E.R. Dingley (editors). *Kinabalu Summit of Borneo*. Sabah Society Monograph. Kota Kinabalu: Sabah Society, 1978. A superb, detailed account of the Kinabalu National Park..
- MacKinnon, J. *Field Guide to the Birds of Borneo, Sumatra, Java and Bali*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. This field guide illustrates and describes all the species you will encounter on Borneo and 96% of those you will encounter on the Malay Peninsula.
- MacKinnon, J. *In Search of the Red Ape*. London: Collins, 1974.
- McNeely, J. and P. S. Wachtel. *Soul of the Tiger*, 1988. An exceptional book, quite unlike anything else written. Put together by two international conservationists who know the people and nature of the Orient as well as any.
- Myers, S. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Borneo*. Princeton University Press. 2009. This field guide to all the birds of Borneo will be published during September 2009 and will presumably be a lot better than the MacKinnon guide we have used to date. -**This is the field guide we recommend for use on this tour.**
- Otsuka, K. *A Field Guide to Butterflies of Borneo and South-east Asia*. Hornbill Books. Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. 2001. A fine photographic guide to the 200 most commonly encountered butterflies in Borneo.
- Payne, J. et al. *The Mammals of Borneo*. Kuala Lumpur: The Sabah Society with the W.W.F., 1985. – **This is a superb field guide and one we heartily recommend, especially as we typically see 35-40 species of mammals on our Borneo tour.**
- Polunin, I. *Plants and Flowers of Malaysia*. Singapore: Times Editions, 1988.
- Richards, P.W. *The Tropical Rain Forest*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Rubeli, K. *Tropical Rain Forest in South-East Asia: A Pictorial Journey*. Malaysia: Tropical Press, 1987.
- Ryan, N.J. *A History of Malaysia and Singapore*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Smythies, B.E. and G.W.H. Davison *The Birds of Borneo*. Natural History Publications (Borneo). Kota Kinabalu. 1999. This superb new book is really too heavy to carry on tour, however, it is an essential read for anyone with an interest in Bornean birds. This majorly revised edition is huge improvement over the previous edition and contains a great deal of new and interesting information.
- Wallace, A.R. *The Malay Archipelago*. Revised edition. New York: Dover Publications, 1962.
- Whitmore, T.C. *Tropical Rain Forests of the Far East*. London: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Whitmore, T.C. *Palms of Malaya*. 2nd edition. Kuala Lumpur: O.U.P., 1977.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

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