



The
Realm of
Big Five
Kinabatangan River Expedition

5-DAYS WILDLIFE SAFARI EXPEDITION



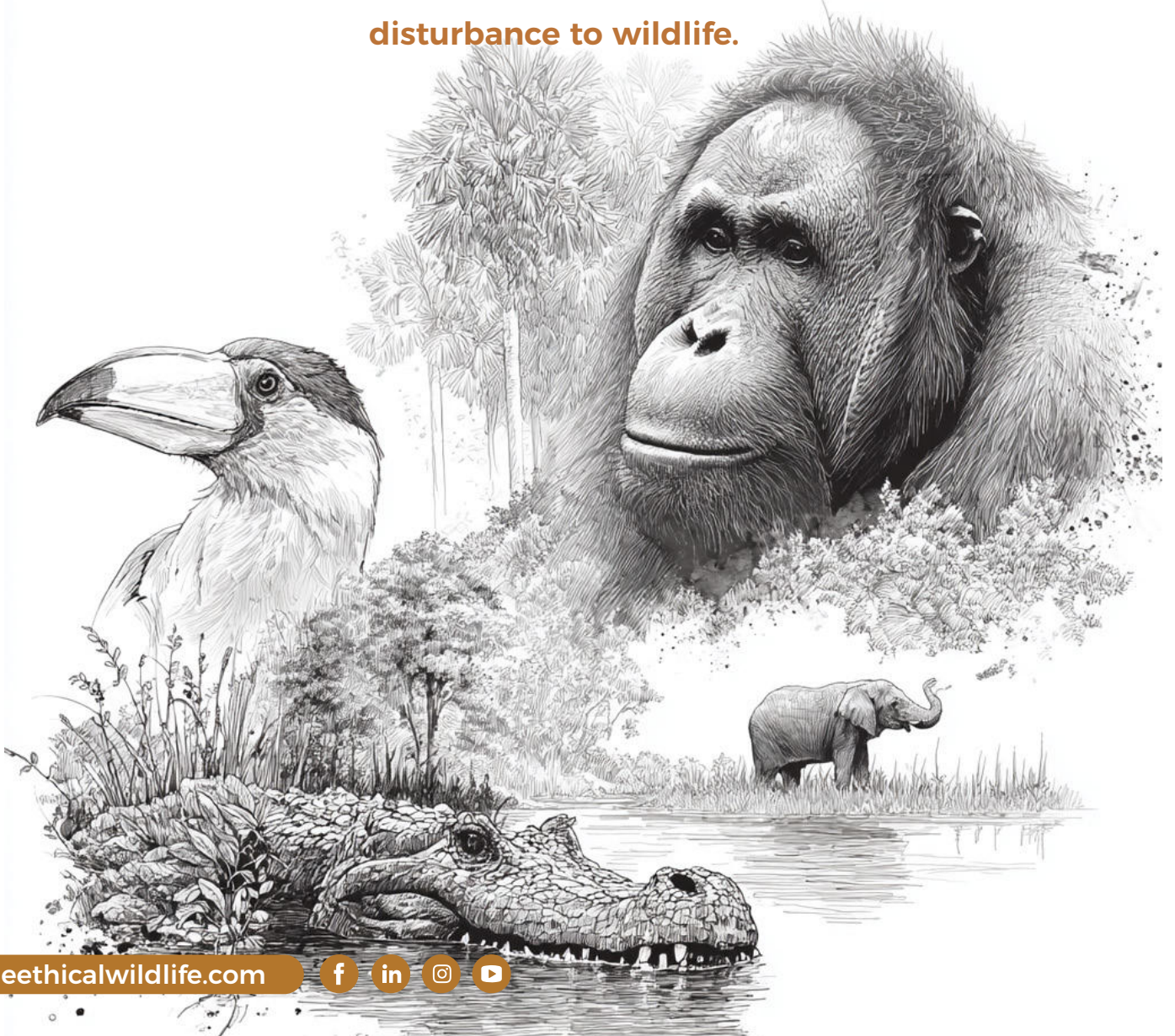
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In the early light, mist drifts over the tea-colored waters of the Kinabatangan, where proboscis monkeys leap through mangrove crowns, Rhinoceros hornbills cross the sky, and ripples betray crocodiles below. This five-day Ethical Wildlife expedition offers a slow, immersive journey into Borneo's river life designed for those who travel with curiosity and care. Guided by Ethical Wildlife's naturalist team, you'll explore the river at its most wildlife-active hours, visit the Orang Sungai cultural gallery, and venture to the Gomantong Cave with chances to encounter Borneo's Big Five: Orangutan, Proboscis Monkey, Crocodile, Rhinoceros Hornbill, and Pygmy Elephant.

