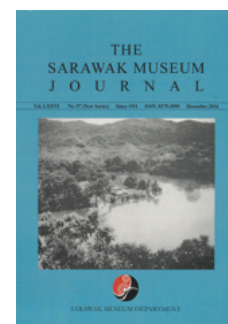




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### BOOK REVIEW

## PHILLIPPS' FIELD GUIDE TO THE MAMMALS OF BORNEO AND THEIR ECOLOGY: SABAH, SARAWAK, BRUNEI AND KALIMANTAN

**Dato Sri Earl of Cranbrook**

Text by Quentin Phillipps, illustrations by Karen Phillipps, with additional photographs by others. (2016), 8vo paperback, pp 1-400, profusely illustrated in colour throughout. ISBN 978 1-906780-92-0. John Beaufoy Publishing Ltd., Oxford, UK.

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Phillipps' Field Guide to the MAMMALS OF BORNEO AND THEIR ECOLOGY: Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei and Kalimantan**

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Naturalists have relished the lively and colourful guides to the birds of Borneo by the Phillipps, brother and sister, writer and artist, published by John Beaufoy and already in multiple editions. This team has now moved to a new subject, with the production of a guide to the mammals of Borneo (including the Natuna Islands) that ranges well beyond the mere task of field identification. Quentin Phillipps' wide reading has taken in many new publications since 1985, first print of the benchmark *Field guide* by Payne and Francis (several times reprinted, but not revised). The *Phillipps' field guide* brings to the reader a thoroughly up-dated treatment of the variety, status and nomenclature of Borneo mammals. From 221 (in 1985), the list has risen to 247 land mammal species. There are also notes and illustrations of 30 marine mammals that have occurred in some big rivers, estuaries and the surrounding seas. As defined by recent work, including the powerful tool of phylogenetic research, 63 species of the land mammals are considered to be endemic to the Borneo biogeographic area (including the Natuna langur of Bunguran Is), with the possibility that other cryptic endemic species may be revealed in due course.

In an Introduction, the writer sets his objective, that the book shall be "read and enjoyed (in parts) by a wide range of people with a variable knowledge base". For the enjoyment of people wanting to expand their knowledge base, the pages are interspersed with yellow text boxes, diverting the reader with incidental information, sidelines and anecdote. One of the first yellow boxes (p. 6) sets the style of the book, listing eight 'Matters for debate' which could, less politely, be called 'Rejected assumptions'. This list is immediately followed by seven 'speculative ideas', which the author hopes will stimulate further enquiry. The current revolution in taxonomy of the bats of the region is noted and, although this group already constitutes almost 40%

of the total species list, expectations are that the number may ultimately be doubled. Readers are offered an email address to propose corrections or add new species, and a website (*Borneomammals.com*) for an up-to-date species list. A yellow box suggests places to see Borneo's top ten mammals. This, and the following list of 63 endemic mammals chiefly cite Sabah locations, thereby in part reflecting the background of both author and artist but also, frankly, naming places with well organised access and reasonable likelihood of a successful viewing. It is sad that, so soon after this book was published, the Tabin reserve, Sabah, no longer offers a chance to encounter Sumatran rhino. Among the rarest endemics, known by single specimens, whoever succeeds in finding a Black shrew or Emmon's tree-rat will be the second person ever to see these mammals, dead or alive (p. 243)!

The body of the book is divided into three main sections. First, an introduction to Borneo in a regional context, the equatorial climate and vegetation, the prehistory of mammals and people, general ecology of mammals and some 30 pages on plant life and plant and mammal interactions, all vividly accompanied by lively coloured illustrations from Karen's brush. Second, neatly led in via the feeding habits of fruit bats, the systematic section (pp. 84-325) follows the familiar arrangement of Payne and Francis (1985) rather than the current leading reference work (Wilson & Reeder, 2005, *Mammal species of the world*). Mammals are grouped by Family or Order. First are Pteropodidae, fruit bats and flying foxes (18 species), followed by the insectivorous bats (79+ species in 8 families). Genetic analysis has suggested a revised classification of bats into two suborders, shown on p. 110, thankfully without introducing the ugly names Yinpterochiroptera and Yangochiroptera. Shrews follow, with a clear illustration to show the absurdly small fourth unicuspid tooth in the upper jaw that distinguishes the three species of the genus *Suncus* from three *Crocidura*. The two very different Erinaceidae are Moonrat and the lively diurnal Hylomys, the latter often met busily fossicking in the leaf litter in high altitude forests of northern Borneo. The 10 treeshrews, of which 7 are Borneo endemics, deservedly occupy pages 142-152. Next, the pangolins include the living Sunda pangolin and also the Giant pangolin, noted as probably the first mammal to go extinct in Borneo after the arrival of modern humans. Among colugos, genetic research is quoted to separate the Borneo colugo with the systematic name *Galeopterus borneanus* Lyon 1911, with a note of at least one other cryptic endemic in the Natuna Islands, for which older names would be available: *G. natunae* (Miller 1903) on Pulau Bunguran and *G. gracilis* (Miller 1903) on Sirhasan.

For the first of 21 Primates (pp. 156-192), following Groves and Shekelle (2010) in *International Journal of Primatology* — a reference not included in the Selective bibliography (pp. 388-393) but accessible via the website — the long-standing name *Tarsius* has been replaced by *Cephalopachus*. This resurrected genus contains only one species, *C. bancanus*, for which Western tarsier is still the familiar vernacular name. Slow lorises have (since 2013) been separated into four species in Borneo, based on facial pattern and colour, shown by Karen's illustrations: Philippine and Banka Slow lorises extend to extra-territorial ranges, but Borneo and the new Kayan Slow loris are endemics; again, the Natuna loris may be separable at species level. More species of langurs have also been identified by research and re-evaluation. Although historic ranges have been severely reduced by forest clearance, the following are recognised and illustrated: Red langur, throughout Borneo, with four geographical subspecies on the main island and a fifth on Pulau Karimata. Grey langurs, now divided into four species: sexually dimorphic Hose's langur is split from Sabah grey langur and Kutai grey langur, and the linking White-fronted langur *Presbytis frontata* retains its identity although re-named Kalimantan grey langur. The Natuna langur of Bunguran Besar is an endemic of uncertain relations. On the Borneo mainland, the variable Banded langur is renamed Sarawak langur, to reflect its sadly fragmented distribution, with vulnerable populations at Samunsam, Madulam and Similajau. The genus *Trachypithecus* is represented by the widespread Silvered langur *T. cristatus*. Sharing the coastal and riparian habitat, but now fragmented in 16 known populations, is Borneo's most famous endemic cercopithecoid, the Proboscis monkey (pp. 174-179). The Long-tailed and Pig-tailed macaques are followed by the gibbons, here recognised as four species: Abbott's, North Borneo, White bearded and Mueller's gibbons, the latter two being distinguished where they meet by different female 'great' calls. The distribution of the three recognised (but scarcely distinguishable) subspecies of Borneo Orangutan are mapped; a potential addition could be the unverified report of some 50 Orangutans in South Kalimantan (*Banjermasin Pos* 10 Oct. 2014).

Rodents follow (pp. 194-245). Squirrels (36 species including 14 flying squirrels, 7 endemics) are described in detail and illustrated by Karen to show diagnostic characters of species — and subspecies of the more variable squirrels — supplemented by distribution maps and photographs, including one by R. Orenstein taken as possible confirmation of the presence of Sunda black-banded squirrel *Callosciurus nigrovittatus* in Borneo. The Giant squirrel is among the variable species, with 5 recognised subspecies on the main island and others on small islands. On the Natuna group, old descriptions of 1895 to