

# Malaysia & Borneo

## Budget Birding

*24<sup>th</sup> June to 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 (10 days)*

## Budget Birding Extension

*3<sup>rd</sup> July to 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024 (5 days)*



Wrinkled Hornbill by Glen Valentine

*Borneo is the world's third largest island and typically conjures up images of a wild forest paradise where Orangutans, gibbons, broadbills and pittas roam the Bornean jungle! On this tour we will visit some of the island's most famous birding sites, namely the fabled Mt. Kinabalu, Tabin Wildlife Sanctuary, Sepilok and the Kinabatangan River. Habitats range from rich lowland and montane rainforest to coastal wetlands. A wide mix of highly sought-after, rare and endemic Southeast Asian birds can be expected on this fabulous adventure. As if this wasn't enough, Borneo is also one of the very best countries in Asia to enjoy rainforest mammals, and we can expect some incredible creatures such as Orangutan, Proboscis Monkey, Bornean Gibbon, mouse-deers, Leopard Cat and, if we are very lucky, Bornean Clouded Leopard! This budget tour has been designed to provide prime Bornean birding and wildlife viewing at a more economical price and for those with less time to spare in the field.*

*Malaysia is a developed Asian nation offering first class facilities, an extensive range of well serviced national parks and nature reserves, and a bounty of quality birds and mammals; simply put, this is the perfect destination for a birding tour! On this short extension we will visit one of Asia's most famous birding sites, Fraser's Hill, where highlights include the localized Blue Nuthatch, Black Laughingthrush, Malayan Whistling Thrush and Fire-tufted Barbet. We will also spend a day birding mangrove habitat at Kuala Selangor with specials such as Mangrove Blue Flycatcher, Mangrove Whistler, Ashy Minivet and Laced Woodpecker. This extension is a perfect*

*addition to our Budget Borneo tour and offers the opportunity to pick up a good selection of widespread Asian species and a host of specials at a reduced price to our standard tour.*