Note: This is a small-group expedition with a maximum of 6-7 guests per boat, ensuring intimate sightings, quiet observation, and minimal disturbance to wildlife.



• ITINERARY •

Day 1 - Into the Heart of Borneo

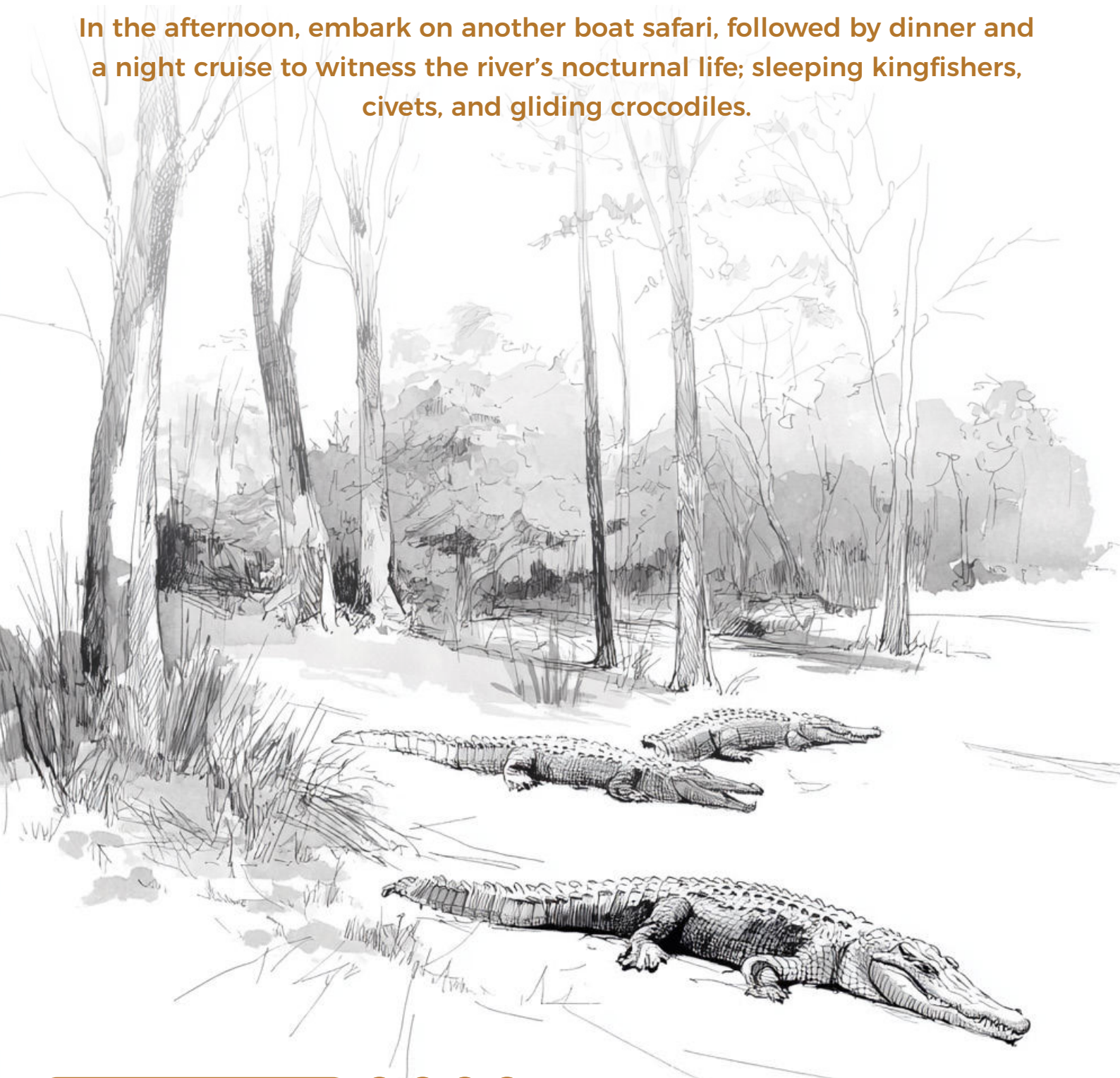
Arrive in Sandakan and drive through the lush rainforest to stay. After lunch, set out on your first river safari, spotting orangutans, proboscis monkeys, Rhinoceros hornbills, crocodiles, and, if lucky, pygmy elephants. Return for a riverside dinner as fireflies shimmer above the water, your first taste of Borneo's wild rhythm.

