
Introduction

About Sukau Rainforest Lodge



The Sukau Rainforest Lodge annual Sustainability Report is intended to help track our progress on how we approach sustainability and our efforts in improving overall performance. We strive to set a good example for responsible travel and hope this inspires others to want to work towards the same goal. We are strong advocates of the overall positive impact of eco-tourism especially the role it plays in assisting local communities, protecting natural resources, providing education and working opportunities as well as supporting responsible business practices.

This report also highlights some of the efforts we have made across the company, and we are delighted that we are able to share this with our stakeholders, and in the process, we hope to inspire others towards promoting as well as practicing sustainable tourism.



Founder Message



Albert Chin Kion Teo

Founder and Managing Director
Sukau Rainforest Lodge/Borneo Eco Tours

Dear readers,
I'm pleased to share with you our Sustainability Report for the year 2019, which highlights Sukau Rainforest Lodge's commitment to sustainability and our long-term growth as an ecolodge in detail.

This report touches on the goals Sukau Rainforest Lodge has set in 2019, as well as the challenges the lodge has faced in the year. The report also covers all areas of our operations and the continuous effort in upholding our sustainable ethos, with sustainable and responsible tourism being the key drivers of the lodge's operations and activities.

Since the local community here in Sukau is one of our key stakeholders especially in our sustainability mission, this report also covers our impact on their professional and personal development.

This report also underlines the direct and indirect contributions that we are making based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By endorsing the 17 UN SDGs, we are able to use it as a tool for formulating our sustainability strategy as part of a global effort to bring about positive change.

The lodge also contributes to environmental and community projects under our very own non-profit division, Borneo Ecotourism Solutions and Technologies (BEST) Society, which enables us to reduce our negative impact as well as contribute to positive good through our projects throughout Sabah.

Finally, presented in this report is also the positive impact guests have made during their time with us at Sukau Rainforest Lodge, as well as their feedback about our Green and Sustainable Practices at the lodge. Our efforts in championing sustainability is only possible through the support we receive from travellers who choose Sukau Rainforest Lodge as their preferred accommodation in Sukau, Kinabatangan. We also like to thank the many others like you who have helped to spread the message and contributed in cash and kind to realise our vision and continue our mission to keep "Saving Paradise".



Sustainability & Us

Last year, we focused our sustainability goals revolving around 5 key themes. The following show some of the highlights of our successes.

Environment

- Guest rooms are 100% free from single use plastics.
- Switching to non-plastic food containers, cutlery, and cups.
- All incandescent and CFLs light replaced with energy saving LED Lamps.
- 2 additional artificial hornbill boxes successfully installed.

Team members

- 15.8% increase staff training
- 576 total hours of staff training
- > 50% of staff are locally from the Kinabatangan area
- Increase in staff engagement through various activities

Community

- Hospitality camp with SMK Sukau in collaboration with INTI College Sabah
- 30% increase in income for Rasig Tours

Internal Operations

- Implementation of a Sustainable Purchasing Policy
- Significantly reduced and minimised packaging materials from suppliers
- Sustainability Standard Operating Procedures in place
- >95% of our suppliers are local from Sandakan

Communication

- Visits from Conservation Fellows
- Successful partnerships with educational establishments – UITM, UMS, Poliyteknikchnic etc.
- Total of 8 talks about Conservation in total by invited speakers



Wildlife Protection

1. Artificial Hornbill Nest

(BEST Society & Sukau Rainforest Lodge)

Last December 2019 we witnessed the installation of two additional artificial hornbill nest boxes. With the help of the Wildlife Survey and Protection (WSP) team, one was installed in the lodge standing at roughly 58 feet on a Caralia Brachiatta, known locally as the Meransi tree. The second hornbill nest box was successfully installed at the Kinabatangan-Rasig land on a Resak tree roughly 40 feet high.

2. Wildlife Spotting

Identified as a biodiversity hotspot, Sukau is home to a wide range of wildlife. Our guides and in-house naturalists are excellent at spotting and identifying wildlife. However, they carry out a greater responsibility in being the eyes and ears of local authorities and NGOs that work towards conserving our surrounding environment. Especially the endangered endemic species such as the Bornean pygmy elephant, clouded leopards, orangutans and many more, they are struggling to survive as they are in a constant battle with habitat loss.

