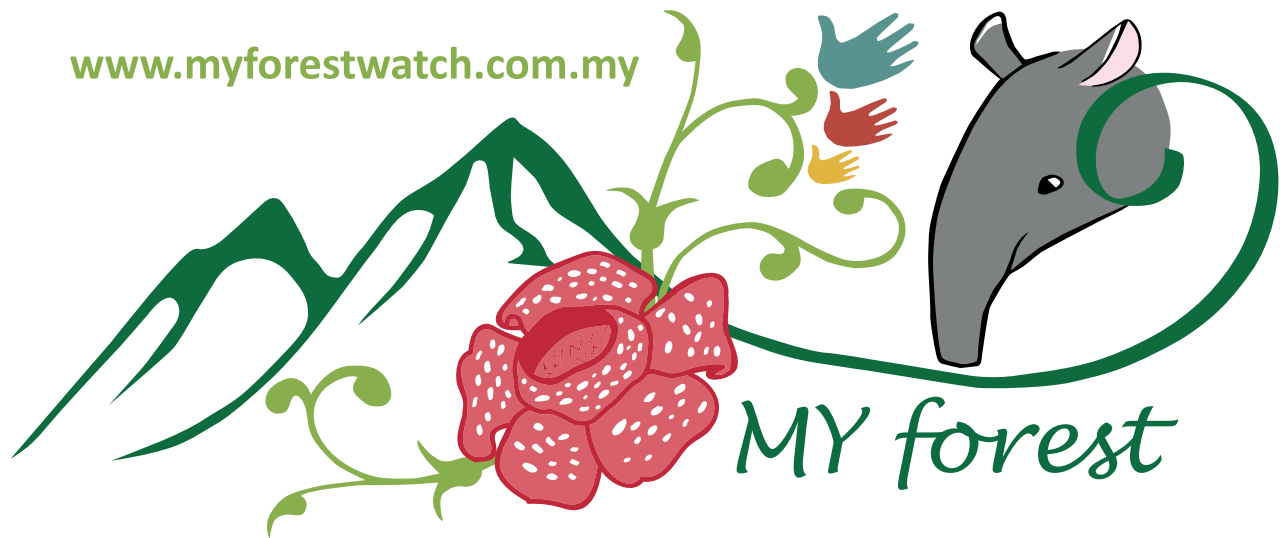


MY forest **COMMUNICATIONS & VISIBILITY**

**Malaysian Naturalist
2017 & 2018**



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STRENGTHENING NON-STATE ACTOR INVOLVEMENT IN FOREST GOVERNANCE

INDONESIA • MALAYSIA • THE PHILIPPINES • PAPUA NEW GUINEA



MALAYSIAN

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Delicate Wings of Beauty

Lacewing Butterflies of
Peninsula Malaysia

More Than Meets The Eyes

The amazing Air Hitam Dalam
Educational Forest
features more than just a
serene getaway

The Elephant in The Room

The death of an elephant calf gives
focus on the predicament of our
beleaguered pachyderms



PUBLICATION OF THE
MALAYSIAN NATURE SOCIETY (MNS)
PP5527/09/2012(031178)



STRENGTHENING ENGAGEMENT OF NON- STATE ACTORS IN FOREST GOVERNANCE IN INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Images by Yeap Chin Aik, MNS Conservation Division

The Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) is pleased to announce its role in a high-impact partnership led by BirdLife International in Southeast Asia that looks to deliver non-governmental participation in protecting our forests.

The project, funded by the European Commission, addresses the constraints faced by governments in handling illegal and unsustainable logging, and over five years seeks to build the capacity of

non-state actors, which include community-based organisations, civil society organisations, indigenous peoples and women, to engage more effectively with the government and the private sector in promoting good forest governance.

MNS, the country's oldest environmental NGO, has been given this task for Malaysia, and will be working alongside Birdlife International and other country partners like Burung Indonesia (Indonesia), Haribon

Foundation (the Philippines) and Tenkile Conservation Alliance (Papua New Guinea), including University of Wolverhampton (UK) Centre for International Development Training (CIDT) and the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG).

