

# Birding Ecotours



## BORNEO: SARAWAK – RESTRICTED RANGE ENDEMICS

01 - 07 AUGUST 2027



*Blue-banded Pitta* – one of the stunning birds we will target on this trip (photo Yeo Siew Teck)

The Malaysian province of Sarawak in Borneo takes more effort than neighboring Sabah, but we do not recommend missing Sarawak as it provides superior chances of seeing **Blue-banded Pitta**, **Bornean Banded Pitta**, **Hose's Broadbill**, **Bulwer's Pheasant**, **Rail-babbler**, and other absolute jewels that will burn your eyes. And we also will be looking for species we have no chance of seeing on our Sabah tour, such as **Dulit Frogmouth**, **Bornean Frogmouth**, and **Black Oriole**, all mega world birds of rather legendary status!

This short (seven-day) trip starts and ends in Kota Kinabalu in the neighboring Sabah province before crossing into Sarawak, where our birding is focused. This trip begins immediately after our **Birding Tour Borneo: Sabah Classic Tour**, and straight after this Sarawak tour there is our **Birding Tour Malaysia: Peninsular Malaysia**, which offers yet more spectacular birds.



*Dulit Frogmouth is one of the most legendary of Borneo's endemics (photo Yeo Siew Teck).*

## Itinerary (7 days/6 nights)

### Day 1. Kota Kinabalu to Orang Ulu Village (via Klias Wetland)

In the morning we proceed from Kota Kinabalu to the Klias Wetlands, where we will look for **Grey-breasted Babbler**, **Scarlet-breasted Flowerpecker**, **Red-crowned Barbet**, and **Chestnut-bellied Malkoha**. One of our main targets here will be **Hook-billed Bulbul**, a specialist of peat swamp forest. After lunch in Lawas town we will travel overland in four-wheel-drive vehicles to Orang Ulu Village ahead of our next few days birding at Paya Maga.

Overnight: Orang Ulu Village homestay

## Day 2. Paya Maga Highlands

After breakfast we will transfer to the Paya Maga Highlands drop-off point, from where we will slowly hike for four kilometers (two-and-a-half miles) along a gently undulating old logging road to our campsite, birding along the way. This beautiful montane forest area in remote northeastern Sarawak is home to many incredible species, and we will be on the lookout for a very special bird, none other than **Black Oriole**, a very rare Bornean endemic not found in Sabah.



*We will be birding in what is practically the only place in the world where you stand a chance of seeing the endemic **Black Oriole** (photo Yeo Siew Teck).*

These highlands are covered in secondary forest with an abundance of *Macaranga*. We will bird the logging road from where it begins, then go beyond Gunung Doa at 850 meters (2,500 feet) to the base of the Paya Maga Camp Site at 1,050 meters (3,100 feet). The habitat along the road consists of mixed dipterocarp and lower montane forest. Occasional patches of undisturbed montane heath forest remain, particularly on the steepest slopes.

Targets during our hike will include **Bulwer's Pheasant** along with **Bornean Banded Pitta**, **Blue-banded Pitta**, and **Hose's Broadbill**, all stunning jewels. There are usually plenty of bulbuls, babblers, and flycatchers along the track, and other endemics may include **Bornean Barbet** and **Bornean Leafbird**.

In the evening we will look for **Bornean Frogmouth**, another endemic bird best looked for in Sarawak as opposed to Sabah.

Overnight: Paya Maga campsite wooden house

### Day 3. Paya Maga Highlands

After breakfast we continue birding the Paya Maga Highlands, hoping to add species to our list that might include more endemics. We will look for **Hose's Broadbill**, **Bornean Leafbird**, **Bornean Bulbul**, **Pygmy White-eye**, **Banded Kingfisher** (an endemic subspecies and potential future split), **Bornean Treepie**, **Chestnut-crested Yuhina**, and any of the other goodies that are around.



We will search for *Hose's Broadbill* in the Paya Maga Highlands (photo Liew Weng Keong).

While not endemic, **Rail-babbler** is likely at the top of many birders' wish-lists. Not only is it an incredible-looking species but it is also in a monotypic family, making it a must-see for any family lister. It is also extremely secretive and does not give itself up easily, although the sub-montane forest at Paya Maga is a good place to search for it.

We will also be sure to search for **Javan Blue Flycatcher**, until recently part of the Hill Blue Flycatcher complex. The subspecies of this new species that occurs in Borneo may potentially be further split as Dayak Blue Flycatcher in the near future, so this is one to be on the lookout for! Other species we will search for include **Collared Owlet**, **Jambu Fruit Dove**, **White-necked Babbler**, **Eyebrowed Wren-Babbler**, **Temminck's Babbler**, the attractive **Scaly-breasted Bulbul**, **Finsch's Bulbul**, **Olive-backed Woodpecker**, **Rufous-collared Kingfisher**, **Diard's Trogon**, and **Red-bearded Bee-eater**. In the evening we will have another opportunity for **Bornean Frogmouth** if needed.