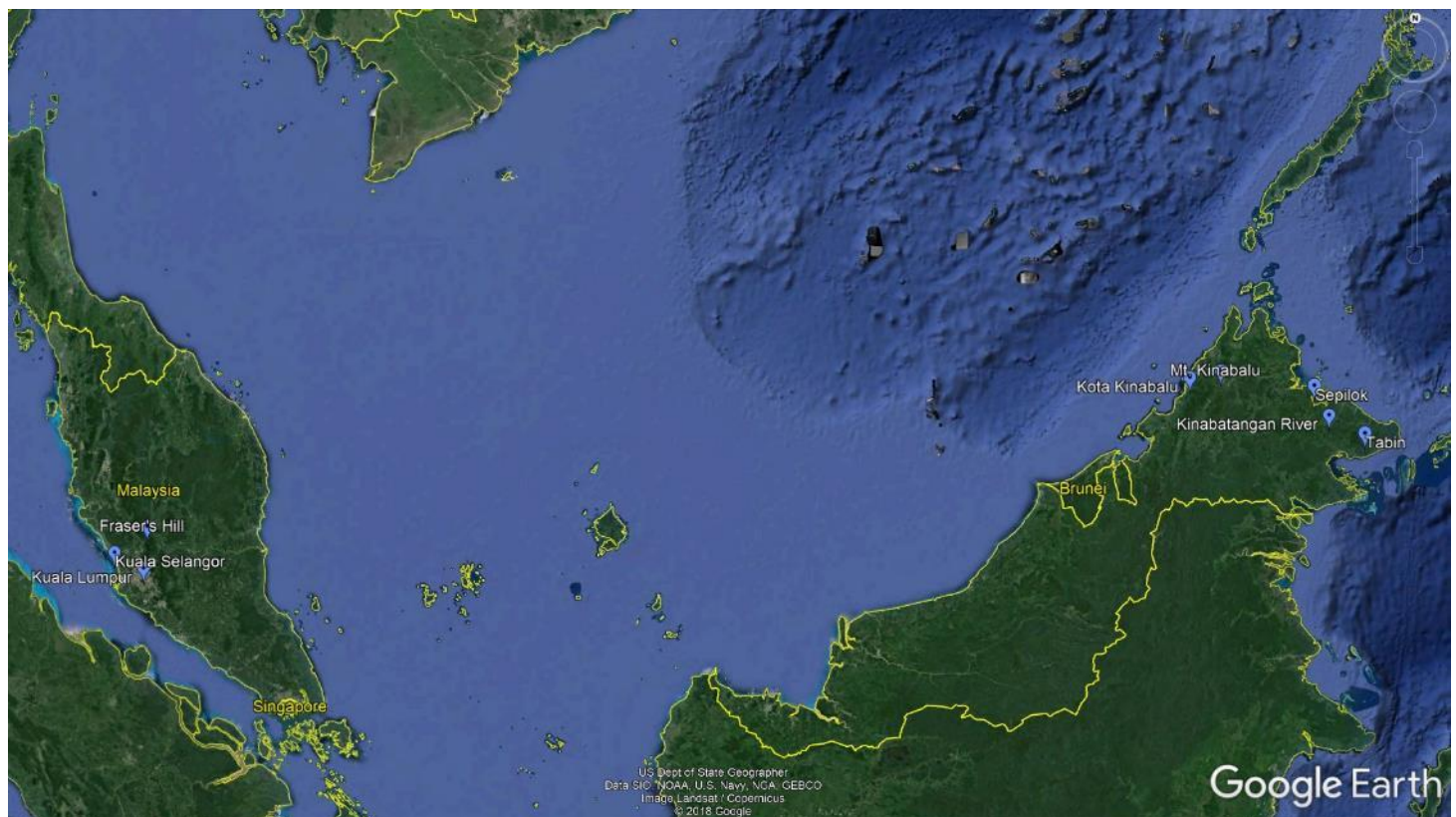
## **Itinerary & Map**

### **Budget Birding**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Kota Kinabalu to Mount Kinabalu</b>
<b>Days 2 &amp; 3</b>	<b>Kuala Selangor to Mount Kinabalu</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Mount Kinabalu to Sepilok</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Sepilok</b>
<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Sepilok to Sukau</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Kinabatangan River</b>
<b>Day 8</b>	<b>Sukau to Tabin Wildlife Reserve</b>
<b>Day 9</b>	<b>Tabin Wildlife Reserve</b>
<b>Day 10</b>	<b>Tabin Wildlife Reserve to Kota Kinabalu</b>

### **Budget Birding Extension**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Kuala Lumpur to Kuala Selangor</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Kuala Selangor to Fraser's Hill</b>
<b>Days 3 &amp; 4</b>	<b>Fraser's Hill</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Fraser's Hill to Kuala Lumpur &amp; depart</b>



## ***Birding sites in detail***



**Whitehead's Trogon by Nigel Redman**

**Mount Kinabalu.** The pristine, montane forest that cloaks the lower slopes of Moun Kinabalu - Borneo's highest mountain at 13,435 feet (4,095 m), is home to some of Borneo's most prized birds that includes a multitude of localised mountain endemics. Some of the many fine birds to be sought here include Sunda Cuckooshrike, Golden-naped Barbet, the sensational Bornean Green Magpie, noisy Bornean Treepie, resident Dark Hawk-Cuckoo and Sunda Cuckoo (a recent split from Oriental Cuckoo), Indigo Flycatcher, Chestnut-crested Yuhina, Bornean Whistler, Chestnut-hooded, Sunda and extremely scarce and shy Bare-headed Laughingthrushes, Bornean Whistling Thrush, the delightful Bornean Forktail (recently split from White-crowned), Black-sided (Bornean) Flowerpecker, Eyebrowed Jungle Flycatcher, Bornean Swiftlet, Temminck's Babbler, the miniscule Bornean Stubtail, Mountain Wren-Babbler, the exquisite Temminck's Sunbird and Black-capped White-eye, as well as some really star birds such as the rare Fruithunter, an endemic, canopy-dwelling thrush, Crimson-headed (now considered to be a kind of pheasant called a Bloodhead) and Red-breasted Partridges, the rare and near-endemic Sunda Owlet, the very rare and furtive Everett's Thrush, extremely rare and seldom-seen Mountain (Kinabalu) Serpent Eagle, nomadic and unpredictable Tawny-breasted Parrotfinch and the local, recently split Crocker Jungle

