

BORNEO

THE WEB OF LIFE



Name of the Authors: Sathyan KM & Rajesh Koderi

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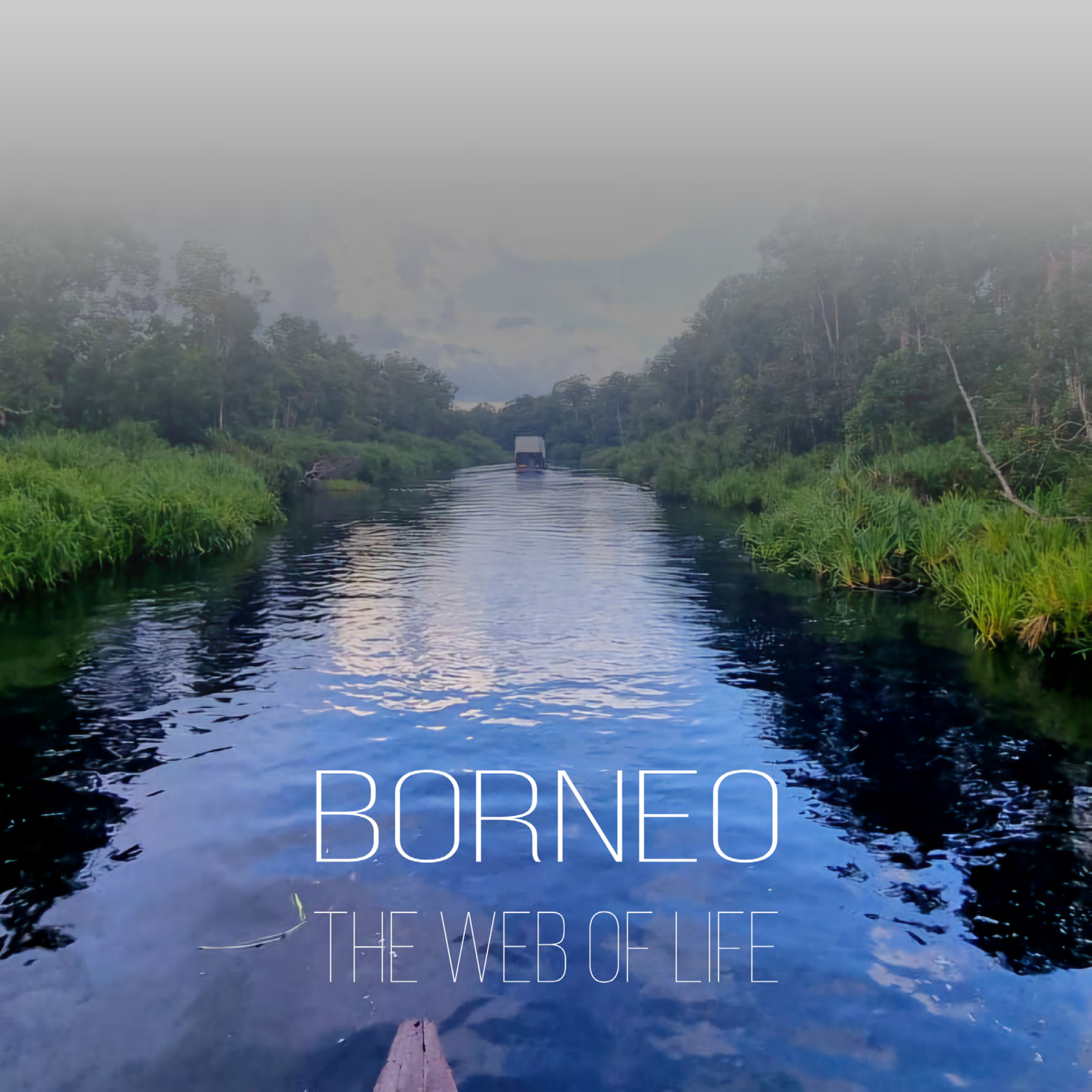
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Email of Authors: sathyankm15@gmail.com (Sathyan KM) / rkoderi@gmail.com (Rajesh Koderi)

Contact Numbers of Authors: +91 98200 25239 (Sathyan KM) / +91 93207 06891 (Rajesh Koderi)

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A photograph of a river flowing through a dense, lush green forest. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding vegetation. In the distance, a small boat is visible on the river. The sky is overcast with soft, grey clouds. The overall mood is serene and natural.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Unique Wildlife

Borneo boasts endemic species like the proboscis monkey with its comically large nose, the pygmy elephant (the smallest elephant species), and the endangered Borneo rainbow toad, rediscovered after 87 years!