3. Rare Sightings

As most travellers who come to Borneo know that we are blessed with abundant wildlife like the proboscis monkeys, orangutans, and pygmy elephants, it is also home to the sunda clouded leopard (*neofelis diardi*). Clouded leopards are medium-sized wild cats that are mostly nocturnal. As of 2015, the sunda clouded leopard was listed as Vulnerable (VU) on the IUCN Red, making it incredibly rare to spot in its natural habitat.

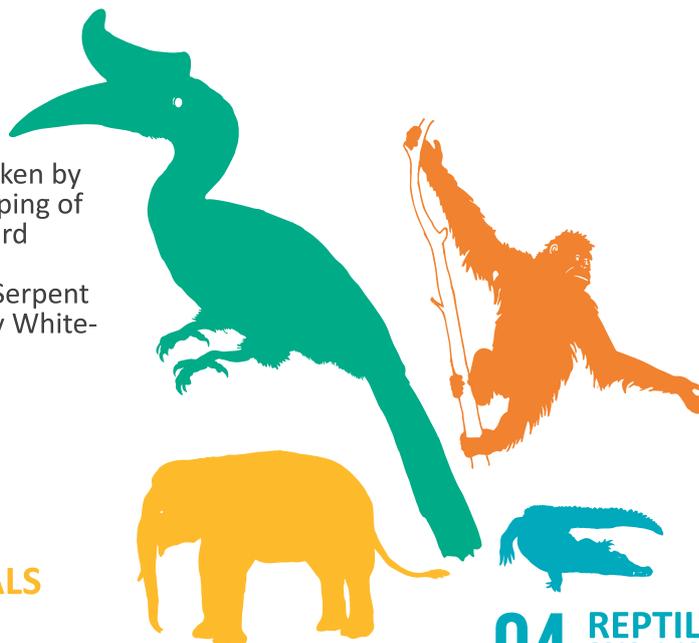


One of our guides, Hamit along with his guests had spotted a Clouded Leopard in the Menanggul area while on a night cruise in March of 2019. Amazingly, he had managed to capture this moment with amazing photos up close.

Total wildlife and birdlife sightings by our guides in 2019

01 BIRDS 2019: 8,304 2018: 5,505

Silence is often broken by the melodious chirping of Sukau's over 210 bird species, including Hornbills, Crested Serpent Eagles, and the tiny White-fronted Falconets.



02 PRIMATES 2019: 1,593 2018: 1,476

Among others, swinging through the forest treetops are singing Gibbons, mischievous Macaques, peaceful Proboscis Monkeys and of course, the iconic Orangutans.

03 MAMMALS 2019: 1,516 2018: 1,324

Other mammals also inhabit the surrounding rainforest, including Bornean Sun Bears, four species of elusive wild cats, and the nearly extinct Pygmy Elephants.

04 REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS 2019: 1,108 2018: 732

The Kinabatangan River's rich tapestry of life includes the scaly and slimy – such as Saltwater Crocodiles, Water Monitors, and Jade Tree Frogs.

Planet Preservation

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Throughout the years, SRL has strived to find different ways to minimise energy use as much as it possibly can. By closely monitoring the energy usages and emissions, we can pinpoint priority areas that require more attention. We have managed to keep overall energy consumption per guest relative to previous years even though guest nights have significantly increased.

I. Energy and Carbon Management

Overall Energy Usage:

MONTH	GUEST NIGHT (GN)	ELECTRICITY (GENERATOR)		PETROL (BOAT)		LPG (KITCHEN)	
		KWH	KWH/GN	PETROL (L)	PETROL/GN	LPG (L)	LPG/GN
2019	18,871	293,688	17.15	244,041	14.34	8,257.24	0.48
2018	16,878	253,390	16.09	243,239	15.05	9988.16	0.66

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Guest Carbon Footprint



Summary:

- Overall increase consumption of electricity and petrol
- Decrease in consumption of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)

Improvements made:

- Switching out all incandescent and CFLs with LED lamps in all areas of the property

II. Water Management

Throughout 2019, we have managed to make improvements to reduce our water usage. Some of the improvements are listed as below:



Equip low flow showerheads with pressure compensating flow restrictors



- Output of high flow taps to 2L/min
- Output of high flow taps in public restrooms to 2 L/min.



