

Trip Report

Malaysia & Borneo - Rainforest Birds & Mammals 19th March - 1st April 2011 (11 days)

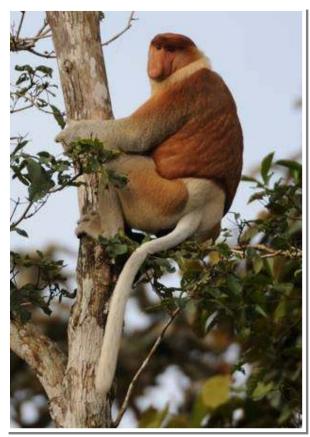
Trip Report compiled by tour leader Gavin Lautenbach



Report

We started our Bornean adventure on the banks of the Kinabatangan River where we stayed for a few nights at the delightful Bilit Rainforest Lodge. Our river based excursions were incredibly rewarding and we saw a wide variety of birds and animals including our first encounters with Orangutans, Long-tailed Macaques, Proboscis Monkeys and a wide variety of bird species. We had wonderful sightings of Storms Stork, Brahimny Kite, White-bellied Fish Eagle, Wallace's Hawk Eagle and a number of Hornbills including Oriental Pied, White-crowned, Wrinkled and the magnificent Rhinoceros Hornbill.





On our second day we ventured to the Gomontong which are an intricate cave system. For centuries, the caves have been renowned for their valuable edible Swift nests, which are harvested for bird's nest soup. The most valuable of the nests, the white ones, can sell for very high prices. The birds' nest collection is an ancient tradition, and the trading of these nests has been done from around 500 AD. It was very interesting to see the different nests on the walls and ceiling of the caves. We also had a wonderful sighting of a male Orangutan desperately trying to impress a young female who wanted no part in his advances and played a wonderful game of hard to get.

Back at on the Kinabatangan River we skipped the afternoon boat excursion due to a heavy downpour. After dinner and when the rain had passed we



climbed back on the boat for a night ride which turned out to be very productive. We found sleeping Blue-eared and Stork-billed Kingfishers, Common Palm Civet, Buffy Fish Owl, Flying Fox and a dozy looking Proboscis Monkey. After an eventful evening we caught up on some rest and were up again early the next morning. The highlight of the morning was a young female Orangutan in the middle of a Fig tree right next to the side of the river, she posed beautifully for the cameras before disappearing into the denser foliage.





Next was the Bornean Rainforest Lodge which is situated in pristine primary forest in the heart of Danum Valley. Arriving in the late afternoon we met our local guide Dean and headed out onto the forest trails which were muddy and infested with leeches, nothing to be afraid of, this is Borneo after all. We had a wonderful start with a family of Red Leaf Monkeys, there were a number of youngsters in the group which made for a nice photographic opportunity. A little further down the trail we came across some Crested Fireback's which stayed on the trail for some time while cameras were clicking merrily away. We then went on a night drive which was brilliant, in a short space of time we saw some interesting creatures. With the help of a spotlight we managed to see Red Flying Squirrel, Sambar Deer, Brown Wood Owl and an amazing Colugo or Flying Lemur. After dinner we were treated a rare sighting of a Western Tarsier which posed patiently while photographers rapidly adjusted settings, what a fantastic sighting of this nocturnal primate.

The sound of Bornean Gibbons echoed through the valley breaking the stillness of the morning. A hearty breakfast to fuel the day and we were off to see the canopy walkway which was truly astounding. We managed to find a Pygmy Squirrel at eye level which is one of the advantages to being so high up. On the way home we found a large Orangutan which was concealed in the canopy of a tall tree. Almost two hours later the old man of the forest descended the tree and crossed the road less than 10 meters from the group. It really was one of the most incredible experiences to be so close to a wild animal like that,



truly phenomenal. To top it all off we managed to get some unbelievable photos of this remarkable event.

The last morning was a little quiet, the weather seemed to send birds and animals into secret hideouts. We ended up spending time inspecting the burial sights of one of the local nomadic tribes that took up residence close to the camp a few hundred years ago. We were intrigued by an old wooden coffin made from indigenous hard wood encasing the local chief of the time. It was interesting to see that he was buried with a blow gun which was still in very good condition despite all the years of rain and insects.