Flycatcher. While walking the park's trails and access road, we may also encounter Blyth's Hawk-Eagle, Checker-throated and Maroon Woodpeckers, Blyth's Shrike-Babbler, Ashy and Hair-crested Drongos, Yellow-breasted and Mountain Leaf Warblers, Sunda Bush Warbler and White-browed Shortwing.

A 19th-century naturalist called Whitehead spent many months on the mountain and three very special birds, restricted to Mount Kinabalu and the highlands further south in Sabah and Sarawak, are named after him: Whitehead's Broadbill, Spiderhunter and Trogon. We will put in much time and effort on the forest trails in an attempt to locate these rare beauties. However, one must be aware that all three of these species occur at extremely low densities on Mount Kinabalu and are usually very tricky to find. We will therefore require a fair amount of luck, coupled with hard work and good field craft to locate them! Whitehead's Pygmy Squirrel, a tiny creature with ear tufts nearly as long as its body, is another endemic creature we hope to encounter during our time in the park.

**Poring Hot Springs.** The hot springs are surrounded by superb, mid-elevation forest that contain a range of different species more typically associated with lowland forest such as Black-and-yellow, Green and Banded Broadbills, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, the endemic White-crowned Shama, Golden-whiskered, Blue-eared, Red-throated and Brown (a recently recognised Bornean Endemic) Barbets, the brilliant Violet Cuckoo, Yellow-eared and Spectacled Spiderhunters, Dusky Munia, Scaly-breasted, Streaked and Spectacled Bulbuls, Orange-bellied Flowerpecker and the scarce and extremely local Grey-headed Babbler. If we are fortunate during our



**Indigo Flycatcher by Nigel Redman**



**Golden-naped Barbet by Keith Valentine**

Hanging Parrot, Silver-rumped Spinetail, Bushy-crested, Wreathed and Rhinoceros Hornbills, Great Slaty and several species other species of woodpeckers and barbets. If we are very lucky, we may find the rare Bornean Bristlehead which has been recorded here on a regular basis.

A session of owling may turn up Bornean Wood Owl and Oriental Bay Owl, whilst careful scanning may reveal a roosting Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher.

**Gomontong Caves.** The entrance road to the caves cuts through some beautiful and pristine lowland rainforest where we will spend the early morning searching for any lowland species we may still need. These could include the likes of some of Borneo's trickier species such as White-fronted Falconet, Black-crowned, Bornean Banded and very rare Giant Pittas, Black-throated Wren-Babbler and Moustached Hawk-Cuckoo, as well as more regular but sometimes elusive species like Black-throated Babbler, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (the race here sometimes split as Rufous-backed Dwarf Kingfisher), Little Green Pigeon and Puff-backed Bulbul.

In the late afternoon we will make our way a short distance inside these huge caves where we may observe the bird's nest collectors harvesting old nests of Edible-nest and Black-nest Swiftlets for bird-nest soup. These fearless collectors climb high onto the cave ledges using flimsy rope ladders, an amazing feat indeed. The other two species of nesting swiftlets we hope to see are Mossy-nest and Glossy Swiftlets. Thereafter we will wait outside the caves for the mass bat exodus. There is an estimated two million bats (mainly made up of three species: the Wrinkle-lipped Free-tailed Bat, Large-eared (Philippine) Horseshoe Bat and Fawn Leaf-nosed Bat but as many as 27 species have been recorded!) and a million swiftlets make their home. Here several raptors including Bat Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite and Wallace's and Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagles usually join in for the feast.

**Kinabatangan River.** Superb rainforest birding is to be had along the Kinabatangan River. The surrounding area has unfortunately been reduced

time here, we may hear about a flowering *Rafflesia* (news of these in flower spreads quickly), affording us the opportunity to see this floral wonder.