Borneo: A Verdant Paradise

Borneo, the third-largest island in the world, is a lush tropical haven shared by three countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei. Covering an area of approximately 743,330 square kilometers, Borneo is home to one of the oldest rainforests on Earth, dating back over 140 million years.

This biodiverse paradise is renowned for its rich flora and fauna, many of which are found nowhere else on the planet. Towering dipterocarp trees, vibrant orchids, and ancient ferns form the backbone of its lush landscapes. It is a sanctuary for iconic wildlife such as orangutans, pygmy elephants, and proboscis monkeys, alongside countless lesser-known species that thrive in its intricate ecosystems.

Borneo's equatorial location brings year-round warm temperatures, averaging 27°C, and high humidity. Its climate is characterized by two monsoon seasons, with heavy rains shaping the rivers, swamps, and peatlands that sustain life in this green treasure trove.

The forests of Borneo are not just a biological marvel; they are vital for global environmental health, acting as a significant carbon sink and regulator of the Earth's climate. As a vital reservoir of biodiversity and culture, Borneo's forests stand as a testament to the awe-inspiring complexity of life.





DID YOU KNOW?

Home to the World's Largest Cave Chamber

Sarawak Chamber in Mulu National Park (Malaysia) is the largest known cave chamber on Earth, capable of fitting 40 Boeing 747 airplanes!





Entry Points:

Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak)

- Kinabalu Park (Sabah): Gateway to Mount Kinabalu and surrounding rainforests, offering access to incredible biodiversity.
- Danum Valley Conservation Area (Sabah): A pristine rainforest reserve rich in wildlife and research opportunities.
- Bako National Park (Sarawak): Known for its coastal rainforest and proboscis monkeys.
- Mulu National Park (Sarawak): Famous for its caves and limestone forests, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Tabin Wildlife Reserve (Sabah): A haven for endangered species like pygmy elephants and Sumatran rhinos.

Indonesia (Kalimantan)

- Tanjung Puting National Park: Renowned for its orangutan rehabilitation centers and dense lowland forests.
- Betung Kerihun National Park: A remote and biodiverse area with primary rainforest and river systems.
- Kutai National Park: Offers a glimpse into lush dipterocarp forests and orangutan habitats.
- Sebangau National Park: Known for its peat swamp forests and endangered species.
- Gunung Palung National Park: Features diverse ecosystems ranging from mangroves to montane forests.

Brunei

- Ulu Temburong National Park: Known as the "Green Jewel of Brunei," this park offers pristine forests and canopy walks.
- Andulau Forest Reserve: A protected area showcasing Brunei's lowland rainforests and unique biodiversity.

These entry points serve as key gateways for exploring Borneo's incredible natural heritage and can highlight how each country contributes to conserving this rich ecosystem.





Exhibitions

- Foto Vision Group, Gaganendra Shilpa Pradarshashala, Kolkata.
- Picturesque Worldwide Group, Gallery Gold, Kolkata
- Xemania International Photography Exhibition, Gallery Gold, Kolkata.
- Mumbiography Group, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai.

Memberships & Conservation Initiatives

- Life Member, Photomuse—The Museum of Photography, Kerala.
- Supporter, The Orangutan Project (Borneo, Indonesia), adopting “Happi,” a baby orangutan as part of their rehabilitation program.
- Member, Natural History Museum, UK.

Born in Kerala, fondly known as "God's Own Country," and now residing in Mumbai, I've always found inspiration in nature's beauty and creative expression.

My artistic journey began in childhood, drawing portraits with pencil on chart paper. My fascination with photography was sparked in the early 1990s, watching wedding photographers capture candid moments during the era of film cameras. The anticipation of waiting for film processing to reveal the results only deepened my love for the craft.

My photography journey officially began with a Canon Autoboy Luna XL (28-70mm), capturing candid and landscape shots. As technology evolved, so did my tools, transitioning from a Nikon Coolpix L6 in the digital era to my first DSLR, the Canon 70D. This marked a turning point, inspired by my wildlife mentor and neighbor, Mr. Rajesh Koderi, an ardent nature lover.