Tabin National Park was our next destination, we arrived early in the afternoon and wasted no time in getting out and about. We started off with a trip to the



unique mud volcano, which is rather а strange phenomenon. It is a warm, silky mud with a hundred times more sodium, calcium elements and trace than the surrounding soil. This attracts both birds and animals as they have learnt that this mud is a great source of much needed minerals and nutrients. After squishing through the mud for half an hour we climbed up on to the top of the hide

where we would wait patiently for the next few hours. We had Scarlet-rumped Trogon, Fiery Minivets, Green Imperial Pigeon, Black Hornbills, Black and Red Broadbills followed by Pig-tailed Macaque and Bearded Pigs who came in for a drink. Driving home from the mud volcano we had a Moonrat cross the road in front of us which was a nice surprise. After dinner we went on a night drive

which was outstanding as our local guide Meldin had a fantastic ability to find nocturnal creatures with the spotlight. We found Small Toothed, Masked and Common Palm Civets, Malay Civet, Little Mouse Deer and a number of awesome sightings of Leopard Cat.

We had some wonderful sightings over these few days and it was very rewarding to see some of Borneo's brilliant wildlife. We found Bornean





Gibbons close to where we were staying they were calling territorially, their

Gibbons close to where we were staying they were calling territorially, their unique sound carrying for miles. We had a Bornean Yellow Muntjac cross the road right in front of the vehicle which was a nice surprise. Whilst walking along the road we had a Malay Weasel run out onto the middle of the track and then turn around headed straight back into the forest. This was a first sighting for our local guide who had been working in the park for the last 8 years.

On our last evening in Tabin we went for another night drive which was absolutely phenomenal. In the last afternoon light we had Wrinkled Hornbill, White-bellied Sea Eagle and Yellow-bellied Prinia. We found Black Giant Flying Squirrel, Western Tarsier which we managed to photograph well, Banded Palm Civet and a Buffy Fish Owl right next to the road.

Leaving Borneo behind, we flew to Peninsular Malaysia and stayed at Frasers Hill for two nights. Although I time was short we had a few nice sightings. We saw Slaty-backed Forktail, Diard's Trogan, Chestnut-hooded Laughing Thrush, Chestnut-bellied Malkoha, Pacific Swallow and on the mammal front Banded Leaf Monkey and a wonderful sighting of a young Siamung which seemed to have been left behind by his family group.

Next stop was Taman Negara National Park which was a little quiet after having had such fantastic experiences in Danum Valley and Tabin. We spent quite a bit of time at a hide where we watched Longtailed Macaques, Grey-bellied Squirrel, Wild Boar and Red Muntjac. We also saw Chestnutbreasted Malkoha, Chestnut-backed Rufous-winged Scimitar Babbler, Babbler, White-throated Kingfisher, Red Junglefowl, and Abbots Babbler. The Canopy Walkway was very impressive there was a sense of relief however when we were back on terra firma. We also had a lovely afternoon boat ride which was very scenic.

All in all it was a truly memorable trip, with spectacular scenery, incredible birds and some outstanding sightings of the unique fauna and flora. A special thanks to





the guides who helped us find these spectacular creatures and their tireless efforts, helping us get such wonderful photographs.



Mammals (33 Species)

Great Apes Pongidae

Orangutan

Pongo pygmaeus

We had a number of fantastic sightings however the most memorable was in Danum Valley where we waited for over two hours for a huge male to come down a tree and cross the road just meters in front of us. What an incredible experience!

Monkeys Cercopithecidae

Banded Leaf Monkey

Presbytis obscura

We had a number taking fruit from in front of our hotel at Frasers Hill.

Red Leaf Monkey

Presbytis rubicunda

We had a brilliant sighting of a small family group on our first afternoon at Danum Valley.

Proboscis Monkey

Nasalis larvatus

This spectacular creature was seen well along the Kinabatangan River.

Long-tailed Macaque

Macaca fascicularis

Commonly seen throughout the tour.

Pig-tailed Macaque

Macaca nemestrina

First seen on our drive to the Gomontong Caves, we had a great time watching some youngsters playing in Tabin.

