

## **Borneo's Orangutans, Elephants and Wildlife of the Kinabatangan River**



Sunday September 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunday September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019  
US\$ 5,200 per person based on double occupancy  
Single Supplement is US \$1,000 (traveling with no roommate)

Sabah, Malaysia, on the island of Borneo, is a land of varied landscapes and brilliant wildlife. Our tour takes us on a journey highlighting the Zoo's elephant and orangutan protection efforts. We will experience local cultures and enjoy an exciting boat trip on the Kinabatangan River; one of Borneo's longest and most majestic rivers. Our trip will offer us an opportunity to visit the village of Sukau, home of the Kinabatangan Orangutan and Elephant Conservation Programs where we will meet with conservation partners from these efforts. While in Sukau, we will travel with local staff to search for Bornean elephants and orangutans, proboscis monkeys, hornbills, crocodiles, and many other wildlife species using the river, ox-bow lakes and tributaries.

**Group size is limited to 16 guests**

Contact [conservation@houstonzoo.org](mailto:conservation@houstonzoo.org) for bookings and more information

## Borneo's Orangutans, Elephants and Wildlife of the Kinabatangan River

### Day 1: Sunday September 15, 2019. Arrival into Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Plan to arrive into Kota Kinabalu (airport code BKI) where you are met on arrival and drive to your luxury lodgings at the Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort Hotel located directly on the South China Sea for an overnight stay. Guestrooms are decorated in traditional Borneo textures and colors and offer balconies with views of the gardens, sea and outlying islands. Resort amenities include restaurants and bars, health club, spa, and a swimming pool. The afternoon and evening is at leisure to recover from jetlag.

**Overnight at Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort Hotel**

**(D)**



### Day 2: Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup>. Kota Kinabalu to Sandakan

After breakfast we will spend 2 hours walking in the lush 66-acre nature reserve on its various jungle trails with impressive views of Mount Kinabalu on one side and the Sabah coast line on the other. The reserve was as part of their orangutan rehabilitation program and here we may see the first orangutans of the trip. Late morning, we depart by air for Sandakan located on the east coast of Sabah, the flight is less than one hour and from the air we can see the scale of the oil palm plantations that dominate the landscape here. We will be staying in the modern Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in downtown Sandakan. After check-in we drive a short distance up the hill behind town to visit the former home of Agnes Newton Keith, an American author best known for her three autobiographical accounts of life in North Borneo (now Sabah) before, during, and after the Second World War. Now a museum, it depicts details of her life in Borneo before and during WWII. In the grounds of the museum we also enjoy sunset cocktails followed by dinner at the English Tea House overlooking Sandakan harbor.

**Overnight at Four Points by Sheraton Hotel**

**(B, L, D)**

**Day 3: Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre and Bornean Sun Bear Rescue Center**



After breakfast, we proceed to Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre. The centre is an initiative of the Sabah Wildlife Department to rehabilitate young orangutans. Visitors view these red apes during their feeding time from an observation platform followed by audio visual presentation of the rehabilitation initiatives. Observe the difference of rehabilitated orangutans and wild ones in the lower Kinabatangan forest we will see later in the trip. We plan to attend the morning feeding here at the Centre followed by a visit to the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre to see Malaysia's endemic bear species.

Immediately after our visit to the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre we will depart for Sukau, en route we plan to visit the Gomantong Cave, which is famous for its large colonies of insectivorous bats and swiftlets. For centuries, the caves have been renowned for their valuable edible swiftlet nests - which are harvested for bird's nest soup. The bird's nest collection is an ancient tradition and the trading of these nests has been done since at least 500AD. Twice a year, from February to April and August to September, locals with licenses climb to the roof of the caves, using only rattan ladders, ropes and bamboo poles, and collect the nests. The first collection takes place early in the breeding season before the swiftlets lay their eggs. The birds

then make another nest in which they lay their eggs. If we are lucky our visit should coincide with the daily exodus of bats from within the cave out to feed over the forest and river system - a truly incredible spectacle. The virgin jungle reserve around the cave hosts orangutan, red leaf langurs, tarsier, slow loris, silver leaf monkey, bearded pig, muntjac, moon rat, civets and the occasional elephant. At dusk we continue to the Kinabatangan River, a further 30-minute drive, and then transfer by boat to our lodge on the banks of the Kinabatangan River.

