

## Honey Bees of Borneo Exploring the centre of *Apis* diversity



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"It is often stated that 'the honey bee' (i.e. *Apis mellifera*) is one of the most researched animals. Yet waiting in the wings are eight Cinderella sister species who, while known and utilised by communities in Asia since the earliest human history, remain little known to the scientific community, ignored by those who set criteria for bee products, and are unheard of by the majority of beekeepers worldwide. For readers realising that they too know only of *Apis mellifera* – now is the time to meet the family!

The island of Borneo is home to five of the nine recognised honey bee species. Within these nine species, there are dramatic variations in behaviour - most notably between species that nest on a series of parallel combs within a cavity, and species with (so-called) dwarf or giant honey bees that nest on single combs in the open. The five species co-existing in Borneo include representatives of each type, and Borneo is therefore the best place on earth for their close observation and comparison. For more than 20 years, the authors have been studying these bees, attaining a unique insight of the species' diversity, their evolutionary history, and their astonishing adaptation to their environments. They now share these insights here, explained with a clarity that will enable readers to gain a wide, and correctly focussed perspective of honey bee biology and behaviour."

Dr. Nicola Bradbear (Bees for Development)

Monmouth, January 2010

<http://www.borneobooks.com/blog/2010/03/30/honey-bees-of-borneo/>