The action will complement and support existing FLEGT and REDD+ initiatives in the four countries through targeted interventions in forest monitoring, management, planning and policy, including:

- delivering training on forest governance, management and policy;
- implementing community-based monitoring programmes at priority sites;
- supporting forest conservation, forest restoration and sustainable livelihoods at priority sites;
- strengthening community networks to facilitate information exchange and inform policy processes;
- engaging in land use planning and forest policy processes at local, provincial and national level; and
- promoting cross-border cooperation through exchange visits and a forest governance forum.

In this inception year, MNS will be setting up its infrastructure, strategic plan and action plan to achieve its targets, which include:

- developing materials and delivering training on forest policy, forest management, conservation planning and land use planning processes, for community-based organisations, indigenous communities and MNS state branches;
- building the capacity of state and non-state actors to monitor forest resource use, forest condition and forest carbon stocks;
- implementing community-based forest monitoring programmes at priority areas, with emphasis on



Central Forest Spine and Heart of Borneo KBA sites;

- using community monitoring and remote sensing data to inform advocacy responses to illegal logging and deforestation, and communicating the results thereof to key stakeholders, policy makers and the broader public;
- establishing a national forest monitoring network, providing information on the state of Malaysia's forests, biodiversity and carbon stocks; and
- co-operating with government agencies on forest governance, management and conservation issues.

MNS Executive Director I.S. Shanmugaraj says, "This is a unique opportunity for MNS to strengthen our local communities' involvement in forest advocacy, in the

protection of our green spaces and as important habitats for our wildlife. We believe MNS's experience in projects alongside local communities over the years makes us a strong player in this regional partnership." MNS's recognised work with non-state actors include the conservation of hornbills, with emphasis on the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex; Kuala Selangor Nature Park for Ramsar, via CEPA outreach programmes for MNS members and local communities; safeguarding the mangrove belt of the North Central Selangor Coast; and Revisiting Our Original Trees (ROOTS). **N**

Should you have enquiries, please contact:

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RARE LIMESTONE TREASURES

MALAYSIAN

Naturalist

RM12 VOLUME 71-1 SEPT-NOV 2017



PUBLICATION OF THE
MALAYSIAN NATURE SOCIETY (MNS)
PP5527/09/2012(031178)

Langkawi hosts 70th MNS meetup

The island of Langkawi was the site of the Malaysian Nature Society's 70th Annual General Meeting on 23 September, with members from around the country flying in for a wonderful, though wet, gathering of minds.

The AGM long-weekend also encompassed island tours, which were especially popular with first-time visitors to Langkawi and those who wished to add some lifers to their watchlists. With Langkawi's rich biodiversity, they weren't disappointed, despite the northern parts of the country suffering unseasonably wet weather.

MNS President Henry Goh said he was pleased with the turnout, especially with this being a non-election year for the Society.

This showed that MNS was still going strong, with dedicated members ready to come together for the betterment of the country's oldest environmental NGO. He said, "It's no small task to get members to fly in on a voluntary basis, and they came from as far away as Sabah and Sarawak."

Introduced for the first time was the MNS AGM Conference 2017, themed "Role of MNS as a Non-State Actor in Green Governance", held a day before the AGM. The programme brought together MNS Branches as well as esteemed personalities, such as Merdeka Award winners, to share information on past, present and future conservation efforts, towards the formulation of the MNS Strategic Plan 2018-2030.

Guests of honour, participants and organisers of the MNS AGM Conference 2017, which was part of the Society's AGM proceedings in Langkawi





The conference was opened by the President, followed by the Opening Address by Guest of Honours Dato' Azizan Noordin, CEO of the Langkawi Development Authority, who spoke about LADA's efforts in striking a balance between development and environmental protection in Langkawi; and Vinayagan Dharmarajah, Regional Director (Asia), BirdLife International, who shared BirdLife's work alongside MNS on Malaysia's Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas.

In session one, titled "Learning From the Masters", the audience heard from 2016 Merdeka Award Winner Tan Sri Dr. Salleh Mohd Nor, former MNS President and current Senior Advisor; 2015 Merdeka Award Winner Emeritus Professor Dato' Dr. Abdul Latiff Mohamad, Honorary Editor of the *Malayan Nature Journal*; 2014 Merdeka Award Winner Mohd Khan Momin Khan, former Director-General of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia; and Professor Dr. Ahmad Ismail, former MNS Vice-President and Environmental Education Advisory Committee Chairman.

