



TROPICAL BIOLOGY ASSOCIATION

## Course Guide

### Borneo

#### Key information

<b>Course site:</b>	Danum Valley, Sabah
<b>Course dates:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> to 30 <sup>th</sup> October
<b>Meeting place:</b>	To be announced, Kota Kinabalu 30 <sup>th</sup> September, 18:30
<b>Visas:</b>	<b>Visa without reference (VWTR) may be required.</b> Participants must check with the Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see below)
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Dr Glen Reynolds, Danum Valley Field Centre

#### Danum Valley Field Centre

Danum Valley Field Centre (DVFC) is generally accepted as the foremost tropical rainforest research station in South East Asia. The Centre was set up in 1986 for the purposes of research, education, training and wilderness recreation. The station is located on the border of the Danum Valley Conservation Area which is part of a 10,000km<sup>2</sup> forest concession administered by the Sabah Foundation, a charitable organisation which uses income from its activities to finance welfare, education and conservation initiatives in Sabah. The area is one of the most extensive and significant lowland primary forest protected areas in tropical Asia.

The DVFC is located at 117°48.75' E and 5° 01' N on the east coast of the Malaysian state of Sabah, Borneo Island. Danum Valley Conservation Area is Class I protected rain forest covering 438 km<sup>2</sup> on the western side of the upper reaches of the Segama River in Southeast Sabah. It is the largest remaining area of undisturbed lowland dipterocarp forest in Sabah and so is of immense conservation importance. The nearest major town is Lahad Datu on Sabah's southeast coast; approximately 2-hour drive (81 km) away.

#### Facilities

- You will sleep in a shared dormitory (bedding provided) and share common toilet and washing facilities.
- The water supply comes from rainfall and is stored on site.
- The station has a communal eating area and veranda, a library, and a laboratory.
- The field station has electricity from 7.30 am to 11.00 pm. However, power failures do occur – usually when you least expect them – so you should bring a good torch for black outs and night time forays into the forest.
- Packed lunches can be provided if ordered one day before.
- Coffee and tea are available free of charge in the dining area.
- Drinking water is available in the dining hall.

DVFC provides research laboratories, as well as a computer room, mini library, solar drying room and other facilities. Our access to these facilities will be explained upon arrival. The DVFC library is well stocked and up to date with books covering a broad range of natural history, forest management, conservation and other related topics. It is available for use by all researchers and research-related visitors. All titles are held on an MS Access database. Danum theses and books which are no longer in print are kept in a locked case – if you need help, please seek assistance from the Research Assistant.

### Communications

DVFC is equipped with emergency VHF radio facilities, telephone, public telephone, e-mail and fax. There are sometimes problems with internet access so please do not expect to use it during the course duration. Mobile phone reception at the field station is not available at present; however, please remember that, if this situation changes before the course, there is a **strict TBA policy that phones should not be used during timetabled activities.**

### Climate

Our course is scheduled after the height of the south-westerly monsoons; however, come prepared to get wet! For fuller details of the climate at Danum, see the websites on p.8; daily records have been kept since 1985 and are available at the field centre.

### Safety & Do's and Don'ts

The Centre has a first aid kit and a Helipad for emergency evacuations.

Some of the basic dos and don'ts, which will help to make your stay more enjoyable and safe, include:

- Take a water bottle with you in the forest and torch and spare batteries if you are going out at night.
- Do not take anything from the forest including flowers, leaves, insects, wood etc. Remember that this is a special protected area and it is our responsibility to care for it wisely.
- Having a responsible attitude and not dropping litter ANYWHERE. All litter should be disposed of in the bins provided at DVFC, or taken home with you.
- Remember that you are in a Centre where scientists are carrying out research. Please respect this privilege and respect the areas which are restricted for scientists' use only.

**Our address in Borneo:  
Tropical Biology Association  
Danum Valley Field Station  
PO Box 60282  
91112 Lahad Datu  
Sabah, MALAYSIA**

**For emergency messages please contact the TBA Cambridge office**

## For more information on the course site and the TBA course see: -

<http://www.tropical-biology.org/training/courses/where%20are%20the%20tba%20courses/borneo.htm>

## Specific health information

**Yellow fever certificate is required to be produced upon landing in Malaysia for countries as listed below:** Angola, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Djibouti, Ecuador, Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, St. Kitts & Nevis, Suriname, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Venezuela, Zaire and Zambia.

As well as the health information found in the general course guide, there are a few health issues specific to Danum Valley:

**Leeches:** Leeches are not harmful (i.e. not known to carry or transmit disease) but their bites are potentially irritating. **The best way to avoid leeches is to wear leech-proof socks** and we will ensure that these are available for you.