Gibbons Hylobatidae

Bornean Gibbon

Hylobates muelleri

We had some in the distance at Danum Valley. At Tabin we managed to find some much closer and get some great photographs while they were calling territorially.

Siamang

Hylobates syndactylu

We had a wonderful sighting and photographic opportunity at Fraser's Hill, a youngster seemed to have been left behind by the troop and had taken up residence close to the road.

Squirrels Sciuridae

Black Giant Flying Squirrel

Ratufa bicolor

We had a great view in an oil palm at Tabin.

Grey-bellied Squirrel

Callosciurus caniceps

A single sighting sighting in Taman Negara.

Plantain Squirrel

Callosciurus notatus

We had a few sightings in Taman Negara, sometimes difficult to photograph as they moved so fast.

Prevost's Squirrel

Callosciurus prevostii

We had superb views of this fantastic mammal at Danum Valley.

Red Giant Flying Squirrel

Petaurista petaurista

Two seen on one of the night drives at Danum Valley

Least (Common) Pygmy Squirrel

Exilisciurus exilis

This tiny squirrel was seen at Danum Valley on a number of occasions.

Martins, Weasels, Badgers and Otters Mustelidae

Malay Weasel

Mustela nudipes

We were very fortunate to get a quick glimpse on a forest track in Tabin.



Fruit-Eating Bats Pteropididae

Large Flying Fox

Pterops vampyrus

We had good numbers on the Kinabatangan River and again nice photographic opportunity in Tabin.

Lorises Loridae

Slow Loris

Nycticebus coucang

Definitely one of the highlights of the trip, our local guide Meldin spotted this incredible little creature on a night drive in Tabin.

Tarsiidae Tarsiers

Western Tarsier

Tarsisus bancanus

We had two amazing sightings, the first in Danum Valley and the second was in Tabin

Colugo Cynocephalae

Malay Flying Lemur (Colugo)

Cynocephalus variegatus

We were treated to a fantastic sighting of this unusual looking animal on a night drive in Danum Valley.

Civets & Mongooses Viverridae

Malay Civet

Viverra tangalunga

Our first sighting was on a night walk in Danum Valley and we had another sighting in Tabin.

Common Palm Civet

Paradoxurus hermaphroditis

We had a great view in the fork of a tree on the Kinabatangan River; we also had a number of n individuals on our night drives in Tabin.

Small-toothed Palm Civet

Arctogalidia trivirgata

We managed to get some great views in Tabin as well as some photos

Masked Palm Civet

Paguma larvata

On one of our night drives in Tabin we were fortunate to fine one of these nocturnal mammals.

Binturong

Artictis binturong

We had two in the top of a tree, in Tabin. We were very fortunate to find these seldom seen animals.

Banded Civet

Hemigalus derbyanus

After a little bit of patience we were able to get a good view, it crept through the bush on the edge of the road in Tabin.

Cats Felidae

Leopard Cat

Prionailurus bengalensis

This stunning cat was seen and photographed well in Tabin.

Pigs Suidae

Wild Boar

Sus scrofa

We had a number of good sightings from the Tahan Hide in Taman Negara NP.

Bearded Pig

Sus barbatus

We had fantastic views from the hide at the mud volcano in Tabin.

Mouse-Deer Tragulidae

Lesser Mouse-Deer

Tragulus javanicus

We had a very nice sighting on a night drive in Tabin.

Greater Mouse-Deer

Tragulus napu

We had just a glimpse on our way home on a night drive in Tabin.



Deer Cervidae

Sambar Cervus unicolo

We found a few animals on the night drive in Danum Valley and again in Taman Negara.

Bornean Yellow Muntjac

Muntiacus atherodes

We had a single animal cross the road in front of us in Tabin.

Indian Muntjac *Muntacus muntjak*

We had fabulous views of a female from the Tahan Hide in Taman Negara.

Birds (105 species)

Pheasants, Fowls and Allies Phasianidae

Red Junglefowl

Gallus gallus

We enjoyed excellent views at Tabin and again at Taman Negara.

Crested Fireback

Lophura ignita

We had outstanding views of a both males and females at Taman Negara and also at Borneo Rainforest Lodge. The two subspecies involved are very different and the Bornean birds are likely to be recognized as an endemic species in the future.