My inaugural wildlife trip to Dandeli Tiger Reserve brought me closer to nature and set the stage for countless adventures across India's sanctuaries. With each journey, my passion for documenting mammals and birds in their natural habitats grew, encouraging me to invest in advanced equipment that could bring the unseen beauty of wildlife into focus.

Professionally, I am a corporate executive, balancing the demands of leadership with my enduring passion for photography and conservation. This duality allows me to bring a structured, innovative approach to my creative pursuits while using my work to inspire others in both fields.

For me, photography is more than a hobby—it's a means of storytelling. My camera allows me to share the visual narratives of the wild, revealing patterns and behaviors that often go unnoticed by the human eye. Even now, I remain a student, learning the science and art of photography from peers, both senior and junior.

Sathyan KPM



A banker by profession, Passionate Wildlife Photographer and Conservation Advocate.

A deep-rooted love for nature, developed since childhood, has grown into a lifelong passion for wildlife photography. What began as an affinity for wild animals has evolved into a journey of capturing their beauty and diversity through the lens.

With a special focus on bird photography, the intricate details and grace of avian life in their natural habitats are often highlighted. The work extends beyond birds to include mammals, forest landscapes, and unique ecosystems discovered through exploration.

Hobbies and Interests:

Wildlife Exploration: Regular visits to sanctuaries and national parks to immerse in vibrant ecosystems and observe animals in their native environments.

Wildlife Photography: A fusion of technical skill and artistic expression, creating compelling imagery that celebrates the beauty of wildlife—from majestic birds to elusive mammals.

Conservation Awareness: Advocacy for preserving wildlife and their habitats, using photography as a tool to inspire a deeper connection with and protection for the natural world.

Achievements:

Documentation of a variety of wildlife species, with photographs showcased in exhibitions and publications, earning recognition for their artistic and environmental impact.

Engagement with conservation groups and initiatives, contributing to efforts that promote environmental sustainability and emphasize the importance of preserving biodiversity.

Rajesh Kodleri



DID YOU KNOW?

It's Shared by Three Nations

Borneo is the only island in the world governed by three nations—Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei.



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DID YOU KNOW?

The Only Place for Wild Orangutans

Borneo and Sumatra are the only places where wild orangutans live. These “gardeners of the forest” play a crucial role in seed dispersal, ensuring the health of their environment.





THE ENIGMATIC FORESTS OF KALIMANTAN

Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of Borneo, is home to ancient rainforests rich in life and history. Towering dipterocarp trees create a vast canopy, sheltering diverse species like the clouded leopard and the vibrant Rajah Brooke's butterfly.

