



OUNDLLE

School

Biology Expedition 2010: Back to Borneo

This is our third visit to Northern Borneo (Sabah). We believe it is the pinnacle of trips in terms of biology, culture and enrichment. This letter should give you all the information you need about the trip. If you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

For several centuries after its discovery by Europeans the great equatorial land of Borneo stayed shrouded in mystery. From a wildlife point of view Borneo is one of the richest places on earth. Tropical rainforest originally covered almost the entire island and, although widespread felling is now seriously shrinking the forest, vast tracks remain and support an exotic profusion of flora and fauna. Hopefully we may even be lucky enough to see wild Orang-utans and the curious Proboscis Monkey. Near Sandakan we will visit the huge caves at Gomontong, home of millions of bats and swiftlets. The flora and fauna of Borneo is varied, utterly different from that of Europe and for most part, quite easy to find and identify. Borneo is the fourth largest country in the world and has populations of some of the most extraordinary plants and animals. The world's largest flower *Rafflesia*, carnivorous pitcher plants, gibbons, forest elephants, turtle breeding grounds and a huge variety of spectacular birds and insects are just some of the biological attractions.

Borneo contains a wide variety of habitats including mountains, coral reefs, primary undisturbed rainforest and rivers. The area is ideal for an expedition of this nature as we can see and experience a huge variety of ecosystems and their associated flora and fauna within a relatively short period of time.

Pupils will sleep in the Kinabalu montane forest on platforms built using money raised after our first trip, and visit the world famous Gomontong caves where indigenous villagers climb the sheer walls to collect bird's nests for soup. We will also be staying in long houses built by indigenous tribes, both seeing and sharing their way of life for a few days and walking to the summit of Mt. Kinabalu, the highest peak in Southeast Asia. The expedition itinerary is outlined below, and we would not anticipate any significant departures from this. All parties who sign up for the trip will be kept fully informed of any important changes. The tour is being organised jointly between the Biology department and our local contact in Borneo, who is ideally placed to give us the best value for money and up to minute information on all aspects of the expedition. The date of departure is not finalised but would probably start in the second week of the summer holiday 2010 (around 8th July). Throughout the trip we will have an expert local naturalist (fluent in English), familiar with the local flora and fauna.

Day 01; Arrive, transfer to Palace Hotel.

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Day 02: Transfer to visit Kota Belud, and then to Kudat stay in Rungus native longhouse.
Day 03: Transfer to visit Northern tip of Borneo, then transfer to Kinabalu Rose Cabin to stay overnight.
Day 04: Transfer to climb Mt Kinabalu, overnight at 11,000ft.
Day 05: Final ascent to the summit to the Kinabalu, descend to Kinabalu Rose Cabin.
Day 06: Transfer to Kiau village, trek to Miki Survival Camp. Camping. (Montane rainforest)
Day 07: Trekking and camping.
Day 08: Trek to Kiau village, transfer to Sepilok, check in Sepilok Jungle Resort.
Day 09: Own entrance to Sepilok Orang Utan Sanctuary, stay at SJR.
Day 10: Transfer to Selangan Turtle island for a night stay
Day 11: Sukau/Bilit, river cruise. (gallery rainforest)
Day 12: Transfer to Tabin (lowland rainforest) detour Gomantong cave, stay overnight.
Day 13: Tabin.
Day 14: Domestic flight back to KK, transfer to Borneo Proboscis Riverlodge
Day 15: Morning river cruise after breakfast transfer Tempurong
Seaside Lodge. BBQ dinner
Day 16: Leave for UK

The full itinerary will not be finalised until nearer the time but we have spent a considerable amount of time working with a personal friend and local guide in Kota Kinabalu who is ideally placed to give us the best value and up to the minute information on all aspects of the expedition. We would not anticipate any significant departures from the itinerary given below and all parties who sign up for the trip would be kept fully informed of any important changes. While we will visit places specifically to see some animals and plants, for much of the time we will be identifying, studying and photographing the organisms that we see. This is very much in the nature of the traditional field biologist, something that we have very little opportunity to do within the school environment. The opportunity for both the staff and pupils to learn so much together is tremendous and cannot be underestimated.

The guides we will have with us in Borneo are all first-aid qualified and experienced in dealing with the sort of problems that can occur in the tropics. The tour company have quoted a maximum time of 3 hours travel from the nearest first-world hospital in Kota Kinabalu and there are a number of clinics all over Sabah. Each pupil will need health insurance and the school insurance covers the party thoroughly. We are not doing any hazardous activities that require additional cover.

Accompanying the pupils will be myself, Mr Adam Langsdale and Miss Louise Barnwell. Based on a party size of 23 (20 pupils and three accompanying staff) the total cost of the expedition is £2500. Please note that these are projected prices - we are booking a long time in advance and have no control over any increase in flight costs. While there are no guarantees, I have been assured that the ground costs should stay the same but this price cannot be guaranteed. It is important to realise at this stage that the cost is not fixed but represents a maximum figure that I would expect all participants to pay. This unpredictability is the downside to booking so early but it has allowed us to minimise the cost of a potentially expensive trip and we have been able to select our accommodation very carefully. All pupils and their parents will be kept fully informed of any changes in the cost. The cost does not include the following:

- anti-malarials (available and billed through the school)
- vaccinations (including yellow fever)
- spending money
- suitable clothing and equipment (this will be minimal).

Payment for the expedition can be made in termly instalments with the final summer 2010 payment being made by a cheque. Please note that a non-refundable deposit of £250 will be part of the first payment if you wish your son / daughter to come on the expedition.

We will do our very best to accommodate anyone who shows a strong desire to be part of this tremendous experience. If you are willing to confirm that your son / daughter will participate in the Borneo Expedition 2010, would you fill out the details in the form below and post it back to me at the address on the letterhead. There are some additional details which I would like to collect at this stage that are outlined on the form. I'm afraid that email cannot be accepted as permission for your son / daughter to participate and only written confirmation will be accepted. At a later date a full medical form required by the school will need to be filled in.

Many thanks for your interest I hope that it is possible for your son or daughter to participate in what I promise will be one of the most incredible experiences of their lives.

Kind regards,

John Hunt

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I give permission for my son / daughter _____ to participate in the 2010 Biology Expedition to Borneo. I give permission for the school to bill me for the cost during the next 4 terms. Final instalment is payable by **cheque in the first week of the Trinity Quarter 2010.**