**Sepilok.** We will walk the trails in search of a number of lowland species such as Scarlet-rumped Trogon, Rufous-collared Kingfisher, Chestnut-rumped Babbler and Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher. We will also spend time in elevated bird hides/towers. Here, one is level with the canopy and offers a good vantage point to look for raptors such as Oriental Honey Buzzard, Crested Serpent Eagle, Wallace's Hawk-Eagle, Brahminy Kite and Crested Goshawk. Other possibilities may include Cinnamon-headed (Green), Pink-necked (Green) and Thick-billed (Green) Pigeons, Long-tailed Parakeet, Blue-crowned



**Orangutan by Colin Valentine**



**Proboscis Monkey** by Nigel Redman

to endless tracts of commercial Oil Palm plantations with the result that nearly all the region's wildlife has been forced into a narrow strip of forest along the river. The concentration of wildlife here is, however, phenomenal and we will spend most of our time birding on productive boat trips on the main Kinabatangan River and its adjacent tributaries. These boat trips are simply amazing, allowing one to approach both birds and mammals at close range. Some of the wildlife we are likely to encounter on these trips include the rare Storm's Stork, Lesser Adjutant, Grey-headed and Lesser Fish Eagles, Oriental Darter, Blue-eared and Stork-billed Kingfishers, Blue-throated Bee-eater, Wrinkled, Black and Rhinoceros Hornbills, Silvered Langur, Long-tailed Macaque and the bizarre Proboscis Monkey. If we are fortunate, we may encounter some of the Kinabatangan's rarer inhabitants such as Helmeted and White-crested Hornbills, White-fronted Falconet, Wallace's Hawk-Eagle, Jerdon's Baza, Moustached Hawk-Cuckoo, Long-tailed Parakeet, the very rare and until recently mythical Bornean Ground Cuckoo, Orangutan, Maroon Langur (Red Leaf Monkey) and Pig-tailed Macaque.

Birding around our lodge can also be rather productive and here we may very well find Hooded Pitta, Orange-bellied Flowerpecker, Brown-throated Sunbird, Plaintive Cuckoo, Black-and-red and Black-and-yellow Broadbills, Short-tailed and White-chested Babblers and Rufous Piculet. We will also undertake a night boat ride which will afford us the opportunity of seeing the much desired Buffy Fish Owl, as well as roosting Stork-billed and Blue-eared Kingfishers and the possibility of encountering the rare and nocturnal Flat-headed and Leopard Cats, Asian (Bornean Pygmy) Elephant and endemic Bearded Pig.

**Tabin Wildlife Reserve.** This large 122,000 ha reserve in the centre of the Dent Peninsula is covered with lowland dipterocarp forest and has been declared a Wildlife Reserve primarily on account of the large number of animals inhabiting its forests, some of which are highly endangered. This is one of the few places on earth where the Sumatran Rhinoceros still occurs in the wild, and optional night drives through the park often produce Leopard Cat, Colugo, Asian Palm, Small-toothed Palm and Malayan Civets, and both Red Giant and Black Giant Flying Squirrels. Buffy Fish and Brown Wood Owls are also often seen on these nocturnal excursions, while even the rare and spectacularly patterned Bornean Clouded Leopard occasionally appears.

Some of the very special birds that we will be searching for during our time here include the near-mythical Blue-banded Pitta, exquisite Blue-headed, Bornean Banded and Black-crowned Pittas, the shy Black-throated Wren-Babbler, Rufous-tailed Shama and Chestnut-necklaced Partridge. Birding from the road edge is a pleasure with mixed species flocks being a near-constant feature. Working through these flocks we hope to encounter such avian gems as Rufous Piculet, Buff-rumped and Buff-necked Woodpeckers, Rufous-fronted and Ferruginous Babblers, Brown Fulvetta, White-bellied Erpornis, Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker, Black-



**Storm's Stork** by Nigel Redman

bellied and Chestnut-breasted Malkohas, Blue-eared Barbet, superb Red-naped Trogon, Maroon-breasted Philentoma, Bar-winged and Black-winged Flycatcher-shrikes, gregarious Fiery Minivet, Green Iora, Dark-necked and Rufous-tailed Tailorbirds, Streaky-breasted and Little Spiderhunters, immaculate Ruby-cheeked Sunbird and a multitude of bulbul species, to name just a few!