Storks Ciconidae

Storm's Stork

Ciconia stormi

We had great views along the Kinabatangan River and again at Tabin N.P.

Bitterns and Herons Ardeidae

Black-crowned Night-Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

We had a single bird on our night excursion on the Kinabatangan River.

Little [Striated] Heron

Butorides striata

On our cruise from Taman Negara we found a bird working the rapids looking for food. NOTE: A polytypic and cosmopolitan superspecies with over 30 recognized forms. Clements recognizes two full species, the North American Green Heron B. virescens and the widespread nominate form which we recorded in Malaysia. This split is not recognized by the now out-dated early volume of Handbook of Birds of the World (del Hoyo et al) who lump both these forms under the nominate.

[Eastern] Cattle Egret

Bubulcus coromandus ibis

This rather cosmopolitan species was seen next to the road and on the airstrip.

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

We had a number of sightings on the Kinabatangan River.

[Eastern] Great Egret

Ardea modesta (alba)

Was seen on the Kinabatangan River.

Intermediate Egret

Egretta intermedia

One seen on our first day.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

A single bird was seen on the Kinabatangan River.



Anhingas Anhingidae

[Oriental] Darter

Anhinga melanogaster

We had a few birds on the Kinabatangan River and again at Tabin.

NOTE: The resident African form A. rufa is sometimes lumped with the Asian A. melanogaster and the enlarged species called Darter. Clements uses the latter treatment of lumping these forms.

Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae

Jerdon's Baza

Aviceda jerdoni

We had fantastic views along the Kinabatangan River.

Crested Honey Buzzard Pernis ptilorhynchus

One seen at Kinabalu Park.

Brahminy Kite Haliastur indus

Was seen flying over the Kinabatangan River.

White-bellied Sea Eagle Haliaeetus leucogaster

First seen on the Kinabatangan River and again at Tabin.

Crested Serpent-Eagle

Spilornis cheela

We had a number of great sightings and managed to get some great photos

Crested Goshawk Accipiter trivirgatus

We had a long distance view at Tabin on one of the afternoon game drives.

Rufous-bellied EagleHieraaetus kienerii

We saw one sitting on a nest in Tabin.

Crested Hawk-Eagle Nisaetus (Spizaetus) cirrhatus

We had a single bird in Tabin.

Wallace's Hawk-Eagle Nisaetus Spizaetus nanus

We had a good view on our way through or breakfast at Bilit Rain Forest Lodge.

Pigeons and Doves Columbidae

Spotted Dove

Streptopelia chinensis

Seen on the side of the road on the way to Tabin.

Little Green-Pigeon

Treron olax

We could see a few birds in a fruiting tree from the Tahan Hide in Taman Negara.

Green Imperial-Pigeon

Ducula aenea

Two birds came down to drink at the mud volcano in Tabin.

Parrots and Cockatoos Psittacidae

Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot

Loriculus galgulus

We had a few fly over us on the river cruise in Taman Negara, they were a bit distant.

Cuckoos Cuculidae

Greater Coucal

Centropus sinensis

We had a number of good sightings on the Kinabatangan and again in Tabin. **Raffles' Malkoha**Phaenicophaeus chlorophaeus

We had a nice view from the Canopy Walkway in Danum Valley.

Chestnut-breasted Malkoha

Phaenicophaeus curvirostris

Wonderful sightings in Taman Negara.

Chestnut-bellied Malkoha

Phaenicophaeus sumatranis

We found a single bird at Frasers Hill.



Owls Strigidae

Buffy Fish-Owl

Ketupa ketupu

First seen on the Kinabatangan River and then we got another great view at Taman Negara

Brown Wood Owl

Strix leptogrammica

A distant view on a night drive at Danum Valley and then a wonderful photographic opportunity in Tabin.

Treeswifts Hemiprocnidae

Whiskered Treeswift

Hemiprocne longipennis

A few birds perched close around the Borneo Rainforest Lodge walkway at Danum Vallev.

Swifts Apodidae

Glossy Swiftlet

Aerodramus esculenta

Was seen often at most places we visited.

Edible-nest Swiftlet

Aerodramus fuciphagus

Seen on its distinctive nest at the Gomontong Caves.

Silver-rumped Needletail

Rhaphidura leucopygialis

Was seen well on our river cruise at Taman Negara.