• ITINERARY •

Day 2 - Dawn to Dusk on the River

Wake before sunrise for a morning cruise, when mist hangs low and gibbons call through the canopy. Later, take a guided forest walk to learn about jungle plants and hidden wildlife signs.

In the afternoon, embark on another boat safari, followed by dinner and a night cruise to witness the river's nocturnal life; sleeping kingfishers, civets, and gliding crocodiles.



• ITINERARY •

Day 3 - Rhinoceros Hornbills, Heritage & Hidden Caves

The dawn safari brings encounters with Rhinoceros Hornbills and perhaps playful otters. Visit the Orang Sungai Gallery to learn about the River People's harmony with nature.

In the afternoon, cruise again in hopes of spotting more of Borneo's Big Five before returning for a wholesome dinner.

For those who wish to experience the forest after dark, an optional night cruise or guided walk reveals a whole new world of nocturnal life.



Day 4 – Caves, Raptors & Reflections

A final dawn cruise invites one more glimpse of Borneo's untamed spirit – orangutans high in the fig trees, Rhinoceros hornbills on the move, and the mist drifting gently off the river.

Later, journey to Gomantong Cave, where the forest opens into an ancient limestone cathedral alive with swiftlets and bats. This is where thousands of bats take flight at dusk, one of Borneo's most dramatic natural scenes. As the sun dips, watch the dramatic exodus – a living cloud spiralling into the dusk sky, pursued by raptors in flight.

Return to the lodge for a farewell dinner, the sounds of the jungle weaving one last symphony before your journey home.