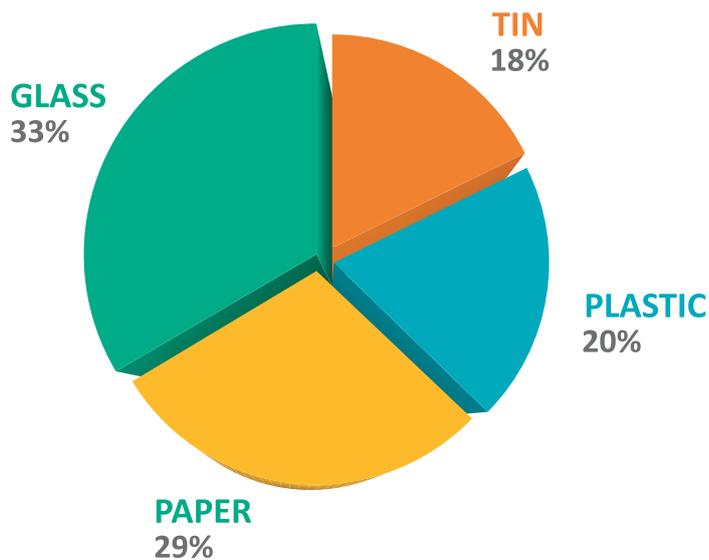
Progressively replacing electric water heaters with tankless LPG water heaters

Overall increase in water usage.

	GUEST	STAFF
TOTAL	9,308,406 m ³	6,091,406 m ³
PER INDIVIDUAL	493 m ³	277 m ³

III. Waste Management

RECYCLED WASTE (KG)



Recycled waste
963 kg

Compost waste
7,846 kg

General waste
9,714 kg

Total Waste
18,522 kg



48% of our total waste is either recycled or composted

Most of our recycled items are weighed, bagged and then sold to local buyers and recycling centres. Besides recycled items, we've managed to sell our scrap metals and zinc that would eventually be re-processed into new sheets and blocks. The funds generated from these trades go to our in-house Sustainability Committee which continuously work towards sustainable practices with various activities.



III. River Cleaning River Warriors

Since 2018, the river warriors have been consistently organising river clean ups within the village area monthly. Several members of staff as well as in-house guests join these river clean-ups. After every river clean up, the rubbish collected are bagged up and recorded.



Challenge

Though it is nothing to be proud of that this much rubbish ends up in the river and though these river clean-ups seem like a great effort in conserving our rivers and wildlife, it unfortunately does become unsustainable in the long run.

Even though conservation activities like these have increased over the past year, we have realised that the main cause for these river clean-ups are due to the lack awareness and waste disposal facilities for the local community. Though our lodge has made sure to take the necessary steps to dispose our waste accordingly through waste segregation, re-selling recyclable items and transporting the waste out of Sukau to the nearest landfill located 45-minutes away.

Unfortunately, not every individual is able to dispose waste the way we do, which may be the main reason as to why bags of rubbish end up in the river every day. We hope that we can continue our efforts in raising awareness of how we should be treating our environments. With that in mind, we plan to collaborate with the local schools and villagers of Sukau in the future in hopes to find a sustainable approach to tackling this issue.



1,101 kg collected in 2019!



SUKAU ECOTOURISM
RESEARCH CENTRE

Land Conservation

SRL plays a huge role in Land Conservation here in Kinabatangan and are proud to be working hand-in-hand with Borneo Ecotourism Solutions & Technologies (BEST) Society, our non-profit division.