Overnight: Paya Maga campsite wooden house



*The rather cute endemic **Bornean Frogmouth** is another major target of the tour (photo Yeo Siew Teck).*

#### **Day 4. Paya Maga Highlands to Ba'kelalan**

We will have a final morning birding in the Paya Maga Highlands area, where we will be on the continuous lookout for new species, some of which may include **Rufous-tailed Shama**, **Bornean Spiderhunter**, **Bare-headed Laughingthrush**, and **Flavescent Bulbul** of the distinctive endemic subspecies sometimes referred to as Pale-faced Bulbul, another potential split.

On reaching the point we were dropped off on day 2 we will board our four-wheel drive vehicles again for a few hours as we travel to the Ba'kelalan area, where we will check into our homestay late in the afternoon. This homestay will serve as our base for the next three nights as we work the area for its special birds.

After dinner we will search for the highly prized **Dulit Frogmouth** in a nearby patch of forest.

Overnight: Ba'kelalan homestay

#### **Days 5 – 6. Ba'kelalan area**

We will have two full days birding in the Ba'kelalan area, home to some of Borneo's classic, vibrant, and famous endemic birds. These include the likes of **Whitehead's Spiderhunter**, **Whitehead's Broadbill**, **Hose's Broadbill**, **Fruithunter**, **Bornean Green Magpie**, **Mountain Serpent Eagle**, **Black-throated Wren-Babbler**, **Bornean Stubtail**, **Bornean Spiderhunter**, **Bornean Barbet**, **Mountain Barbet**, **Golden-naped Barbet**, **Bare-headed Laughingthrush**, **Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush**, and **Bornean Whistler** – an impressive set of birds likely to get the juices flowing!





*Whitehead's Broadbill, a stunning endemic target (photo Liew Weng Keong)*



*The endemic Whitehead's Spiderhunter is another highly sought species (photo Yeo Siew Teck).*

During our time in Ba'kelalan we also hope to encounter **Long-tailed Broadbill**, **Rufous-tailed Jungle Flycatcher**, **Orange-breasted Trogon**, and **Dark Hawk Cuckoo** in addition to the many



species mentioned above. We will have plenty of time to look for all these exciting species and many more. **Crimson-headed Partridge**, **Red-breasted Partridge**, and **Ferruginous Partridge** all occur here but are often particularly secretive and therefore very tough to actually see. In addition to **Dulit Frogmouth** other night birds in the vicinity of the homestay may include **Malaysian Eared Nightjar** and **Brown Hawk-Owl**, so we will seek those out.

Overnight: Ba'kelalan homestay



*Bornean Banded Pitta is another endemic target on our Sarawak trip (photo Liew Weng Keong).*

### Day 7. Ba'kelalan to Kota Kinabalu (via Lawas)

We will have a final morning birding in the Ba'kelalan area, the exact timing of which will depend on the time of our flight between Ba'kelalan and Lawas. We may look around the village, where in the rice paddies and meadows we might find **Greater Painted-snipe**, **Yellow Bittern**, and **Cinnamon Bittern**, along with some other birds of the habitat.

After arrival in Lawas we will transfer back to Kota Kinabalu. The journey will take a few hours, and we aim to be back in the city in the late afternoon. If you plan on leaving Borneo on this day we recommend a late-evening flight; alternatively you could stay overnight (cost not included) and enjoy some hotel comforts after a week of exploring one of Asia's greatest birding destinations.

Directly following this tour we start our **Birding Tour Malaysia: Peninsular Malaysia**, where we can see a very different set of birds to those seen on this tour, such as **Mountain Peacock-Pheasant**, **Malayan Peacock-Pheasant**, **Ferruginous Partridge**, **Malayan Laughingthrush**, **Malayan Banded Pitta**, **Garnet Pitta**, **Blue-winged Pitta**, **Hooded Pitta**, **Mangrove Pitta**, **Common Green Magpie**, **Mangrove Blue Flycatcher**, and many more!

Overnight: Not included

*Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides, and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.*

<b>Duration:</b>	7 days
<b>Group Size:</b>	4 - 6
<b>Dates:</b>	01 - 07 August 2027
<b>Start:</b>	Kota Kinabalu
<b>End:</b>	Kota Kinabalu
<b>Prices:</b>	MYR 21,900 per person sharing – based on 4 – 6 participants (2027)

**Single Supplements:** MYR 1,097 (2027)

**Single Supplements Note:** Single rooming is available in homestays on the first, fifth, and sixth nights only, but with shared bathroom facilities.

**Price includes:**

All accommodation (as described above – note: we will be staying in homestays and serviced campsites. We can provide extra information if you would like to know more about this.)

All meals (from lunch on day 1 to lunch on day 7)

Drinking water, please bring a refillable water bottle

Expert tour leader

Local bird and wildlife guide fees

National park/birdwatching reserve entrance fees

All ground transport and tolls while on tour, including airport pick-up and drop-off

Internal flight (Ba'kelalan to Lawas)

Porters for carrying food, drinking water, and camping equipment

**Price excludes:**

Flights to/from Kota Kinabalu and any airport tax

Any drinks, meals, accommodation, and transfers before the tour officially starts or after it officially ends

Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.

Soft/alcoholic drinks

Camera and video fees

Personal travel insurance

Visa if required

Gratuities (please see [our tipping guidelines blog](#))