Kota Kinabalu can get hot, so you'll need to keep well hydrated. However, don't be tempted to drink tap water or drinks with ice in them, as this water may not be very clean. Only buy mineral waters that come in sealed bottles; **use only bottled water for cleaning your teeth.**

## Arriving in Malaysia

### Passports, visas and entry cards in Malaysia

Make sure you have a **VALID** passport and tourist **VISA** (if applicable) before you travel. **Your passport should be valid for at least six months after you arrive in Malaysia.** If you do not have one then please get one **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

### Visa requirements

**We strongly recommend that you check with the Malaysian Embassy in your own country or the Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to find out whether you need a visa or not and how much it will cost.**

**The web site below gives useful information for all nationalities: -**

<http://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/requirement-for-foreigner>

**All participants: If you have difficulties obtaining a VISA please contact the TBA Cambridge office AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**

**At your port of entry, ensure you verbally inform the immigration officer of the length of time required in the country to cover your entire stay (i.e. including any days immediately before and after the course). The time spent in the host country WILL EXCEED 30 DAYS so please ensure that the officer does not write '1 month' above your visa. Ensure that your visa is stamped on entry.**

**When you enter Malaysia you will be given a standard entry card to fill out, whether you need a visa or not.** When filling in visa forms and entry cards, you **MUST** state that you are a TOURIST on the card. You will also need to give your address in Malaysia, which will be:

**Danum Valley Field Station PO Box 60282, 91112 Lahad Datu, Sabah, MALAYSIA**  
**Our contact person here is: - Dr Glen Reynolds**

### Meeting up with the TBA in Sabah

**The rendezvous or meeting place for ALL TBA course participants is:**

**TO BE ADVISED**

**At 18:30, 30<sup>th</sup> September**

**If we are not organising your travel, please make sure you get to Kota Kinabalu before the course begins. We will be travelling to Danum Valley very early the next morning.**

**Further information will be sent to you before your course starts.**

TBA will provide a meal and accommodation the night before the course begins and on the last night of the course. Your course co-ordinator will provide details of the accommodation well in advance of the course start date.

### Arriving in Sabah by air

**Kota Kinabalu** is the capital of Sabah and has an international airport with regular flights coming in from Kuala Lumpur and other destinations such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, Manila, Bangkok, Taipei and Brunei.

### Kota Kinabalu Airport

The TBA will circulate everyone's flight details so that you can try to meet up with people on your flight. **Please send the TBA your flight details as soon as possible.**

The TBA will endeavour to meet all flights depending on our schedule (if you are arriving very early/leaving well after the course to do independent travelling you should make your own arrangements). If we have told you we will meet your flight look out for the TBA sign.

### Getting from Kota Kinabalu airport to the city centre

A taxi costs around RM 30 (approx. \$8US/6.50 euros), and takes only ten minutes to the city centre, situated 8 kilometres (5 miles) away. There is no bus service at the airport, but you can catch a bus at the main road to the city centre that will cost RM 1.50.

### Useful information

- The official language is Bahasa Malaysia (Malay). English is widely spoken.
- The time in Sabah is +8 hours GMT.
- Most of the shops and offices you will want to visit are concentrated in a fairly small area in the centre of the city. The **Post Office** is on one of the main streets parallel to the sea (see map 3), as are the banks and foreign exchange bureaux (Forex).
- Visitors are recommended not to travel round Kota Kinabalu at night. Take private hires (private taxis) if you are unsure of where you are going.

- The currency is Malaysian Ringgit (RM), international code: MYR. 1 \$US Dollar is approximately 3.1 RM (January 2011). Travellers' cheques and foreign currencies can be exchanged at banks and hotels. All major credit cards types – VISA, Diners Club, American Express and MasterCard – are accepted in many places, but smaller boutiques prefer cash.

### Where to stay in Kota Kinabalu

We will provide accommodation in Kota Kinabalu for the **night before and the last night of the course**. We leave Kota Kinabalu very early on the morning of the start date of the course, so you **need to be in Kota Kinabalu the evening before the start of the course** at the very latest. If you arrive earlier than the night before your course, let us know if you want us to book accommodation at the course rendezvous. If you choose to arrive earlier to do independent travelling, consult a travel guide for information on accommodation or the following web page: -

<http://www.kotakinabalu.com/cmarter.asp?doc=2468&node=2738>

### Getting to the field centre

- **Getting from Kota Kinabalu to Danum Valley with the TBA**

We will be travelling from Kota Kinabalu to Danum Valley by bus and returning by air. The bus journey will take approximately 8 hours and include a stop for lunch.

- **Getting to Danum Valley**

Three flights operate daily between Kota Kinabalu and Lahad Datu.

Transport to and from Danum Valley, using the Field Centre's or Royal Society vehicles, will be arranged in advance. The field centre is easily accessed by road and the journey takes approximately 3 hours from Lahad Datu.

# Maps

## 1. Location of Sabah



## 2. Location of DVFC, Lahad Datu & Kota Kinabalu





## References

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### General reading

Travel guides are a good way to gain an overview of Malaysia, its geography and places of interest. The best two are probably the **Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei guide** by Lonely Planet, which is rather general, and the specific Lonely Planet guide which covers **Borneo**.

### Useful websites

<http://www.searpp.org/danum.cfm>

<http://www.ysnet.org.my/Maliau/Danum/location.htm>

<http://www.kotakinabalu.com/cmarter.asp?doc=367&node=2742>

### Academic references

Please contact the Course co-ordinator at the Cambridge office ([courses@tropical-biology.org](mailto:courses@tropical-biology.org)) for a list of books and published papers that will provide useful background reading on tropical forests, and research in both Danum and SE Asia in general.

### Past projects

Examples of past student projects and published work undertaken during TBA courses at Danum will be available shortly on the TBA website.

**If you have any further queries, please contact us at:**

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Department of Zoology  
Downing Street  
Cambridge  
CB2 3EJ  
UK**

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