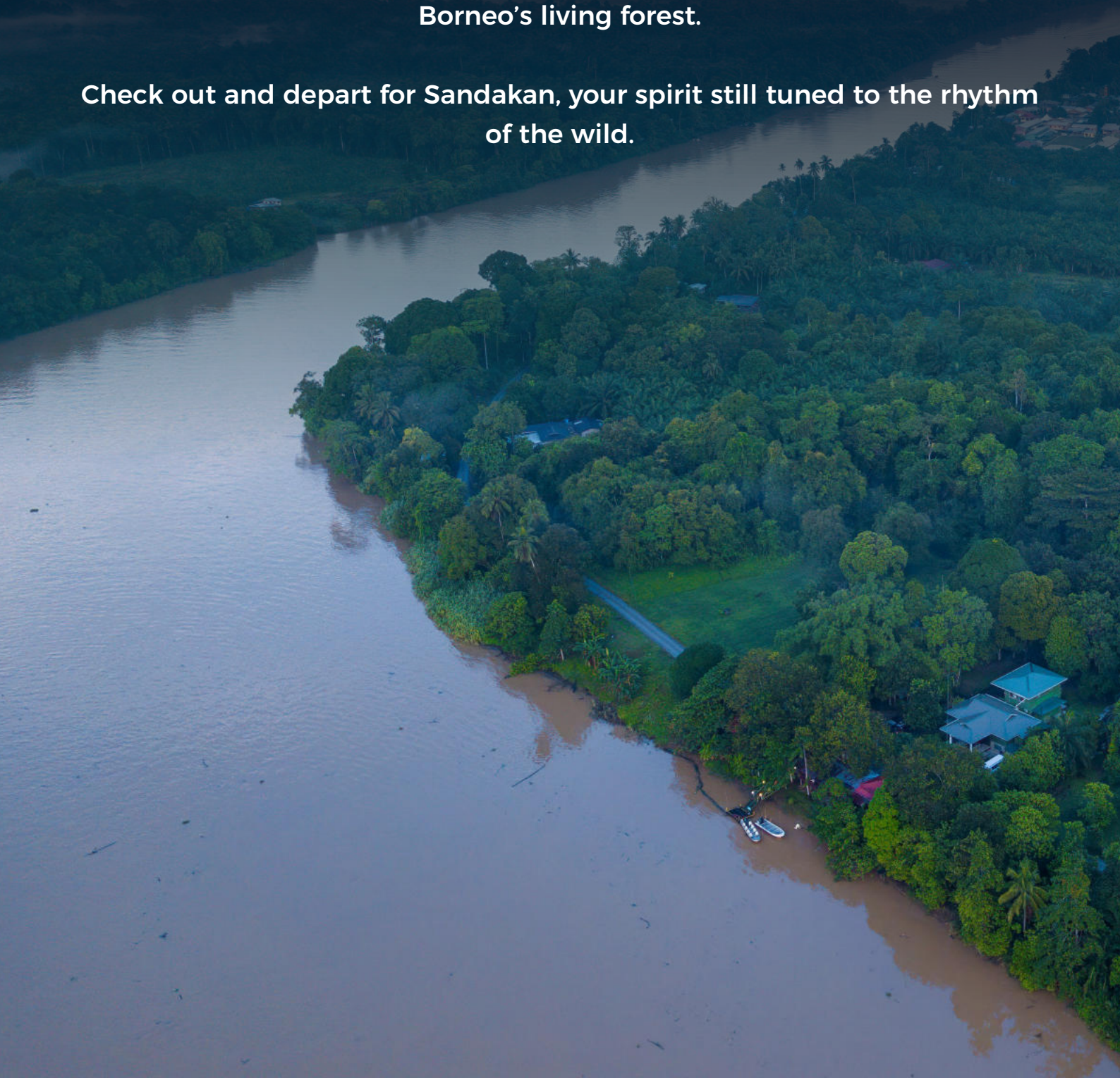


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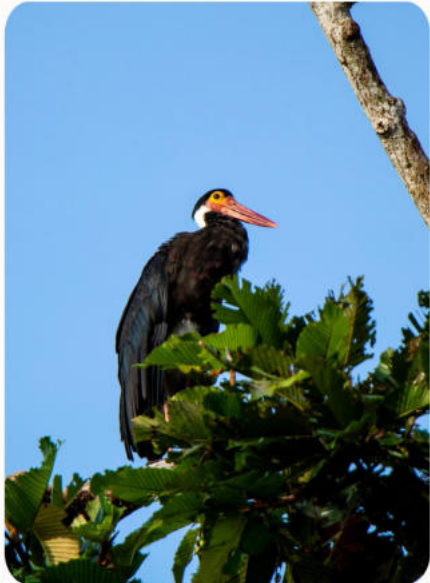
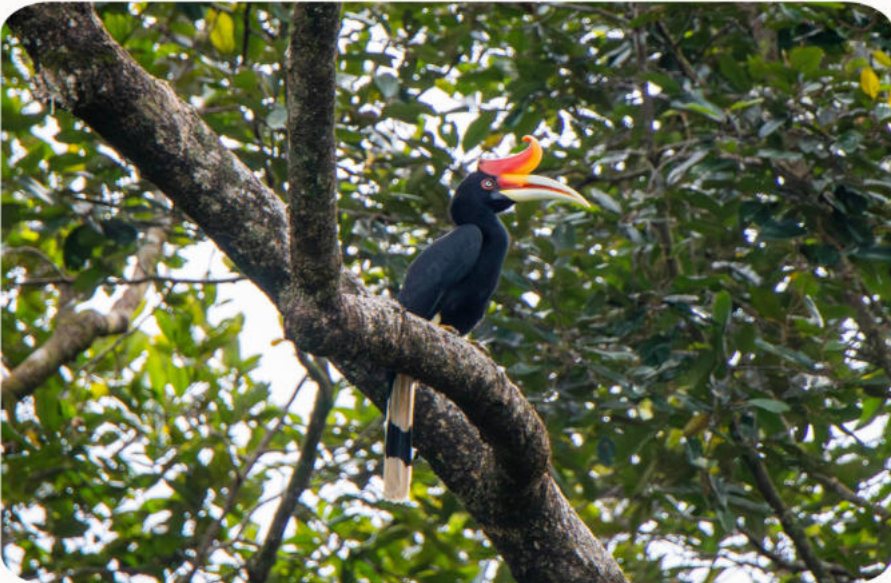
Day 5 – Morning by the River