Sukau Duck Race

Last October, Sukau Rainforest Lodge had collaborated with BEST Society to run a Duck Race event with the objective of supporting the on-going conservation efforts by BEST Society's Borneo Land Conservancy. This initiative is to help raise funds for the purchase of the Borneo Land Conservancy, a 7.7-acre strip of land that was purchased for the sole intent of conservation along the Kinabatangan. In the future we hope to purchase more land along the Kinabatangan in hopes to creating a bigger impact on conserving our environment.

A total of RM 2,400 was raised from the Sukau Duck Race 2019.



Land Conservation



Rasig Land

Since 2017, Sukau Rainforest Lodge supports a local villager in Sukau by the name of Mursalin to conserve his 5.6 acres land located along the Kinabatangan river. Tempted to sell his land to palm oil plantation, this partnership was to help conserve his land by promoting nature-based activities such as managing trekking activities. Mursalin conducts these activities that SRL helps promote to the guest which ultimately provides him with an alternative source of income.

In 2019, Mursalin has gained a total of RM6,265 as a result of this partnership.



Borneo Land Conservancy & Sukau Ecotourism Research Centre

With the establishment and successful launch of Sukau Ecotourism Research Centre (SERC) in 2019, we hope this provides a platform to engage with local and international academic institutions to conduct joint research towards our goals of enhancing social, economic and environmental well-being. Soon after the launch of SERC, we have welcome students from University Malaysia Sabah to conduct their research. One of which concerning “Beehives Fence as Elephant Crop Raiding Deterrent”.

Commitment to Community

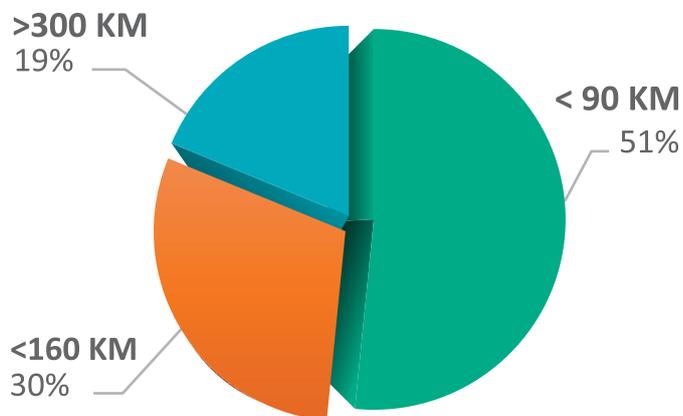
I. Employment Opportunities

We believe that one way of engaging with the community is through providing employment opportunities in the lodge. Since the start of our operations in 1995, we have been supporting the local economy here by hiring the locals. We are also committed to an inclusive workforce that fully represents diverse cultures, background and viewpoints.

Year	Average No. of Staff	% Increase Payroll cost	% Increase no of manpower
2019	61	17%	19%

- 2:3 gender ratio in the workplace (female:male)
- >50% of staff are locally from the Kinabatangan area

STAFF ORIGINS



Onward is simply the action of constantly moving forward and that is exactly what we all want to be doing, especially as a team. Continuously developing ourselves through increasing our knowledge and always learning is essential to moving forward.

It is a holistic career development program that focuses on three pillars: Self-Development, Team-Development and Leadership-Development. The aim of Onward is to bring out the best in each of our team members which allow them to live to their true potential.

It is a program of various intentional learning sessions that are created by implementing the ideas of eminent writers and experts of management skills, team building, leadership enhancement, self-improvement and many more. It is also an avenue where together we learn to share knowledge, experiences as well as transfer skills to one another for continuous development.

II. Training and Development



Borneo Eco Tours and Sukau Rainforest Lodge imparts a strong learning environment that focuses on encouraging staff to develop their personal growth. Staff are constantly subjected to both internal and external trainings allowing them numerous opportunities to develop their skills. Training sessions are not exclusive to Supervisors or Head of Departments, but rather it involves engagement from every level of management. It allows for us to identify and develop the true potential of our team to multifaceted individuals.

567 total hours of training
 † 15.8% training



GIMI Innovation Certification

Mind Vistas, the newest division of Borneo Eco Tours is, had its first Global Innovation Management Institution (GIMI) Level 1 Certification Workshop in Sukau Rainforest Lodge in December of 2019. Several staff members were also selected to attend the workshop over the course of 2 days. The workshop had welcomed 7 other participants all from various backgrounds.