Trogons Trogonidae

Diard's Trogon

Harpactes diardii

We had a single bird at the river at Frasers Hill

Scarlet-rumped Trogon

Harpactes duvaucelii

We had a spectacular view in Tabin at the mud volcano.

Rollers Coraciidae

Dollarbird

Eurystomus orientalis

We found a few on an afternoon drive at Tabin.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae

Stork-billed Kingfisher

Pelargopsis capensis

This magnificent bird was seen on Kinabatangan and again at Taman Negara.

White-throated Kingfisher

Halcyon smyrnensis

We had good views at the Tahan Hide in Taman Negara.

Collared Kingfisher

Todirhamphus chloris

Seen on the power lines next to the road on a number of occasions.

Rufous-backed Kingfisher

Ceyx rufidorsa

Was seen at Danum and again at Tabin.

Common Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

Just one seen on the river cruise from Taman Negara.

Blue-eared Kingfisher

Alcedo meninting

Was first seen along the Kinabatangan River and again at Taman Negara.

Bee-eaters Meropidae

Blue-throated Bee-eater

Merops viridis

We managed to get some good photos on the Kinabatangan



Hornbills Bucerotidae

Bushy-crested HornbillAnorrhinus galeritus

We had a small group on a morning drive at Tabin. **Oriental Pied-Hornbill**Anthracoceros albirostris

Good numbers were seen on the Kinabatangan River.

Black Hornbill Anthracoceros malayanus

From the hide at the mud volcano we got to see a pair.

Rhinoceros HornbillBuceros rhinoceros

We had some nice sightings at Kinabatangan, Danum Valley and again at Tabin.

White -crowned Hornbill

Berenicornis (Aceros) comatus

We had a brief sighting on the Kinabatangan River and a great sighting at Tabin.

Wrinkled HornbillAceros corrugatus

We had a few birds on the Kinabatangan River.

Wreathed HornbillAceros undulatus

Seen in the late afternoon at Tabin.

Woodpeckers Picidae

Maroon Woodpecker Blythipicus rubiginosus

A single bird was seen in Taman Negara.

Orange-backed Woodpecker Reinwardtipicus validus

Was first seen on the way to the Gomontong Caves and again on the boat cruise at

Taman Negara.

Broadbills Eurylaimidae

Black-and-red Broadbill Cymbirhynchus macrorhynchos

We had some great views of this outstanding bird at Tabin and again at Taman

Negara.

Black-and-yellow Broadbill Eurylaimus ochromalus

We had a view at Danum Valley from the Canopy Walkway.

Dusky Broadbill Corydon sumatranus

We saw three in Tabin.

Woodshrikes and Allies Tephrodornithidae

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike Hemipus picatus

We had a nice sighting close to the Tabin Park headquarters.

Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae

Fiery Minivet Pericrocotus igneus

We had a few from the hide at the mud volcano in Tabin.

Shrikes Laniidae

Brown ShrikeLanius cristatus

We got a good view from the Tahan Hide in Taman Negara.

Orioles and Figbirds Oriolidae

Black-naped Oriole Oriolus chinensis

We one or two from the Tahan Hide in Taman Negara.

Drongos Dicruridae

Bronzed Drongo Dicrurus aeneus

Seen briefly at Tabin.



Fantails Rhipiduridae

Pied Fantail Rhipidura javanica

First seen on the way to the Gomontong Caves.

Monarch Flycatchers Monarchidae

Asian Paradise-Flycatcher Terpsiphone paradisi

We had a great view of a male in Tabin. What an outstanding bird.

Jays and Crows Corvidae

Slender-billed Crow Corvus enca

Good numbers were seen flying over the Kinabatangan River.

Large-billed [Southern Jungle] CrowCorvus macrorhynchos

We had a few birds fly over whilst sitting in the hide in Taman Negara.

Martins and Swallows Hirundinidae

Barn Swallow Hirundo rustica

We had a few sightings, there were two perched at Danum.

Pacific [House] Swallow Hirundo tahitica

A pair was nesting at Frasers Hill

<u>Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae</u>

Yellow-bellied Prinia Prinia flaviventris

We had a nice photographic opportunity on our afternoon drive at Tabin.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae

Straw-headed Bulbul Pycnonotus zeylanicus

This species was found at Taman Negara where we enjoyed several riverside sightings.