Enjoy a slow breakfast by the Kinabatangan as the day brightens and macaques stir along the treetops. The morning is yours to linger on the jetty, watch the river flow past, and carry with you the quiet magic of Borneo's living forest.

Check out and depart for Sandakan, your spirit still tuned to the rhythm of the wild.



GALLERY



Eco lodge near Kinabatangan river

Set on the banks of the Kinabatangan, the lodge is simple, sincere, and perfectly placed—prioritising access to prime tributaries, flexible boat launches, and mealtime windows that sync with wildlife rhythms. Expect friendly, field-oriented teams, in-house nature guides, and homestyle meals that make the restaurant deck an evening hub between cruises.

Why we like it: consistent launch logistics, strong guide network, and a genuine river-life feel, no frills where they aren't needed; comfort where it counts.



• OUR STAY •

Daily activities include:

River safaris at dawn and dusk to explore the Kinabatangan's thriving wildlife corridors from orangutans and proboscis monkeys to Rhinoceros hornbills, crocodiles, and the elusive pygmy elephants.

Night cruises along quiet tributaries to spot nocturnal species such as civets, sleeping kingfishers, and estuarine crocodiles under the beam of a guide's torch.

Guided jungle walks with expert naturalists to discover the smaller wonders of Borneo's medicinal plants, insects, and the signs of orangutans moving through the canopy.



• OUR STAY •

Visits to the Orang Sungai cultural gallery offer an intimate glimpse into the lives and traditions of the River People who call this ecosystem home.

Excursion to Gomantong Cave, witnessing the remarkable bat exodus and the intricate balance between wildlife and local livelihoods.

Meals are home-cooked and hearty, featuring local Sabahan flavours, fresh river fish, vegetables, tropical fruits, and warm hospitality served by the riverside.

● INCLUSIONS & EXCLUSIONS ●

Inclusions

- Scheduled return land transfers: Sandakan ↔ Sukau
- 4 nights' accommodation at an Eco Lodge
- Tourism tax
- Personal toiletries (towels & soap provided)
- 7 river cruises
- Visit to Gomantong Cave
- 1 or 2 morning jungle walk with an in-house nature guide, 1 optional night walk or cruise
- Meals as stated
- In-house nature guide throughout

Exclusions

- Flights
- Beverages & snacks
- Binoculars
- Rain jacket/poncho
- Any items not specified above

• WHAT TO BRING •

Borneo is hot, humid, and intermittently wet, plan for breathability, quick-dry layers, and rain readiness. Please bring:

- Mosquito/insect repellent & sunblock
- Personal medications
- Refillable water bottle
- Rain jacket/poncho
- Universal adapter
- Hat + headlamp/torch (necessary)
- Long socks; flip-flops; small dry bag
- Binoculars
- (Optional) alcoholic beverages for personal consumption