Cross Exposure Training at Shangri-La Rasa Ria Resort (SRRR)

4 members of our staff were sent for a cross exposure training at Shangri-La Rasa Ria Resort to experience the differences and challenges faced in a hotel setting. Through this program, they were able to gain insight into how the different departments impact the hotel's overall performance. This opportunity has helped to develop new practices which was then brought back to be implemented in their home departments and to effectively improve overall guest experience.



III. Community Engagement Gotong-Royong with Kg. Sukau, 20th July 2019

In conjunction with Dengue Prevention Day, the local health department, Police department and the villagers of Sukau had collaboratively organised a gotong-royong in the village area. Several members of our staff had taken part in this event.



IV. Education & Learning

Since 2015, Sukau Rainforest Lodge has offered internship programmes for both international and local university students. We have been able to collaborate with several local universities by providing a platform to give them opportunities for students to gain knowledge and working experience relevant for their field of study.

YEAR	LOCAL	INTERNATIONAL	TOTAL
2015	3	2	5
2016	11	3	14
2017	11	3	14
2018	5	2	7
2019	19	1	20

Work-Based Learning Programme with Politeknik Kota Kinabalu & Sandakan

As of 2019, we have collaborated with Politeknik on the Work-Based Learning Programme for the students that carry out internships with us. This is an approach that Politeknik uses to provide students with value added practical experiences through industry immersion programmes.

SRL started collaborating with Politeknik for this programme in 2019, which explains the increase in total number of students. Overall, there were 8 students under WBL Programme in 2019.



60 students were on internship programmes with SRL since 2015



25% have joined the working with SRL part-time/full-time after successfully completing their internship

Hospitality Camp with INTI College Sabah

We had the pleasure of hosting a Hospitality Camp with the Tourism and Hospitality students from INTI College Sabah.

Our recent camp was held with the objective to raise awareness about the career potential in hospitality and tourism industry among the younger generations. This also extends to empower more locals to serve in the industry.

The INTI College students successfully conducted a Hospitality camp with the students from SMK Sukau. 22 students from SMK Sukau attended the hospitality camp which helped them gain insight on career prospects in the tourism industry.



22 Students from SMK Sukau completed a Hospitality Camp conducted by the Tourism and Hospitality students of INTI College

This programme interaction was to help encourage interests in possibly pursuing a future in the Tourism and Hospitality industry.



After an introduction to what Tourism and Hospitality was all about, both student groups had the chance to try their hand at some of the work in the different departments which were demonstrated by our experienced staff.

The student groups were involved in gaining new skills within the housekeeping and F&B department.

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At the end of the day, each student was given a certificate to recognise their participation

Little did the SMK Sukau students know, five of them would be selected to attend a further in-depth exposure learning opportunity in KK. Two of our local staff were sent to along to experience the event.

5 lucky students from SMK Sukau went for an educational trip to Kota Kinabalu for a more in-depth exposure to what tourism and hospitality has to offer! We have received feedback that the programme manages to instil interest among them to consider a career in this field.

This programme involved our collaborators SMK Sukau Kinabatangan, INTI College Sabah, Faculty of Business, Economics & Accountancy UMS, Cititel Express Kota Kinabalu - Smart, Clean, Simple, and BEST Society for their contribution in this successful event.



The five lucky students along with two of our staff spent the weekend gaining a deeper understanding to what tourism has to offer. Developing a strong focus on the applied knowledge with an emphasis on practical application.



We have received feedback that the programme manages to instil interest among them to consider a career in Tourism. We hope to have more of these camps in the future to continue inspiring and encouraging the younger generations to come.

Protection of Cultural Heritage

To make sure that we do our part in preserving and protecting our culture and heritage, our lodge incorporates various local and Bornean elements in its appearance and activities. By doing so, we are also providing guests an authentic experience during their stay with us.

