

# MALIAU BASIN

SABAH'S LOST WORLD

Hans P. Hazebroek, Tengku Zainal Adlin and Waidi Sinun

Photographs by Hans P. Hazebroek

*Edited by*  
K.M. Wong



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the camps seems to coincide with a decrease of the number of elephant sightings. However, elephants employ large home ranges that may exceed 300 sq. km, and sometimes travel as far as 30 km during a day. Thus they may also roam throughout the areas adjacent to the Maliau Basin buffer zones (Fig. 117).

### Rhinoceros

Footprints of the Sumatran rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) were found at six sites in the Maliau Basin in 1988, three sites of which were in the tropical heath forest. A dung sample collected in 1986 was also identified as definitely belonging to a Sumatran rhinoceros. Dung collected in 1988 in the heath forest included leaf and twig fragments of heath forest plants, indicating that the rhino(s) had fed in this habitat and not merely passed through. Apart from (possibly) barking deer, this appears to be the only mammal species which feeds in heath forest in the Maliau Basin. Based on these observations Payne *et al.* (1989) regarded that only relatively small numbers of rhinos occur in the Maliau Basin compared to the other areas in Sabah where rhinos are found—including the Danum Valley Conservation Area and Tabin Wildlife Reserve. Hunting camps one to several years old, a wire snare trap, and also ancient signs of human presence—fragments of glazed pottery below the topsoil—were discovered in the Maliau Basin in 1988. Payne *et al.* considered that these signs could indicate hunting of rhino in the Maliau Basin over many centuries. Rhino horn is believed to have been exported from Brunei from the 7th century AD.

### Bearded Pig

Sightings, tracks, rubs and breeding nests indicate that Bearded pigs (*Sus barbatus*) occur throughout in the Basin as well as the Tembadau Valley (Figs. 116 & 119). Bearded pigs have a dark brown, rough coat and a bristly beard. They use their long snout to churn up the forest soil, looking for roots, earthworms, fruit, seedlings, and other forest offerings. When a female bearded pig is preparing to give birth, she builds a large (up to 1.8 m in diameter) nest of leaves and



Fig. 116. Bearded pigs (*Sus barbatus*) forage mostly during the day, but are also occasionally active at night. Fig. 117 (Following pages). Bornean pygmy elephants, newly recognized as a distinct subspecies of the widespread Asian Elephant, roam widely through Maliau's buffer zones and are occasionally sighted in the Tembadau Valley.