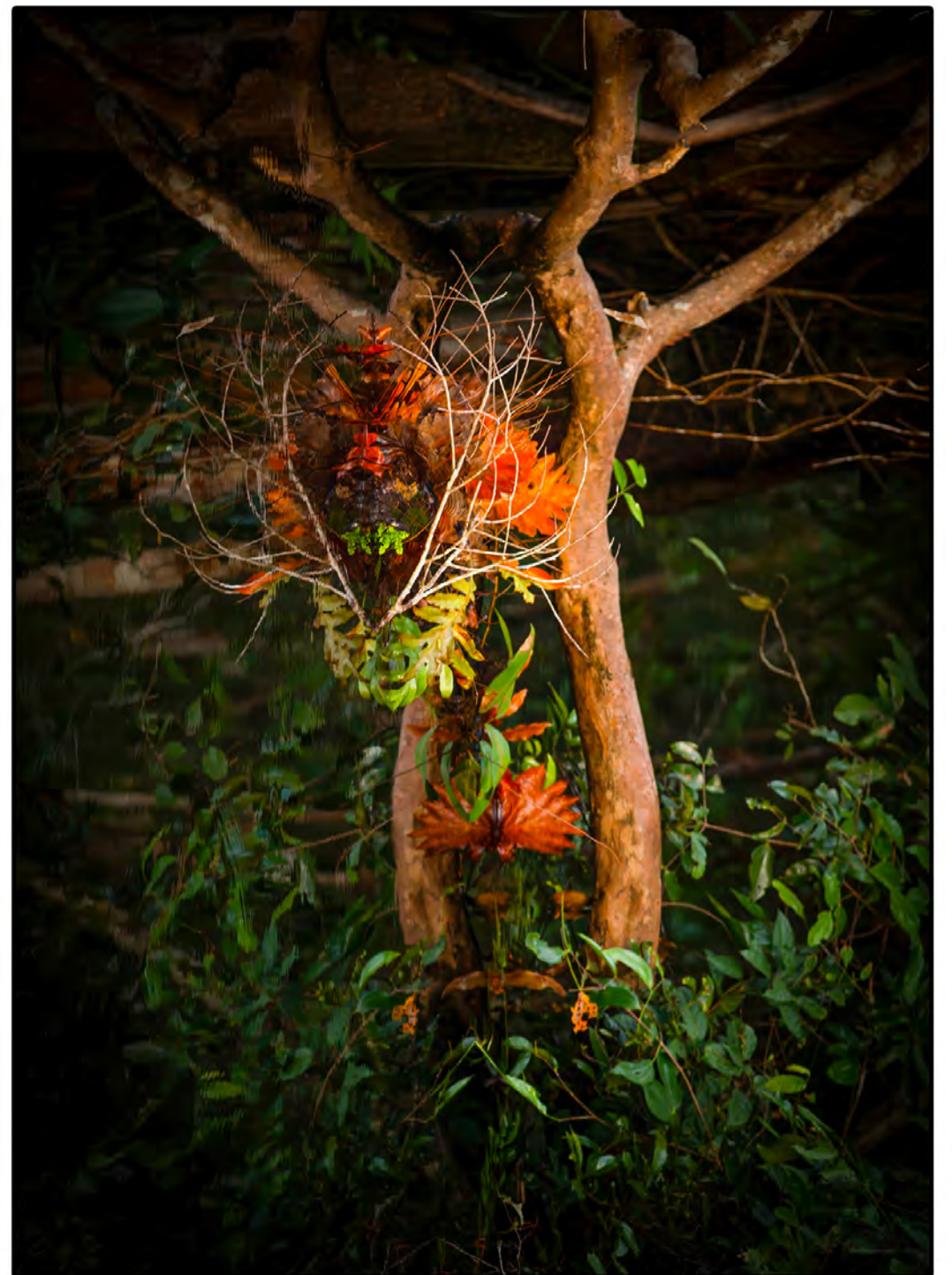
Local legends breathe life into the forest, intertwining nature with spirituality. One tale speaks of the “Hantu Hutan,” or forest spirits, believed to protect the land and its creatures. Villagers recount eerie encounters, like strange lights flickering among the trees or the mysterious silence that falls before a storm. These stories, passed down through generations, reinforce the deep respect the local Dayak tribes have for the forest.

Beyond its beauty and mystique, Kalimantan's forests face mounting challenges. Illegal logging, palm oil plantations, and mining threaten this biodiversity hotspot. However, efforts to conserve this natural treasure are growing, with local communities, conservationists, and ecotourism working hand-in-hand to protect its future.

Walking through Kalimantan's forests is more than a journey—it's an immersion into a world where nature, myth, and reality intertwine, leaving an indelible mark on all who experience it.