Session two, "MNS Nature & Conservation – Moving Through Time", featured presentations by MNS Branches, namely Langkawi, Kedah, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan/Melaka, Johor, Miri and Sandakan, and the Herpetofauna Special Interest Group from MNS Selangor Branch.

In session three, "Cherish the Past & Looking Forward to the Future", the audience participated in raising concerns to be pursued by MNS towards strengthening the Society, playing on its 75 years of environmental advocacy and its ambitions to safeguard Malaysia's biodiversity.

Goh said this cooperation was an important element towards strengthening civil societies' role in effecting green policies for the country. "With MNS being the oldest and largest membership-based environmental NGO in Malaysia, its Branches are the key to success in promoting the study, appreciation, conservation and protection of Malaysia's natural heritage," he said.

"MNS has been the main force behind the protection of many key habitats, as well as national, marine and state parks in Malaysia, and this conference has greatly assisted in the Society's road map for its future conservation efforts," Goh said, adding that he was heartened by the Members' response to the Conference, which is slated to become an annual event. "This shows commitment, and the willingness to keep MNS as a relevant part of policy decisions for the country."

Above left and right: The MNS AGM Conference 2017 brought together MNS Branches from around Malaysia to strengthen the civil society organisation in its green governance role

Above: MNS President Henry Goh and BirdLife International Regional Director (Asia) Vinayagan Dharmarajah looking at MNS merchandise highlighted at the proceedings, which included books published by MNS Branches

The MNS AGM Conference 2017 was funded by the project, "Strengthening Non-State Actor Involvement in Forest Governance in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea". Supported by the European Union, the project is coordinated by BirdLife International at the regional level and implemented by MNS in Malaysia. For more information, visit www.myforestwatch.com.my

Pesta Sayap soars again at Kuala Selangor Nature Park

THE SPOTLIGHT shines again on the wetlands of Kuala Selangor and its resident and migratory birds, with Pesta Sayap (Festival of Wings) held at the Kuala Selangor Nature Park (KSNP) over the second weekend of October. The two-day event featured the public-friendly Pesta Sayap celebration on 14 October and the MNS members' pow-wow the following day to discuss the future of the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) Malaysia, which is a mainstay of MNS bird lovers' activities each year.

Now in its 13th year, Pesta Sayap 2017 is themed "A healthy planet for migratory birds and people – their future is our future", picked up from World Migratory Bird Day, as KSNP and its surroundings make up part of the North Central Selangor Coast and an important section of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Welcome to the birds

Pesta Sayap started early, with MNS staff, members and guests buzzing to get exhibition booths decorated, activities prepped, audio visual systems checked, food and beverages sorted, for the welcome to the birds and visitors.

The exhibitions encompassed those of the MNS secretariat for registration and activities; the MNS Selangor Branch, with their nature guides and flora and bird special interest groups; the Selangor Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan); and local community groups working together with MNS to promote conservation, namely Sabahat Beruang Madu (for the Malayan sun bear), Sahabat Raja Rimba (Malayan tiger), Penang Inshore Fishermen Welfare Association (mangrove rehabilitation) and Kelab Alami Kawa Kuala Selangor (fireflies).



Above:
There were some 500 visitors to Pesta Sayap 2017, included 350 children, 34 students from Universiti Putra Malaysia, youths and youngsters from local communities and members and friends of MNS, who took part in a range of fun and educational activities



Activities included guided nature walks and bird watching around KSNP, video screening of bird photographs, mangrove planting, nature-themed colouring and craft activities, and nature-themed talks.

MNS President Henry Goh said Pesta Sayap was an important event to highlight the conservation of the area's coastal wetlands, mudflats, peat swamp, mangrove rivers and rice fields used by avifauna on their annual migration. He said while environmental education outreach to the public was important, he also called on further action to protect the wetlands and waterbirds, namely in pushing for Ramsar status, or Wetlands of International Importance, for KSNP.

Goh said Ramsar status meant sustainable management or wise use of the mangrove ecosystem, which would draw tourists, bring in income for the communities and promote the conservation of the overall biodiversity of the North Central Selangor Coast.

Pesta Sayap Objectives

- To raise awareness on migratory birds and their wetlands habitats.
- To monitor and collect data on resident and migratory birds in the forest and wetlands habitat.
- Outreach to community and the public, especially youths, on being effective environmental stewards.
- To promote KSNP and its surroundings as a potential Ramsar site and Flyway Network Site important for local community livelihood as well as an ecotourism destination.

