

# RECORDINGS OF BAT & CAVE-DWELLING BIRD SOUNDS

## MALAYSIA – SARAWAK

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DOC-RBB-MY1 France 1992

### Dans les grottes

Cave Swiftlets – Bats – Recorded in Caves

**Prod. Co:** Pithys International; Meylan

**Rec. Eng:** Jean Pierre Picot

**Rec. Date:** 1992

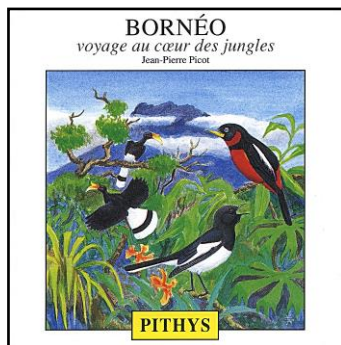
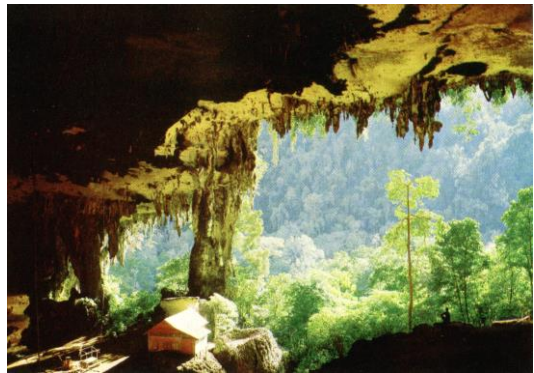
**Liner Notes:** (16 pages in French) Jean-Pierre Picot

**Time:** 1:53

1. **CD:** BORNEO – VOYAGE AU COEUR DES JUNGLES  
Pithys 10092 (Tk 4)
2. Reissue on **CD:** BORNEO – VOYAGE AU COEUR DES  
JUNGLES (2006)

Fremaux FA 668 (Tk 4)

**Notes:** The almost continual chatter and banter of the birds-nest gathers echo in the huge entrance area of the Niah Great Cave. Barely audible in the foreground can be heard the short, high-pitched, scolding cries of the cave swiftlets. One wonders why the nature sound recorder didn't make his recording when the men



were absent from the cave.

“Les voix d’hommes qui résonnent dans cette curieuse atmosphère rapelle (sic) que ceux-ci exploitent depuis fort longtemps deux richesses de ces grottes: le guano d’une part dont ils peuvent récolter jusqu’à plus d’une tonne par jour (accumulation des fientes de chauves-souris et de salanganes), et les fameux ‘nids d’hirondelles’ d’autre part. Friandises très prisées de la cuisine chinoise où ils sont intégrés à des potages, les nids des salanganes sont presque exclusivement constitués de salive pure. Les minuscules coupes sont accrochées dans les fentes élevées de la voûte des plus grandes grottes, aussi les ramasseurs locaux ont-ils parfois construit des échafaudages de bambous pouvant atteindre 100m de haut !” (Picot 1992)

[The men’s voices that resonate in this strange atmosphere remind us that for a very long time they exploited these caves for two rich resources: on the one hand guano where they can harvest more than one ton per day (the accumulation of droppings of bats and swiftlets), and on the other hand the famous ‘bird’s nests’. Swiftlet nests are almost exclusively made of pure bird saliva and are very popular in Chinese cuisine, where they are incorporated into soups. The tiny cuplike nests are attached in high slots in the vault of the largest caves and the local nest collectors have sometimes built bamboo scaffolding up to 100m high!]

Regarding the cave-nesting swiftlets of the genus *Collocalia*, Lord Medway stated that "*Collocalia lowi* (Low’s Swiftlet) the most numerous of the three species found at Niah, makes the ‘black’ nests of commerce, which are harvested twice a year (July and August, and December and January) by their owners." It is not known which of these three species we are barely hearing here.

Lord Medway found six species of bat in this cave. There was no evidence of direct bird and bat competition. The Lesser and Greater Horseshoe bats are the most abundant at Niah Cave but they do not crowd out the birds. (Medway 1958)

Regarding the noise of the birds and bats – “The Naked and Fruit Bat colonies can be precisely located by their sounds. Both cheep and twitter continuously at roost: the former also utters an occasional deeper tone. The echo-location call, too, of the Naked Bat is within the range audible to human ears; it can be heard as the bat flies overhead in the dark, an unbroken twitter, rather like the stridulation of grasshoppers... The major share [of noise] comes from the swifts, whose nest calls are loud and shrill, and whose sonar navigation in the dark is a rattling call of mean frequency about 3000 cycles, well within the sensitivity range of human ears.” (Medway 1958)

This CD album was reissued by Frémeaux & Associés in 2009.