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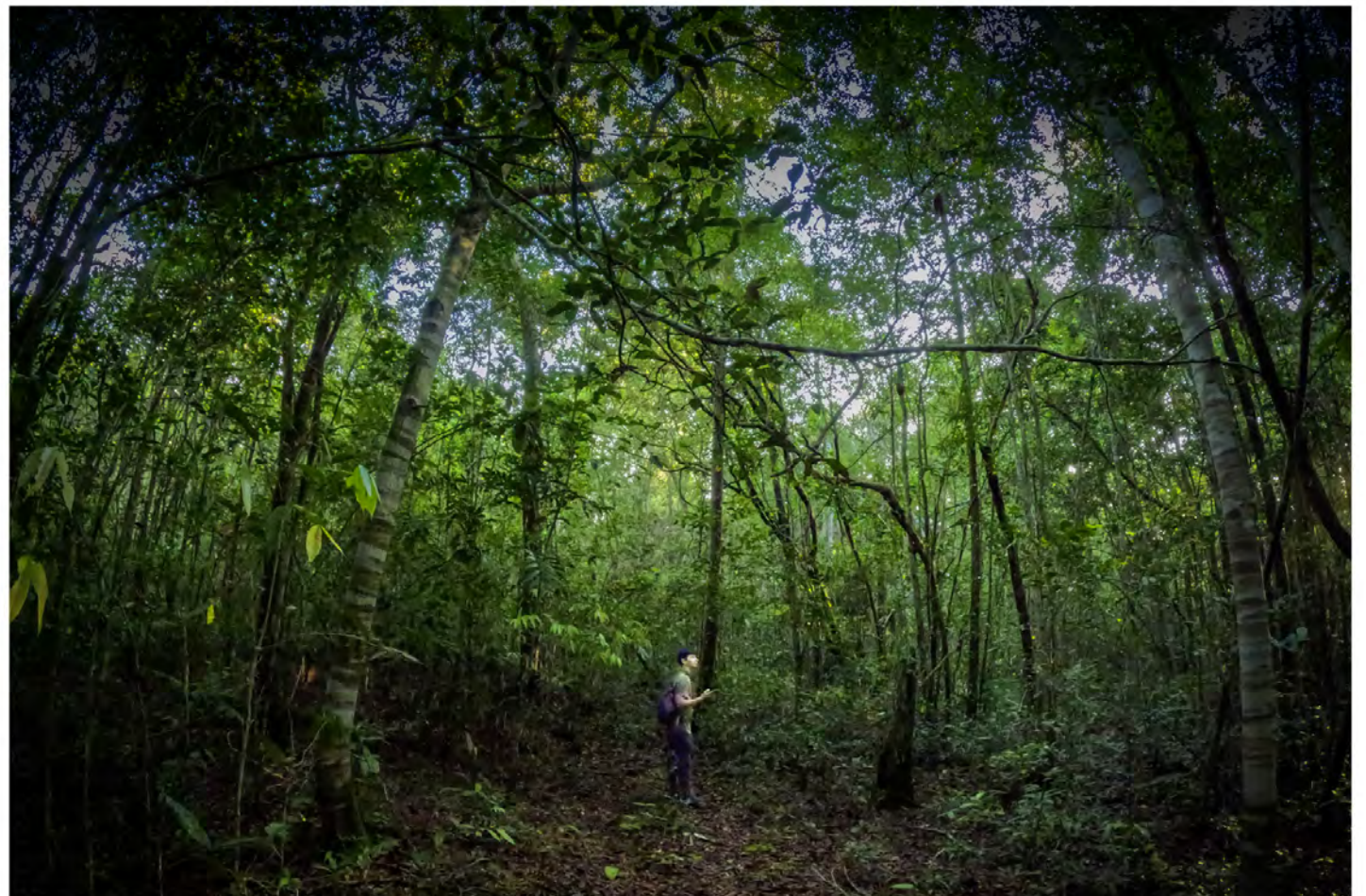


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DID YOU KNOW?

Borneo is home to One of the Oldest Rainforests

Borneo's rainforests are over 140 million years old, predating even the Amazon! These ancient forests are among the richest ecosystems on the planet, teeming with rare plants and wildlife.





RIVER ECOSYSTEMS OF BORNEO

Borneo's rivers are the lifeblood of its ecosystems, weaving through dense rainforests, peat swamps, and mangroves. Major rivers like the Kinabatangan, Rajang, and Mahakam sustain both biodiversity and human communities. These waterways are home to a myriad of life, including freshwater fish, crocodiles, and endemic species like the Irrawaddy dolphin and Bornean river shark.

The surrounding riverbanks and floodplains support vibrant flora, such as nipa palms and aquatic plants, while also serving as crucial habitats for wildlife, including proboscis monkeys and hornbills. Peat swamp forests and mangroves play a vital role in water purification, flood control, and carbon storage, highlighting the ecological importance of these ecosystems.

Among these waterways, blackwater rivers stand out for their unique characteristics. The term "black river" refers to the tea-colored waters stained by tannins from decaying organic matter in the surrounding peat swamps. These rivers, such as the Sungai Sebangau in Central Kalimantan, are acidic and nutrient-poor but host specialized flora and fauna adapted to their conditions. The dark, reflective surface of these rivers creates an otherworldly ambiance, making them an ecological and visual wonder of Borneo's landscape.

Borneo's river ecosystems not only nurture its extraordinary biodiversity but also provide essential resources and livelihoods for local communities, emphasizing their role in the island's environmental and cultural fabric.



© Sathyan KM



© Sathyan KM

HUMAN HABITATION, OCCUPATION, AND FOOD

Borneo's rivers have long been the lifeblood of its human communities, shaping their settlements, livelihoods, and culture.