Source: www.pestasayap.wordpress.com

Making the census count

The second day of Pesta Sayap 2017 was given to a seminar on the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC), an annual endeavour by Wetlands International to monitor resident and migratory waterbirds (also known as waders), as part of its global monitoring programme, the International Waterbird Census.

The AWC Malaysia involves volunteers staking out, on a prescribed fortnight each January, wetlands from Afghanistan eastwards to Japan, Southeast Asia and as far as Australasia, which form the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) and a large part of the Central Asian Flyway.

The Malaysian census has been ongoing since 1987, as part of MNS's commitment towards citizen science as a unique model for advocating conservation. The counts are carried out by MNS members and fellow birdwatchers, alongside the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (Perhilitan), but this is the first time they have been brought together to discuss the census, specifically the results and challenges faced.

At the seminar, attendees heard from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, BirdLife International, the MNS Bird Conservation Council and Wetlands International on the impact the years of counting have had on the waterbird landscape, which included sensitive areas being protected, threatened species given attention and communities committing to related wetlands conservation. Some challenges were also brought up, and these include hardships in engaging stakeholders and the bigger picture of doing justice to the millions of birds that use the flyways, in the face of mounting threats.

Attendees were also given the floor to share their AWC experiences and findings, and the audience was briefed on the 2016/2017 census from MNS Branches of Penang, Perak, Selangor, Johor, Terengganu and Kuching, as well as Perhilitan, while



the MNS Secretariat presented about a community survey it had conducted on public perception of waterbirds.

Salient points raised revolved around the mechanics of the AWC, such as difficulties in getting volunteers – some states had only one or two stalwarts committed to the exercise, while for others, counters sometimes could not make a session due to insufficient notice – lack of training, specifically in terms of identified waterbird species, and lack of equipment.

The takeaway was that, these obstacles mean Malaysia could not paint a clearer picture of the true state of waterbird migration on her shores, and this was addressed at the end of the seminar, with panellists Tan Choo Eng of the MNS Bird Conservation Council, MNS Senior Advisor Tan Sri Dr. Salleh Mohd Nor, BirdLife International (Asia) Dr Yong Ding Li, MNS President Henry Goh and Perhilitan's Ahmad Khusaini Mohd Kharip Shah.

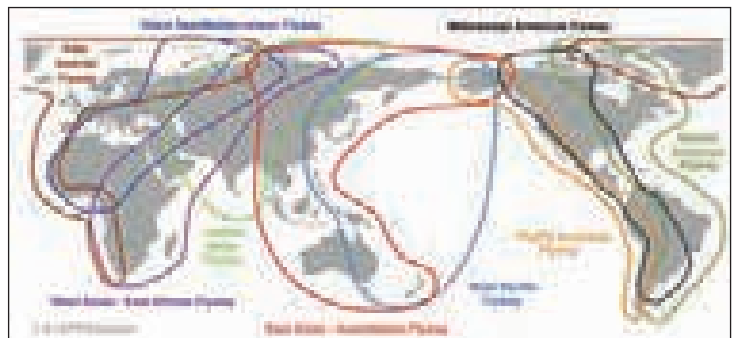
With discussion and solutions on MNS pushing membership and volunteer drives, helping provide equipment and training, alongside advocating for waterbird feeding and roosting grounds, such as the Kapar ash ponds, the panel and seminar closed with the attendees feeling confident of ensuring the AWC Malaysia grows stronger, and helps promote the conservation of the country's wetlands and natural heritage. 🐦

Above:
Attendees of the Asian Waterbird Census Malaysia Seminar, which addressed the impact and challenges of AWC and how it can be strengthened to help promote the conservation of the country's wetlands and natural heritage

Opposite page:
The tone of the seminar was of sharing and learning, where MNS members and volunteers related their experiences and challenges in performing the count each year

Clockwise:
The speakers included Mark Ng, from the MNS Selangor Branch; Rose Au, MNS Kuching Branch Chair; Vincent Chow, MNS Johor Branch Chair; and Ahmad Khusaini Mohd Kharip Shah, Perhilitan

Bottom:
Highlights of the presentations: The world's flyways; the International Waterbird Census; AWC 2017 results from Selangor



