



2. Borneo 2019



by Johan Kjellander 2019



By the end of February we left the Philippines for good and sailed 450 NM south-west to Borneo. First stop was Bandar Seri Begawan, the capitol of Brunei.



Brunei is a muslim country with many mosques. To the left is the Omar Ali Saifuddin mosque, also called the Thai Mahal of Brunei. To the right is the Kampong Tamoi Mosque with the old water village in the foreground.



We anchored close to the Royal Brunei Yacht Club in the Brunei River and the next day we took a tour upstream with a local tourist company. The shores are bordered with mangrove and compact rain forest.



Egrets are common in the shallow waters.



So is the Monitor Lizard (Sv:Varan).



But the most spectacular is of course the Proboscis Monkey (Sv:Näsapa, Lat:Nasalis larvatus). Endemic to Borneo.



They live in groups with one adult male, several adult females and their children. Not easy to find. Easier to spot are the Long-tailed Macaques (picture to the right).



A few days later we booked a tour on the Temburong river into the Ulu Temburong national park. Strong currents and rapids and not easy to navigate. Our skipper had to stop half way to replace the propeller.



A beautiful boat ride with compact tropical jungle on both sides of the river. Lots of birds and flowers.



Stork-billed Kingfisher, (Sv:Storknäbbskungsfiskare, Lat: Pelargopsis capensis)



After the boatripe, a short hike and then 700 steps up along a hillside to the "Canopy Walk", a tourist attraction where you climb another 50 meters up above the highest trees and watch the djungle from above. Beautiful ! Then down again and another short hike to a waterfall with a SPA-fish pond. Had a nice swim and then the fish cleaned our toes.



I must say I'm impressed by the size of Borneo's ants. At least twice the size of those we have at home.

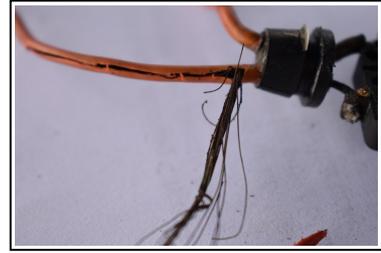
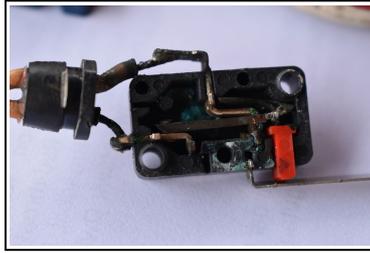


After 10 days in Brunei we continued south along the coast to Kuching in Malaysia. The marina in Kuching is in the Sarrawak river and the tide is strong. Many interesting objects float by.



One of the first boats we met in Kuching was a red French catamaran that was out on a mission to find "low tech" technology, document and spread it on the internet. One of the "low tech" projects was to make green diesel from used cooking oil that they got from a restaurant. They filtered the oil, added

some chemicals and then used the stuff in the red catamaran. Interesting.
See: Nomade de Mers.



The float switch in our forward greywater tank suddenly stopped working. It was only two years old so I decided to open it and find out what caused the problem. Once inside it was obvious that the microswitch was totally destroyed by corrosion (2:nd picture), but how did the water get in ? Well somebody on Face Book adviced me that capillary forces can make water travel long distances inside an electric cable. I checked my cables (3:rd picture) and there it was. Totally corroded inside. After two years, water had traveled along the inside of the cable and into the micro switch. Lesson learned.



We saw many Herons in the marina. Above to the left is a Striated Heron (Sv:Mangrovehäger, Lat:Butorides striata) sitting right beside our boat on the pontoon. In the city we saw the Zebra Dove (Sv:Zebraduva, Lat:Geopelia striata) and the Myna (Sv:Brun Majna, Lat:Acridotheres tristis). We hadn't seen the Myna for a while but I do remember that we saw them in Tahiti two years ago.



I have always wanted to see the Orangutans and now was the time. To see them in the wild is not easy but if you visit a rehabilitation centre you might

see semi wild Orangutans when they come for food. Full of expectations we took a taxi to the Semenggoh Nature Reserve where many Orangutans had been reintroduced to the wild for many years. The wardens feed them twice a day and you can watch from a small distance. This time of the year however there is plenty of food in the forest so the Orangutans were not hungry and didn't show up. All I saw was a butterfly!



A few days later we tried the Matang wildlife center and that was better. In Matang you can see some of the Orangutans in big enclosed pastures learning to climb and find their own food before they are released to the wild life in the forest. They are very cute but can be dangerous and people have been hurt.



Watching them climb high up in a high wooden structure was fascinating. It looks so easy. They must have very strong arms and a fantastic sense of distance and balance.



From ground level to the top in only a few seconds.



Nice to see wild animals that seem to have a good life.



The Orangutans are so sweet and inspiring. They were even for sale, made out of coconuts.



In Matang, there was also a unit for crocodiles. Here you could see salt water crocodiles which is the biggest of all crocodiles, and also their cousin, the Gharial with the long narrow nose.

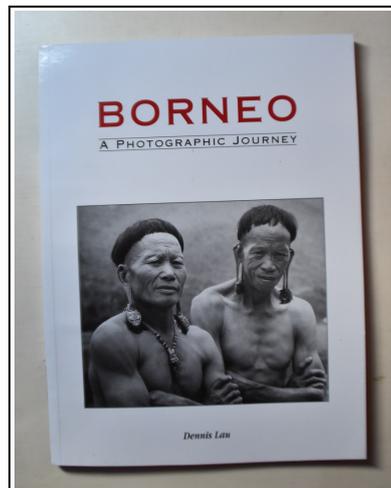


Finally, after all the jungle and all the wild animals we also had a dose of culture. Kuching means cat so Kuching is the "Cat city". There is a big cat

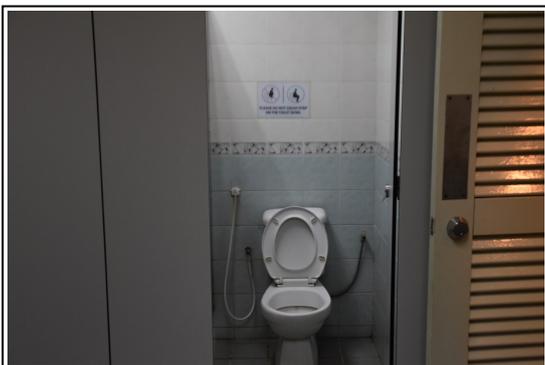
museum with more than five thousand cats. I like cats but this was maybe a little too much.



We also payed a visit to the "Cultural village". Interesting with lots of information about the different tribes that once lived in the djungle and their habits. A dance show was given at the end of the visit with a real "headhunter" who killed balloons with a blowpipe.



I found a book with fantastic photographs in their bookshop. *Borneo, a photographic journey* with pictures by Dennis Lau, published 1999 by Travelcom Asia Sdn Bhd, Kuching. ISBN:983-99431-1-1



That was the end of our visit to Borneo. We stayed about two weeks in Brunei and two weeks in Kuching. The last visit was the State Library of

Sarrawak, very big and very beautiful but I do wonder who the sign in the toilet is intended for. Maybe the Orangutans ?



End of Borneo 2019