I. Clothing and Attire

Local traditional costumes are worn by our team members as they welcome guests to the lodge upon arrival. These traditional costumes are also worn during cultural performances performed by our team for Special Guests at the lodge. Our guests also have the chance to try on the traditional costumes and take photos of them donning the attire.

Besides that, we also introduce the sarong to guests and encourage them to wear it during dinner time. A sarong is a large tube or length fabric which is worn wrapped around the waist and can be worn by both men and women.



II. Music and Dance

In January 2019, we invited a Sape player from our neighbouring state, Sarawak by the name of Peter Paris to showcase the traditional musical instrument and share beautiful sape music to our guests. We also held a workshop for our guests and team members to learn how to play the musical instrument at the lodge.

Besides that, cultural dances are also showcased to guests during special occasions and festivals at dinner time or upon the arrival of Special Guests.

III. Food and Beverages

We serve mouth-watering local dishes at the lodge such as curry, rendang, jungle fern salad, traditional cakes and snacks, and our most beloved homemade coconut jam, just to name a few. Besides that, we also serve local tea, coffee and other drinks too. Even our alcoholic drinks such as our cocktails are made using local spirits such as rice wine.

IV. Decor

The design of our lodge itself has cultural influences and the decorations that we display around the lodge all have Bornean and Malaysian elements. This can be seen in the architecture, the art pieces, sculptures, ornaments and wood carvings.



V. Events and Celebrations

Staying true to our culture and heritage also means that we embrace and celebrate cultural festivities at the lodge.

In 2019, we participated in the Pesta Damas with the local community, which is a festival celebrated by the Orang Sungai or local Sungai people of Sabah. Sungai is also a Malay word for river. Most of the population of Sukau and Kinabatangan are of the Sungai tribe. The Pesta Damas or river boat festival whereby local folks will decorate their damas in a boat decorating competition. Other activities of the Pesta Damas also includes showcasing local delicacies, as well as singing and dancing.

Besides that, the lodge also celebrates other local festivities such as Chinese New Year, Eid Mubarak and Harvest Festival every year to showcase the colourful culture we have in Borneo and Malaysia to our guests.

Guest Experience

What Guests Say About Us and Our Sustainable Practices

“Wonderful and magnificent place to stay and enjoy nature”



- Teoh Yoong Chun

Today me and my family are so happy and grateful to have stay at the wonderful Sukau Rainforest Lodge for 3 days 2 nights...the accomodation that we stay was so beautiful and magnificent and the food is also delicious and tasty, and the lodge itself is so truly magnificent like having a bit of traditional culture especially around the restaurants and the reception...and we are grateful to have spotted several animals during the river cruise including the Proboscis Monkey, Silver leaf Monkey, some birds including Hornbills, crocodiles, lizards orang utan and etc...the staffs there are very friendly, kind,helpful and professional in their jobs especially the guides(Joy & Rahman) and the boatman are very knowledgeable and friendly in which they shared the knowledge of the animals the environmental impacts palm oils and also a bit of the history of Kinabatangan river, and one we will never forget is watching the Pygmy elephants crossing the river during the river cruise on the 1st day and it was our luckiest day in my life we will never forget..

we will definitely come back again to stay here someday whenever we have the chance and thank you for the wonderful service you have provided to me and my family.

Thank you Sukau Rainforest Lodge

“Beautiful lodge deep in the rainforest”



- Piddeaux

We stayed here for a few days as part of our honeymoon adventure through Southeast Asia. I love how the lodge is really only accessible by boat. It's great to be so deep in nature. Staff are great, service is excellent, and the guides of course provide incredible instruction and education. I loved that they give you sarongs to wear as part of the Malay experience :). We enjoyed all the

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Thank you Sukau Rainforest Lodge

“5★ accommodation and customer service”