AWC 2017 (Selangor)
Species seen

Species	Count
Asian Golden Plover	1
Black-winged Stilt	1
Common Noddy	1
Greater Frigatebird	1
Lesser Frigatebird	1
Masked Booby	1
Red-footed Booby	1
White-headed Stork	1
Yellow-billed Stork	1

AWC 2017 (Selangor)
Species seen

Species	Count
Asian Golden Plover	1
Black-winged Stilt	1
Common Noddy	1
Greater Frigatebird	1
Lesser Frigatebird	1
Masked Booby	1
Red-footed Booby	1
White-headed Stork	1
Yellow-billed Stork	1

Pesta Sayap is organised by the Malaysian Nature Society, together with the Kuala Selangor District Council Selangor, Selangor Branch Bird Group and MNS-BCC waterbird study group, with the support of the Selangor State Government and Wetlands International.

The AWC Malaysia Seminar is underpinned by MNS's strategy for habitat and species protection at a landscape level, part of the BirdLife International partnership strategic plan of action and in line with Malaysia's National Policy on Biological Diversity 2016-2025, under-revision Wetlands Policy, the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Targets, Ramsar obligations for wetlands conservation and EAAF partnership commitments. The programme is supported by the Tan Kean Cheong Bird Conservation Memorial Fund and Ricoh.



Environmental education is at its best through show and tell, which was the idea behind the exhibitions by Sahabat Beruang Madu, Sahabat Raja Rimba, Penang Inshore Fishermen Welfare Association, Kelab Alami Kawa Kuala Selangor and Perhilitan, as well as the MNS Selangor Branch and its flora and birding special interest groups





BETWEEN ROOTS & CANOPY

Growing local involvement in forest governance & monitoring

Indonesia • Malaysia • Papua New Guinea • The Philippines

Project funding



European Union

Project partnership



BirdLife
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FORESTS BENEFIT ALL

From strong roots that hold the soil, to the fresh leaves in the canopy that create oxygen, and everything in between, forests benefit everyone. They clean the air we breathe and reliably provide the water we drink. Forests protect soil from which to grow food and commodities, whilst providing medicine, tourism, ecosystem services and sustainable livelihoods. By storing carbon, forests combat climate change, and they protect against natural disasters like floods and storms. They are also homes for people and unique wildlife, with many new species still being discovered each year.

FORESTS IN ASIA AND THE WESTERN PACIFIC ARE SPECIAL, WORTHY OF GLOBAL RECOGNITION AND PRIDE

The tropical forests of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines cover over 154 million hectares and are globally significant hotspots of plant and animal life, many recognised as "Key Biodiversity Areas" (KBAs) by BirdLife International in partnership with many other leading conservation organisations.

HOWEVER HUMAN POPULATIONS ACROSS THE REGION ARE GROWING RAPIDLY AND THREATENING FORESTS

Driven by agricultural expansion, unsustainable harvesting of timber and illegal logging, forest degradation and deforestation remain perennial environmental problems for countries in Southeast Asia and the western Pacific.

WE NEED TO PROTECT OUR FORESTS

It has never been more essential that nations reduce illegal logging, strengthen sustainable and legal forest management, improve governance, and better account for the value of forests. The European Union aims to support this through its **Forest Law Enforcement, Governance & Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan**, and by supporting governments and communities to implement these better practices.

LOCAL PEOPLE ARE THE ANSWER

Local people have an important role to play in forest monitoring and decisions. They know the risks, they know the health of the forest first-hand, there is no substitute for local knowledge. Local community groups, indigenous peoples, and non-governmental organisations can be there to monitor, protect and report in real time.

THROUGH THIS PROJECT WE CAN HELP MAKE THE LINK BETWEEN LOCAL PEOPLE AND DECISIONS ABOUT FORESTS

¹ <http://en.environmentaldefendants.org/Asia-Pacific/Projectdefendants.aspx>

² www.flegtactionplan.org

BETWEEN ROOTS AND CANOPY

Growing local involvement in forest governance & monitoring

Indonesia • Malaysia • Papua New Guinea • The Philippines

THE CURRENT SITUATION

National and state governments have implemented key measures to stem forest loss across the region. For instance, all four countries have set up in the process of developing national Reducing Emissions from Deforestation & Degradation (REDD+) strategies to monitor and tackle deforestation. Both the Philippines and Indonesia have passed (re)forestation laws to tackle unsustainable agricultural expansion into primary forests and peat land, and logging activities.