Black-crested Bulbul Pycnonotus melanicterus

A single sighting at Fraser's Hill.

Stripe-throated Bulbul Pycnonotus finlaysoni

We had a few sightings from the hide at Taman Negara.

Yellow-vented Bulbul Pycnonotus goiavier

We had a single bird on the Kinabatangan River.

Olive-winged Bulbul Pycnonotus plumosus

While we were waiting for the Orangutan to come down at Danum Valley we managed

to get a good look.

Cream-vented Bulbul Pycnonotus simplex

Was seen well in Taman Negara.

[Asian] Red-eyed Bulbul Pycnonotus brunneus

We had one or two sightings in Taman Negara.

Family Uncertain Incertae sedis

Ashy Tailorbird Orthotomus ruficeps

We had a nice view at Bilit Rain Forest Lodge and again at Taman Negara.



Babblers and Parrotbills Timaliidae

Abbott's Babbler Malacocincla abbotti

Seen well at Taman Negara.

Chestnut-winged Babbler Stachyris erythroptera

We had a good view in Taman Negara.

Bold-Striped Tit-Babbler (BE) *Macronous bornensis*

Seen well at Danum.

Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush (BE) Garrulax treacheri

We had a flock come through at Frasers Hill.

Long-tailed SibiaHeterophasia picaoides

Common and conspicuous at Fraser's Hill.

Starlings Sturnidae

Asian Glossy Starling Aplonis panayensis

Seen regularly, mostly next to the road side.

Common Hill Myna Gracula religiosa

One or two seen on the Kinabatangan River

White-vented MynaAcridothere grandis

We had a few flocks at Taman Negara.

Common MynaAcridotheres tristis

Small numbers were seen driving through cities and agricultural areas.

Thrushes Turdidae

Malayan Whistling Thrush Myophonus robinsoni

We had a sighting next to a river at Frasers Hill in the late afternoon.

Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

Oriental Magpie-Robin Copsychus saularis

Very common at Taman Negara.

White-crowned Shama (BE) Copsychus stricklandii

Was seen at Danum Valley and again at Tabin.

White-rumped Shama Copsychus malabaricus

We had one or two sightings at Taman Negara.

Slaty-backed Forktail Enicurus schistaceus

We had a wonderful photographic opportunity next to a river at Frasers Hill.

Grey-streaked Flycatcher

We had a single sighting close to our accommodations in Taman Negara.

Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*

One seen from the vehicle in Tabin.

Leafbirds Chloropseidae

Greater Green LeafbirdChloropsis sonnerati

Fairly common at Danum Valley.

Lesser Green Leafbird Chloropsis cyanopogon

We had a sighting in Tabin N.P.

Orange-bellied Leafbird Chloropsis hardwickii

We had a brief sighting at Frasers Hill as we were walking down the gap road.



Flowerpeckers Dicaeidae

Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker Prionochilus masculatus

We had a great sighting at Tabin.

Orange-bellied FlowerpeckerDicaeum trigonostigma

We had good sighting in Danum Valley whilst waiting for the Orangutan to come down

from the tree.

Sunbirds Nectariniidae

Purple-naped Sunbird Hypogramma hypogrammicum

Seen well at Tabin close to the main guest area.

Van Hassalt's Sunbird Leptocoma sperata

We tried to get a photo at Tabin but it was just too fast.

Temminck's SunbirdAethopyga temminckii

This beautiful species was seen at Tabin.

Little Spiderhunter Arachnothera longirostra

We had sightings at both Danum Valley and again at Tabin.

Long-billed SpiderhunterNever staying long enough for a photo, we got a brief view in Tabin. **Streaky-breasted Spiderhunter**Arachnothera affinis

Seen well at Tabin.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae

Eurasian Tree SparrowPasser montanus
This species was recorded in small numbers at in suburbia.

Waxbills, Munias andAllies Estrildidae

Dusky Munia (BE)

Seen flying off the roadside in Danum Valley and again at Tabin.

Chestnut Munia

Lonchura atricapilla

We had a number of birds moving off the roadside edge in Tabin

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