**Overnight at Sukau Rainforest Lodge**

**(B, L, D)**

**Day 4: Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. Kinabatangan River and the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Area, Sukau.**



The lower Kinabatangan is the last remaining large tract of wetlands in Malaysia which has enormous wildlife diversity including a number of species endemic to the island of Borneo such as the orangutan, proboscis monkey and Bornean elephant. During our stay here, we will be visiting the recently protected 26,000-hectare Lower Kinabatangan Conservation Area, a region where the Houston Zoo has been working since 2004 to protect orangutans, elephants, hornbills, and small carnivores and work with local communities on reforestation and local village projects. Our program in Sukau will involve learning about the conservation and health initiatives in the area and becoming part of the conservation effort. We plan to go on boat cruises up and down the Kinabatangan River looking for wildlife including orangutans, proboscis monkeys, macaque, crocodiles, hornbills and much more. In the evening we will present a

slideshow on the orangutan research, conservation, community involvement and overview of Kinabatangan ecology. This will be a unique educational opportunity to understand how the zoo has worked closely with the conservation organization Hutan to better protect orangutans and their habitat. This evening we can go on a night cruise to look for nocturnal animals and roosting diurnal birds.

**Overnight at Sukau Rainforest Lodge**

**(B, L, D)**

**Day 5: Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. Kinabatangan River**

This morning we take an early morning boat cruise on the Kinabatangan River in search of orangutans, Proboscis monkeys, langurs and Bornean elephants. We are back at the lodge for a late breakfast and lunch. In the afternoon we enjoy another game viewing cruise until the sun sets. After dinner, we can again choose to go on a night cruise to look for nocturnal animals, along the banks of the Kinabatangan River.

**Overnight at Sukau Rainforest Lodge**

**(B, L, D)**



**Day 6: Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. Our final trip along the Kinabatangan River**

We will cruise in the morning to an oxbow lake - this lake was created over time and separated from the main river as erosion and deposits of soil changed the river's course. This lake is one of the best places to go bird watching and sometimes, wild orangutans are spotted in this quiet and serene lake. The lake is also important as a breeding ground for fresh water fish.

For lunch we will stop at the impressive Danau Girang Field Centre. Supported by the Houston Zoo, this facility is a collaboration between Sabah Wildlife Department and Cardiff University.

During lunch in the middle of a patch of beautiful forest we will hear a bit more about the conservation efforts in the region, as well as learning about the important field work being carried out by local and foreign researchers at this very special research centre.

River cruise until sunset back to the base. This is the time when wildlife is at its most active behavior. Aboard your river boat, you will cruise with your nature guide to search for the proboscis monkeys, snakes, birds and many others. On a fine weather, the day is usually complimented with a beautiful sunset.

**Overnight at Sukau Rainforest Lodge**

**(B,L,D)**



**Day 7: Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>. Kinabatangan River to Kota Kinabalu**

This morning we must leave our tropical paradise, and take a boat back to Sandakan. We have time for a short city tour of Sandakan before our flight back to Kota Kinabalu. Once in Kota Kinabalu we transfer to the Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru resort, (sister property to the Rasa Ria) but situated very close to the Kota Kinabalu airport. We enjoy a Farewell Dinner this evening with our fellow travelers.

**Overnight at Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort**

**(B,L,D)**

**Day 8: Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Kota Kinabalu to Home**

This morning we board our flights headed home and cross the International Dateline en route home. (B)

**Cost per person based on double occupancy is.....\$5,200**

Minimum Group size is 8 participants.  
Group size is limited to 16 participants.

(single supplement is \$1000; B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner)

Prices include: Transport and bilingual driver/guides for the itinerary agreed, lodging on a shared basis and meals as stated, all park entrance fees, unlimited bottled water throughout, welcome drinks/cocktails on arrival, farewell cocktails on last night.

Prices exclude airfares to Kota Kinabalu, all gratuities, entry visas (which can be obtained at Kota Kinabalu airport on arrival) and airport taxes. All personal expenditures such as telephone calls, laundry and alcoholic drinks are excluded.

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