- Susan M

This was a return visit for us and we weren't disappointed. There are not only chalets but also the option of villas - 2 of which are suitable for wheelchairs. The food is excellent at breakfast, lunch and dinner. You receive a cooling welcome drink and cold flannel when you arrive. After a quick briefing and run down about what's on offer you are shown how to wear your sarong for dinner. There are board walks throughout the complex so you never actually walk on the forest floor. There are two plunge pools which are very refreshing. The longer boardwalk around the site gives you opportunities to see Orangutans, silver leaf monkeys and macaques swinging through the trees above your head as they take a short cut through the grounds. The hornbills and owls roost in the area too. There are morning, afternoon and night cruises/safaris in the boats which use quiet electric motors when in search of wildlife. The cruises are always different, providing options for wildlife photography and the most beautiful sunrises and sunsets. There are other excursions to the Gomantong Caves to see the bats leave the caves at dusk and swiftlets who's nests are gathered twice a year for birds nest soup. The Sukau Rainforest Lodge is now a member of the National Geographic and is one of the Unique lodges of the World, they certainly live up to that standard. This is WELL worth a visit. We have been back twice and are already planning our next visit.

“Totally brilliant”



- MsVonnice20

I did the 3 night trip and was so please I did. Marty was a wonderful guide, very informative and great at spotting the birds and animals. There were 4 orangutans basically living at the lodge while I was there so each day after our breakfast members of my tour group would quietly watch their daily routines. The accommodation is beautifully presented and I liked that they strongly encouraged us to use refillable bottles of our own while they supplied chilled filtered water to reduce the plastics, when they could have been selling me so many bottles of water. My only negative was Gomantong cave, if you dislike cockroaches skip it. They did not climb on us but they were all over the handrail and slithering over the boardwalk all around us...I should have gone for the massage instead or stayed outside. The early morning cruising was so beautiful as the sun is just rising the animals are on the banks and the heat of the day hasn't started.

Conservation Fellow

The Wall of Honour for Conservation Fellows was established by Sukau Rainforest Lodge to recognise influential individuals, leaders, conservationists, and experts who have vastly contributed to ecotourism, sustainable development, the environment, and the communities of Kinabatangan River.

Thank you Sukau Rainforest Lodge

Conservation Fellow Updates

In 2019, we were truly honoured to have some of our new and existing Conservation Fellows visit and stay with us. Those who had more time, had even done some sharing to our guests and team members on topics that they are an expert in.

We believe that the sharing sessions by experts and invited speakers at the lodge is important for educating guests and team members about conservation and other critical issues, as well as to inspire action amongst them.

1. Yukio Hasegawa

- March, 2019

The architect who designed the lodge's Borneo Villas stayed at Sukau Rainforest Lodge and officiates a room named after him.



3. Dr. Wong Siew Te

- April, 2019

Founder and CEO of Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BCBCC) stayed with us again this year and gave a sharing on Sun Bear Conservation in Kinabatangan.

2. Michael Groom

- April, 2019

Mountaineer and Man of Sheer Will visited Sukau Rainforest Lodge and shared an inspirational talk about "Sheer Will". His adventures and near experiences with death as an avid mountaineer is one that has inspired many.



4. Masaru Takayama

- October, 2019

Founder of the Asian Ecotourism Network visited Sukau Rainforest Lodge and officiates room named after him.



5. Dr. Mina Gabor

- November, 2019

officiated a room named after her at Sukau Rainforest Lodge during her short stay.

To learn more about our Conservation Fellows, visit the Conservation Fellows page up on our website.

Case Study



Sukau Rainforest Lodge, that embraces sustainability initiatives which led it to achieve the recognition as one of the National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World. Sukau Rainforest Lodge is also certified with the TravelLife Gold certification for being a green accommodation.

We are featured in the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Sustainable Development of Wildlife Tourism in Asia and the Pacific: Good Practices & Their Implications report. You can get the full version here:

<https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284421572>

Awards & Highlights



April '19

British Actress Dame Judi Dench stayed at Sukau Rainforest Lodge.



June '19

Borneo Villa rooms officiated by YB Datuk Christina Liew, Sabah Deputy Minister, State Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah.



November '19

Sukau Rainforest Lodge awarded with the Boutique Hotel Award as Asia's Most Eco-Friendly Hotel

June '19

Sabah Deputy Minister and State Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah, YB Datuk Christina Liew officially launches the Sukau Ecotourism Research Centre (SERC), a facility under BEST Society.