Many indigenous groups, such as the Dayak, Iban, and Orang Ulu, reside along the riverbanks, building stilt houses and floating settlements that adapt to seasonal flooding. These rivers serve as highways, connecting remote villages to trade and communication networks.

The rivers sustain diverse occupations, including fishing, farming, and traditional crafts. Fishing is a primary livelihood, with rivers providing an abundance of freshwater species like catfish and prawns.

The fertile floodplains support agriculture, where crops such as rice, bananas, and sago are cultivated. Additionally, the forests near rivers yield resources like timber, rattan, and medicinal plants, which are integral to the local economy.



© Rajesh Koderi



© Rajesh Koderi





FLORA OF BORNEO

Borneo's flora is among the richest and most diverse on the planet, with its rainforests housing over 15,000 plant species, many of which are endemic. Towering dipterocarp trees dominate the landscape, forming the backbone of the forest canopy and supporting a myriad of life.

The island is also renowned for its unique and exotic plants, including the giant *Rafflesia*, the world's largest flower, and the carnivorous pitcher plants that have evolved to thrive in nutrient-poor soils. Orchids, numbering in the thousands, add splashes of color to the forest, while ferns and mosses flourish in the humid undergrowth.

These plants not only sustain the island's wildlife but also provide valuable resources to its human inhabitants, from timber and medicinal plants to fruits like durian and mangosteen. Borneo's flora is a testament to the beauty and resilience of its ancient rainforests.

© Sathyan KM



© Sathyan KM





THE MACRO WORLD OF BORNEO

Borneo's rainforests teem with an incredible variety of insects, spiders, and butterflies, each playing a vital role in the ecosystem. The island is home to an estimated 150,000 insect species, from giant stick insects and jewel-like beetles to brightly colored cicadas. Many of these are endemic, reflecting the unique evolution of Borneo's biodiversity.

Butterflies, such as the majestic Rajah Brooke's birdwing and various swallowtail species, are among the most striking, their vibrant patterns adding splashes of color to the forest. These pollinators are essential for maintaining the health of Borneo's flora.

Spiders, including the golden orb-weaver, tarantulas, and trapdoor species, showcase remarkable adaptations. Tarantulas, with their large, hairy bodies and formidable hunting prowess, inhabit the forest floor, where they ambush prey in the cover of darkness. Meanwhile, orb-weavers spin intricate webs to trap flying insects, and trapdoor spiders rely on stealthy ambush techniques.

Together, these creatures form the backbone of the forest's food chain, ensuring the balance and health of Borneo's extraordinary ecosystems. Their fascinating behaviors and ecological roles make them an integral part of the island's vibrant rainforest.







AVIANS OF BORNEO

Borneo is a haven for bird enthusiasts, boasting over 600 recorded species, including more than 50 endemic to the island. From the vibrant forests to the misty mountain peaks, the island offers diverse habitats that attract a dazzling array of birds.

One of Borneo's most iconic avian residents is the hornbill, revered by indigenous cultures and often called the "guardian of the forest." With their striking bills and majestic presence, hornbills play a critical ecological role as seed dispersers. Other standout species include the Bornean bristlehead, a unique and elusive bird found only in Borneo, and the blue-banded pitta, a jewel of the rainforest floor.

The island's vibrant broadbills, with their vivid plumage and melodic calls, bring life to the forest canopy. Trogons, such as Whitehead's trogon, are a highlight of Borneo's montane forests, their striking colors blending with the misty highlands. Alongside them, the agile fantails, known for their lively tail displays, flit through the dense undergrowth in search of insects.

Borneo's wetlands and river ecosystems are home to herons, kingfishers, and egrets, while higher elevations harbor montane species like the mountain serpent-eagle. The lush rainforests also resonate with the gentle coos and chirps of baby birds, nesting under the protection of their parents, a testament to the thriving avian life on the island.

Borneo's birds are not just a visual treat but also vital to its ecosystems, from pollination to pest control, reflecting the intricate balance of life in this tropical paradise.

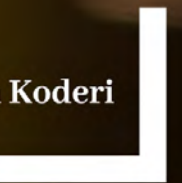


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MAMMALS OF BORNEO

Borneo is home to a remarkable array of mammals, many of which are found nowhere else on Earth. The island's diverse habitats, from dense rainforests to mangroves and mountains, provide refuge for a wide variety of species, including several iconic and endangered mammals.