**Stork-billed Kingfisher by Nigel Redman**

**Kuala Selangor.** The monotonous calls of Coppersmith Barbets are usually heard echoing across the hotel grounds, while at the mangrove-edge we hope to obtain good views of the scarce Mangrove Whistler, as well as the superb Mangrove Blue Flycatcher and Golden-bellied Gerygone. Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker, Laced and Rufous Woodpeckers and Common Flameback are also present are we may also encounter Asian Koel, Little Bronze Cuckoo, Scaly-breasted and White-rumped Munias, Pied Triller and Black-naped Oriole. Just before dawn is a good time to search for the handsome Large-tailed Nightjar.

**Taman Alam Nature Reserve.** This nature reserve supports a variety of habitats, including coastal woodland, mangroves and wetlands. Some of the birds that we will look out for in the moist woodland here include the handsome Red Junglefowl (ancestor to the domestic chicken), Sunda Pygmy and Laced Woodpeckers, Greater and Common Flamebacks, Large Hawk-Cuckoo, noisy Asian Koel, Ruddy Kingfisher, Pink-necked Green Pigeon, Common Iora, Abbott's Babbler, Forest Wagtail, Yellow-bellied Prinia, Olive-winged Bulbul, Lineated Barbet, Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, exquisite Brown-throated and Ruby-cheeked Sunbirds, Pied Triller, Black-naped Oriole, lively Pied Fantail, Rufous-tailed and Ashy Tailorbirds and the rare and habitat-specific Chestnut-bellied Malkoha.

We will also search hard for three mangrove specialities should we not have already encountered; the tough and often elusive Mangrove Whistler, shy but beautiful Mangrove Blue Flycatcher and Golden-bellied Gerygone. Wetlands in the area support a variety of waterbirds, including Chinese Pond and Purple Herons, White-throated, Stork-billed and Collared Kingfishers, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite and occasionally the endangered Lesser Adjutant.

**Fraser's Hill.** The rather quaint highland town of Fraser's Hill is surrounded by excellent and rather extensive mid-altitude broad-leaved forest and is home to a host of fabulous birds.

We'll bird the network of forested back roads and trails around the town, concentrating our efforts on finding the many special birds of the area, such as the outstanding Blue Nuthatch, Mountain Fulvetta, the rare, shy and endemic Malayan Whistling Thrush, attractive and localised Fire-tufted and Black-browed Barbets, exquisite Red-headed Trogon, Buff-breasted Babbler, delicate Rufous-browed Flycatcher, skulking Malayan Laughingthrush and the low-density and shy Large



**Sultan Tit by Keith Valentine**



**Brown Wood Owl by Adam Riley**

Scimitar Babbler. If we are very lucky, we may see two of the area's most secretive and elusive species: Malaysian Partridge and Rusty-naped Pitta. Other more widespread species that we also hope to encounter include the impressive Crested Serpent Eagle, dashing Long-tailed Broadbill, stunning Common Green Magpie, ground-dwelling Streaked Wren-Babbler, Long-tailed Sibia, Chestnut-capped Laughingthrush, Javan Cuckooshrike, gorgeous Silver-eared Mesia (Leiothrix), Blyth's Hawk-Eagle, Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, Speckled Piculet, retiring Lesser Shortwing, Mountain and Dark-necked Tailorbirds, the vivid-blue Large Niltava, Green-billed Malkoha, sensational Black-eared and Blyth's Shrike-Babblers, secretive Pygmy Wren-Babbler, the brilliant White-tailed Robin, Slaty-backed Forktail and the hyperactive Fire-breasted Flowerpecker.