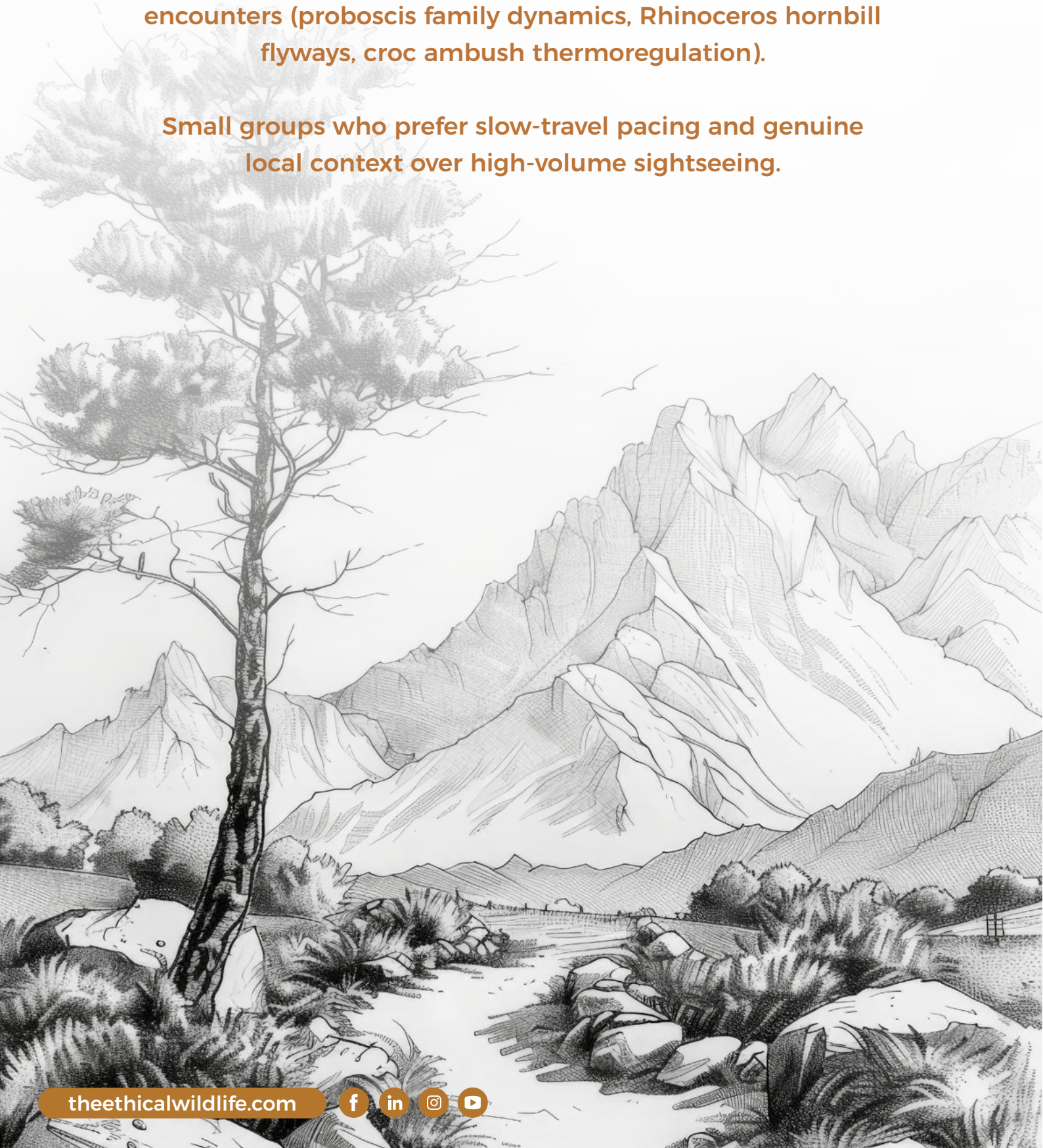
Footwear note: The lodge provides wellies for jungle walks in sizes EU 32-46 (children 17-19.5 cm). If you're outside this range, bring good trekking shoes.

• WHO IS THIS FOR? •

Wildlife-first travellers who value river time, dawn light, and ethical distances.

Photographers & naturalists seeking behaviour-led encounters (proboscis family dynamics, Rhinoceros hornbill flyways, croc ambush thermoregulation).

Small groups who prefer slow-travel pacing and genuine local context over high-volume sightseeing.





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