One of the most famous residents is the Bornean orangutan, a critically endangered species that spends most of its life in the treetops. Alongside it, Borneo is home to the proboscis monkey, known for its distinctive large nose, and the elusive clouded leopard, a master of stealth and one of the island's top predators.

Swinging gracefully through the forest canopy are gibbons, known for their loud, melodic calls that echo through the rainforest at dawn. These agile primates, such as the Bornean white-bearded gibbon, are vital seed dispersers and indicators of a healthy ecosystem.

Borneo's rivers and forests also shelter unique species like the Bornean pygmy elephant, a smaller and gentler subspecies of the Asian elephant, and the sun bear, the world's smallest bear, renowned for its curved claws and affectionate nature. Other notable mammals include the Malay pangolin, the sambar deer, and the Bornean mountain ground squirrel.

These mammals are integral to the island's ecosystems, playing key roles as pollinators, seed dispersers, and apex predators, while also facing ongoing threats from habitat loss and poaching. The survival of these species is crucial to maintaining Borneo's ecological balance.



















CONSERVATION IN BORNEO: A COLLECTIVE EFFORT FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Borneo, home to one of the world's oldest rainforests, is a biodiversity hotspot. It shelters unique ecosystems, including critically endangered species like the orangutan. Conservation efforts in the region focus on combating deforestation, habitat loss, and peatland degradation caused by logging, agriculture, and infrastructure development. Initiatives emphasize reforestation, community engagement, and sustainable practices to preserve this ecological treasure.

In this journey, we were proud to collaborate with Hijau Yayasan Orangutan Hijau Kalimantan, a dedicated organization working toward orangutan conservation and environmental preservation in Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo).

"Hijau", meaning "green" in Indonesian, reflects a commitment to sustainability and ecological balance.

"Yayasan" translates to "foundation," highlighting its role as a non-profit organization.

"Orangutan Hijau" emphasizes an eco-friendly approach to conserving orangutans and their habitats.

Through partnerships like these, Borneo's conservation journey continues to inspire and mobilize collective action to protect its unique flora, fauna, and communities.









GRATITUDE

Anil T. Prabhakar, an internationally acclaimed photographer, was the heart and soul of our photography tour. With his warm, cordial demeanor and ever-smiling presence, he not only shared the untold stories of the forest but also enriched our skills, especially in night photography. His passion for nature was contagious, and his philosophy that every wildlife photographer must contribute back to nature through conservation left a lasting impression. Anil arranged a beautiful boat for our trip and stay, ensuring we felt at home with food tailored to our preferences. More than a mentor, he became a true friend on this unforgettable journey.

Equally remarkable was Mr. Iman, our local guide, whose deep knowledge of the forest amazed us. He could identify every bird by its sound, every tree by its name, and recount its medicinal properties. His gripping horror stories of the forest brought the wilderness to life, making every moment an adventure. Together, Anil and Mr. Iman made this experience a perfect blend of learning, camaraderie, and connection to nature.



BORNEO: THE WEB OF LIFE IS A CAPTIVATING COFFEE TABLE BOOK THAT CELEBRATES THE INTRICATE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF LIFE IN ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST BIODIVERSE REGIONS.

THROUGH STRIKING PHOTOGRAPHY, THIS BOOK EXPLORES LUSH TROPICAL FORESTS, VIBRANT FLORA, UNIQUE FAUNA, AND DYNAMIC ECOSYSTEMS OF TANJUNG PUTING NATIONAL PARK, KALIMANTAN, BORNEO, INDONESIA

EVERY PAGE REVEALS THE HIDDEN WONDERS OF THIS TROPICAL PARADISE, FROM THE NOCTURNAL MYSTERIES OF ITS FORESTS TO THE LIFE TEEMING BENEATH ITS BLACK RIVERS AND OFFCOURSE THE GUARDIAN ORANGUTANS !!.

MORE THAN A VISUAL JOURNEY, THE BOOK SERVES AS A CALL TO ACTION FOR CONSERVATION AND AN ODE TO THE DELICATE BALANCE THAT SUSTAINS LIFE ON OUR PLANET.

"THE WEB OF LIFE" INVITES READERS AND VIEWERS ALIKE TO IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN BORNEO'S BEAUTY AND REFLECT ON OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT IT.

THIS BOOK IS A TIMELESS REMINDER OF THE RICHNESS OF LIFE AND THE STORIES IT WEAVES.

- SATHYAN KM & RAJESH KODERI