Despite this and positive intentions, forest conservation across the region remains constrained by problems of weak governance, limited enforcement, corruption and a lack of accountability has hampered government efforts to prevent illegal and unsustainable logging.

The current involvement of non-state actors (e.g. local communities, indigenous peoples) — critical stakeholders in forest conservation activities — is constrained by a lack of technical knowledge, experience and political influence.

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Official title Strengthening non-state actor involvement in forest governance in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea

Duration Five years (2007–2011)

Project lead BirdLife International

Funded by European Union

Aim To empower and enhance the involvement of non-state actors in forest monitoring, nature conservation, and policy processes, at important forest landscapes in the region



THIS IS ARCHIVED INFORMATION

- Involving local people and community groups in decision-making processes
- Increasing knowledge and training on forest monitoring
- Establishing forest monitoring programmes, using state-of-the-art remote sensing
- Building well-informed networks of local groups and exchanging information
- Improving forest conservation and restoration, whilst improving local people's livelihoods
- Complementing governmental law enforcement efforts
- Complementing existing forest conservation and governance initiatives
- Improving the strength and appropriateness of policies and laws
- Ensuring local people and the nation are aware of, and benefit from the full value of forests (monetary, social, environmental)
- Delivering training for state and non-state actors on forest governance, management and policy
- Promoting regional cross-border cooperation and information sharing through exchange visits and a 'Forest Governance Forum'

FLEGT-VPA (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance & Trade – Voluntary Partnership Agreement) www.flegt.org
REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation & Degradation) www.unredd.net

© 1993 FALLS IN A FOREST AND NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO HEAR IT. DON'T IT MAKE A SOUND?

As the eyes and ears on the forest floor, cartographers will document forest degradation thanks to local monitoring programmes, whilst, through remote satellite analysis, RedA International and the University of Papua New Guinea will be subscribing from above the progress.





PROJECT OUTCOMES

1. **Increased capacity** of local, provincial and national non-state actors to monitor forest resource use, forest condition and forest carbon stocks
2. **Increased transparency** - access to information and accountability in relation to the conservation and management of forests, including Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)
3. **Viable, constructive, and sustainable networks of well-informed non-state actors**, including cross-border cooperation and information exchanges
4. **Informed, effective participation** of non-state actors in national and provincial forest policy processes, including FLEG-VII and REDD+

Content was developed by Kuyasa, BirdLife Japan partnership (2016) and BirdLife, based on the Timor-Leste Ministry of Natural Resources, Policy Unit and BirdLife Conservation Alliance

FORESTED LANDSCAPES IN THE PROJECT SCOPE

Implementation of the project is being carried out in seven key forested landscapes across Southeast Asia and the western Pacific. These landscapes are also recognised as KBAs. Significant human communities live within these areas and depend on resources harvested from the forests for their livelihoods.

1. Indonesia

Mobling landscape (Flores, East Nusa Tenggara)

2. Malaysia

Belum-Temengor landscape (Perak State) and other sites in the Central Forest Spine, Peninsular Malaysia, and the Heart of Borneo area (Sabah, Sarawak)

3. Papua New Guinea

Torricelli Mountain Range (Sandaun & East Sepik Provinces)

4. The Philippines

Mount Irid-Angela (Ilocos), Mount Siburan, Sablayan (Mindoro), and Mount Hiling-Hilong (Mindanao)



COUNTRIES WHERE THE PROJECT IS BEING IMPLEMENTED.
YELLOW SPOTS INDICATE THE KEY FORESTED LANDSCAPES WHERE PROJECT ACTIVITIES ARE CARRIED OUT.

CASE STUDY: MAKING THE LINK

In early 2017 in Gabaldon, the Philippines, the Harbon Foundation provided the crucial link between village leaders, other community members, forest wardens and local officials that catalysed a dialogue about mapping important habitat for nature conservation. As a result, over 8,000 hectares of forest at Mount Mangan is now one step closer to becoming a legal conservation and wildlife protection area (the area's first "Critical Habitat"), securing vital forest for the Philippine Eagle (Critically Endangered), and helping resolve illegal forest activity problems.