See also under Recordings in Natural Caves – Malaysia - Sarawak

**Ref:** Anon. 2012, Swiflet Numbers Dwindling in Niah Caves, Borneo Post Online, Mar. &7, 2012, [theborneopost](http://theborneopost.com)

Anon. n.d., The Plankwalk Trail, Niah National Park, Lee Ming Press, Kunking

Barton, Huw 2001, History of the Great Cave of Niah, [abc.net.au](http://abc.net.au)

Borneo – Voyage au coeur des jungles CD, [Amazon](http://Amazon.com) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Borneo – Voyage au coeur des jungles CD, Presentation (in French), [fremeaux](http://fremeaux.com)

Ducheck, Jochen 2011, Niah Great Cave, [showcaves](http://showcaves.com)

Geological Tours – Niah, [ecomedia](http://ecomedia.com)

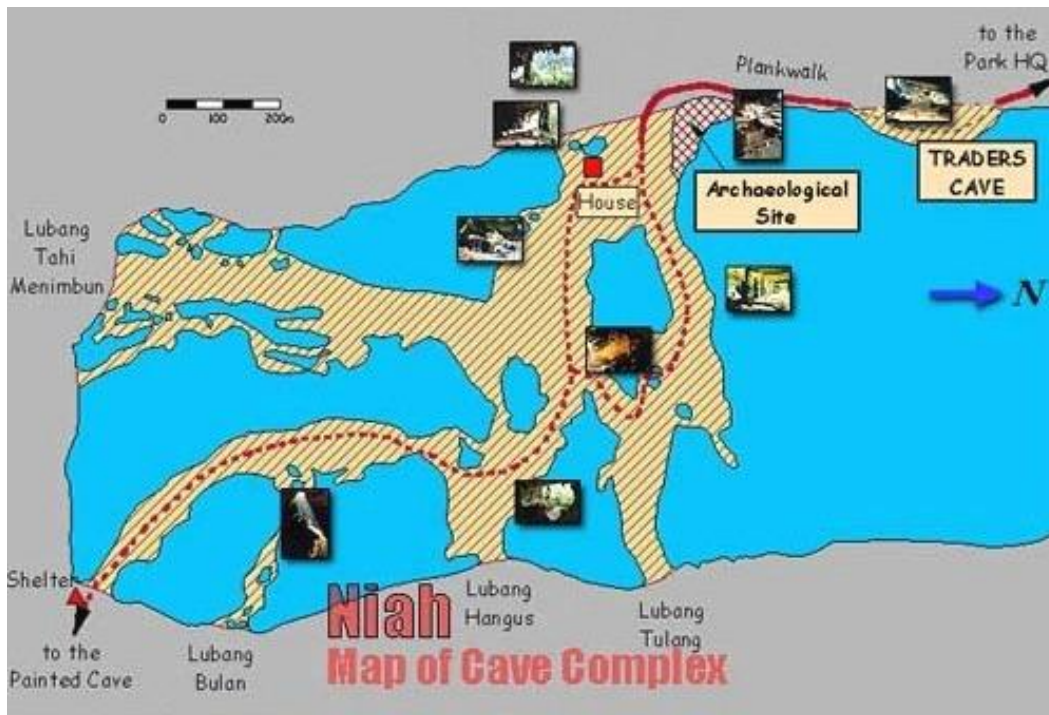
Harrison, Tom 1957, The Great Cave of Niah, *Man*, Nov; 1957, p. 161-166, [rhinoresourcecenter](http://rhinoresourcecenter.com)

Harrison, Tom 1958, The Caves of Niah: A History of Prehistory, *The Sarawak Museum Journal*, v. 8, n. 12, Dec. 1958, Kuching, p. 549-595

Lord Medway, 300,000 Bats, *The Sarawak Museum Journal*, v. 8, n. 12, Dec. 1958, Kuching, p. 667- 679

Niah Cave Gecko (*Cyrtodactylus cavernicolus*), Data, [iucnredlist](http://iucnredlist.org)

Niah National Park, Data, [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia.com)



Based on map with Tom Harrison's 1958 article

DOC-RBB-MY2 France 1993

## Vague de chauve-souris (Bats Flight) – Mont Mulu

Bat Sounds

Prod. Co: Sittelle; Mens

**Rec. Eng:** Rémy Bruckert  
**Rec. Date:** June-Aug. 1992  
**Liner Notes:** (20-page Booklet) Thierry Gaultier  
(English trans.: Tony Williams)

**Time:** (End Tk25-Start Tk 26) 0:16

**CD:** JUNGLES DE BORNÉO  
Sittelle 26304 (Tks 25-26)

**Notes:** With great difficulty we can hear the bat flight (probably coming out of one of the Mulu caves but we are not told) approaching on track 25 (Début de concert – Beginning of the

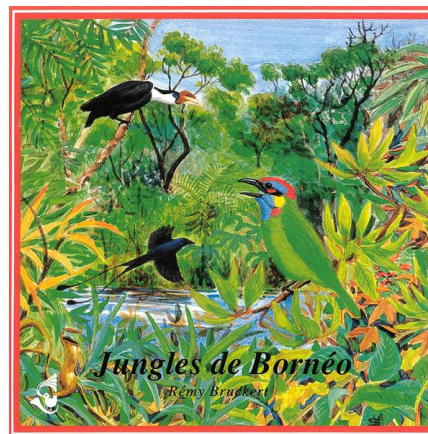


Concert) and then receding half way through track 26. The most overpoweringly present sounds in this haphazard nature recording are the strident frog croaks in the foreground, which distract from every other animal sound.

The subtitle of this track is given on [Amazon](#) in Indonesian as “Kelelawar Kelelawar Yang Terbang,” which translates as “the bat flying” and when entered in Google appears to have a lot to do with just that (see photo on left). (Anon. 2014) However, which species is

under question here remains a mystery.

**Ref:** Anon. 2014, Kisah Kelelawar yang Kesepian (in Indonesian), [liniberita](#)  
Jungles of Borneo CD, List of tracks (in English), [Amazon.fr](#)  
Jungles of Borneo CD, Presentation (in French), [fremeaux](#)  
Rémy Bruckert, Jungles of Borneo CD, [Discogs](#)



[caveinspiredmusic.com](http://caveinspiredmusic.com)