Nocturnal excursions may turn up Malaysian Eared Nightjar, and if we get lucky - the scarce Brown Wood Owl and seldom-seen Mountain Scops Owl, a most elusive little owl that we are almost certain to hear but is notoriously difficult to see.

Mammal species occurring in the area include the vociferous Siamang or Black Gibbon, White-thighed (Banded) Langur and Wild Boar.

During our time here, we'll also venture downhill on at least one occasion to an area called the "Gap", which is a zone of beautiful, mixed broad-leaved forest and bamboo at the base of Fraser's Hill and covers the altitudes from 700 to 1200 meters (2,300 to 4,000 feet). This is a superb birding area that supports numerous exciting forest birds and is often one of the highlights on a tour to Peninsular Malaysia. Some of the delectable birds we may see here include the regal Black Eagle, Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagle, Orange-bellied and Blue-winged Leafbirds, Black-and-crimson Oriole, Grey-chinned Minivet, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, White-bellied Erpornis, Orange-breasted and Red-headed Trogons, White-crowned and Great Hornbills, Chestnut-backed Scimitar Babbler, Hill Blue Flycatcher, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, Black-and-yellow, Long-tailed, Silver-breasted and Dusky Broadbills, the near-endemic Black Laughingthrush, immaculate Sultan Tit, Red-billed Malkoha, the truly spectacular Red-bearded Bee-eater and three bamboo specialists: the vocal Yellow-bellied Warbler, unobtrusive Collared Babbler and the shy and enigmatic Bamboo Woodpecker, as well as the very rare and secretive Marbled Wren-Babbler or scarce, highly nomadic and little-known Yellow-vented Green Pigeon if we are very fortunate.



**Black Laughingthrush by Adam Riley**

## Tour Grading & Key

<b>Overall Ease</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate. This tour has a fair amount of trail walking and early starts. Not suitable for anyone with mobility or health challenges.
<b>Birding Ease</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Bird density can be low. Several difficult target species, many skulking understorey species that require sitting/standing for periods of time to observe.
<b>Accommodation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comfortable.
<b>Walking / Trails</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Some narrow trails, many trails will be muddy and slippery after rain. Terrain can be uneven with fallen logs, tree stumps or rocks under foot.
<b>Vehicles / Roads</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Small coach for most of tour, some roads are in poor condition.
<b>Photography</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Average, but tough due to skulking nature of many species. Some dedicated blinds / hides.
<b>Annoyances</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Hot and very humid in the lowlands. Potential for malaria and dengue, though infection is rare.

## Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- The following meals on the Budget Birding Tour;
  - breakfasts from day 2 to day 10;
  - lunches on days 7, 8, 9 & 10;
  - dinners on days 6, 7, 8 & 9.
- The following meals on the Budget Birding Extension;
  - breakfasts on day 2, 3 & 4;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services;

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any meals other than those mentioned above;
- Any beverages (including bottled water and mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions (ie: night drives and boat excursions);
- Camera fees;
- No tips or gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.



**Single Supplement:** The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

**Tippling:** As noted above, gratuities are NOT included on this tour. If you feel that your leader/s have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes made need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of a generally of a good standard and the hotels and resorts that we make use of are comfortable. There is no camping on this trip.
- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18kg) for hand luggage.
- Fitness: this tour does require a good level of fitness, and participants should be in good general health as most of the birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time. Some of these trails can be quite steep and slippery, especially after rain.
- For much of the tour you will be far away from modern medical facilities.

## ***Arrival and Departure Details***

The Budget Birding tour departs Kota Kinabalu very early on day 1, do ensure that you arrive the day before the tour starts. The tour will conclude here in the mid-afternoon of day 10.

The Budget Birding Extension departs Kuala Lumpur in the late afternoon of day 1 and conclude here by mid-afternoon of day 5.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Kuala Lumpur International Airport (IATA: KUL), and Kota Kinabalu International Airport (IATA: BKI) are the main points of arrival and departure for international flights to Malaysia & Borneo.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements. The following website provides detailed information about visa eligibility and assistance with online applications options where viable: [Visa HQ for Travel](#)

**DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.**