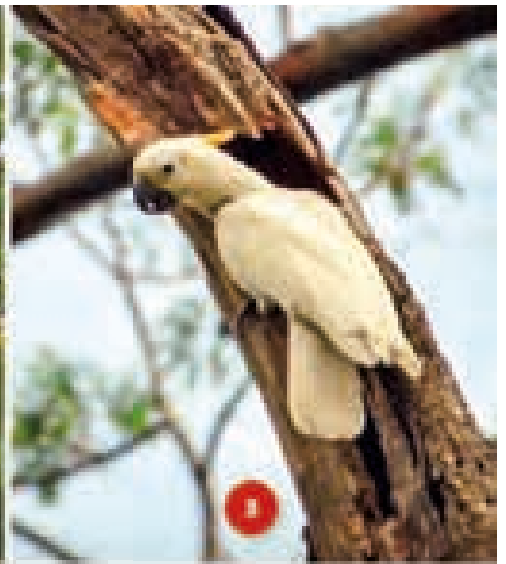
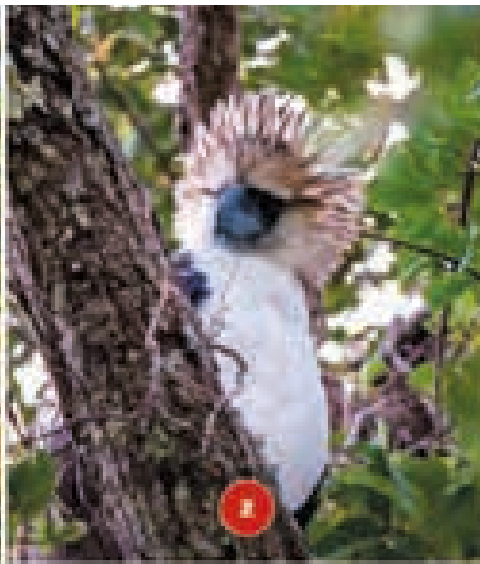
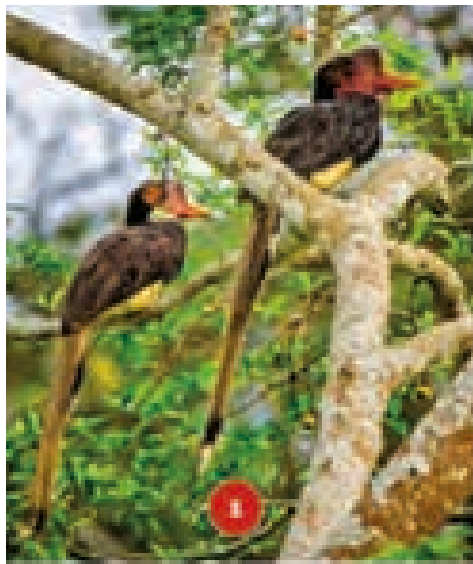
"I have never before had this kind of community dialogue where I got to understand the different programmes of our local government, and how we can take action together. Thank you for hearing us out", Dado Pagayagan, President of the Senior Citizen's Group in Barangay Ugaya.

"By protecting Mount Mangan, we are also protecting the future of Gabaldon and its people". Noel Resurreccion, Harbon Foundation Project Manager.



PROJECT MANAGEMENT





CRITICALLY ENDANGERED FOREST SPECIES THAT WILL BENEFIT

- are among many animal and plant species that will benefit from forest conservation initiatives under this project.

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The International Union

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There is a strong belief in the importance of a quantity of experience with large systems that may, possibly, be gained from a period of deployment.



Keywords: *Self-esteem, self-esteem threat, self-esteem threat sensitivity, self-esteem threat sensitivity scale, self-esteem threat sensitivity scale-2*



Business Process Management



^aTransportation-Maintenance-Construction; M&C.



Keywords: child sexual abuse; disclosure; social support

Training and Technical Assistance



University of Chicago Press, Chicago

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Living Heritage

Celebrating the natural wonders
of Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor



PUBLICATION OF THE
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PP5527/09/2012(031178)



Community eye on Malaysia's natural heritage

TEXT BY MNS CONSERVATION DIVISION

AS PART of its new forest governance project called **MY forest**, the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) in 2017 brought together a range of communities to work towards empowering Malaysians to have a greater role in protecting the country's natural heritage.

MY forest is the Malaysian implementation of a four-country project funded by the European Union and led by BirdLife International, titled "Strengthening Non-State Actor Involvement in Forest Governance in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea". The project will over five years (2017-2021) work towards giving non-state actors – non-governmental organisations, civil societies, local communities, the private sector and the public – the skills and knowledge to inform and change policies towards better management and use of Malaysia's forests.

During the official launch of MY forest on 14th December, MNS President Henry Goh called on everyone to play a part in being stewards of the country's natural heritage. He said Malaysians were aware of the issues affecting the country's green areas, such as deforestation, fragmentation of forests and destruction of wildlife habitats, which have led to a whole list of problems affecting the country and the rakyat, including floods, landslides, water supply problems and loss of wildlife species.

"We have always looked to the governing authorities to protect the country's resources, but this project seeks to change this mindset by delivering non-governmental participation in protecting the country's green spaces," he said, calling for people to come together to be part of changing the forest landscape, to maintain the country's green mountains and hills, its clean rivers, its home for tigers and elephants and tapirs.

"We want all Malaysians to be part of it, to look at our natural heritage and proclaim: MY forest, MY wildlife, MY responsibility." The launch at Vistana Kuala Lumpur was



officiated by Tan Sri Dr. Salleh Mohd Nor, a long-standing conservationist and Merdeka Award Winner for Environment, who served as MNS President and is currently the Society's Senior Advisor. Salleh is also serving as MY forest Advisor alongside renown forester Dato' Dr. Freezailah Che Yeom and Prof. Dr. Ahmad Ismail of Universiti Putra Malaysia.

MY forest was launched by Tan Sri Dr. Salleh Mohd Nor (right) who, alongside fellow Advisor Dato' Dr. Freezailah Che Yeom, placed a sticker on a spot of conservation importance within the project's target area (Credit: MNS Conservation Division)

“

We want all Malaysians to be part of it, to look at our natural heritage and proclaim: MY forest, MY wildlife, MY responsibility.

”

– HENRY GOH

The launch was followed by the National Stakeholder Committee Inception Meeting, which was attended by government agencies, non-governmental organisations, MNS State Branches and individuals interested in the project, with briefings by MY forest Project Leader Balu Perumal, who is also MNS Head of Conservation, and Dr. Hum Bahadur Gurung of BirdLife International.



The project is managed at the regional level by BirdLife International, with the implementation agencies at country level being Burung Indonesia (Indonesia), Malaysian Nature Society (Malaysia), Haribon Foundation (the Philippines) and Tenkile Conservation Alliance (Papua New Guinea).

The project is also partnered with the Centre for International Development and Training, University of Wolverhampton, for their capacity-building expertise, and University of Papua New Guinea, for mapping and GIS services.

Source: BirdLife International

The attendees were informed about the project's aims and objectives, its target areas – Central Forest Spine, Heart of Borneo and selected Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) – and its main thrust, which is building the capacity of non-state actors from all around the country to engage more effectively with the government in protecting Malaysia's forests.

The participation of these National Stakeholder, with their range of existing projects within these target areas and engagement with local communities, will ensure the success of MY forest within the project period and as a long-term programme to monitor problems plaguing Malaysia's verdant green areas.

MY forest's factsheet puts forward that national as well as state governments have implemented measures to stem forest loss, including such initiatives as Central Forest Spine, Heart of Borneo, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) and the still-elusive Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT-VPA). Nevertheless, weak governance may sound the death knell for these green spaces, unless non-state actors can play a larger part in forest governance.

Realising that these critical stakeholders are constrained by a lack of technical knowledge, experience and political influence, MY forest aims to equip them with the necessary technical knowledge, platforms and skills to establish forest monitoring programmes and have a stronger voice in forest management advocacy.

Its objectives are:

- To build the capacity of national, provincial and local non-state actors to monitor the use of forest resources, forest conditions and its carbon stocks;
- To engage effectively with local authorities and national decision-makers;
- To participate in forest management and land use planning processes;
- To inform and influence forest policy processes;
- To increase transparency, access to information and accountability in forest management and conservation; and
- To create viable, constructive and sustainable networks of well-informed non-state actors.



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MY forest Stakeholders

Department of Wildlife and
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Malaysian Timber Industry Board

Environmental Protection Society
Malaysia

Tropical Forest Trust

Ecocentric Transitions

Pulau Banding Foundation

Ecoknights

Global Environment Centre

Treat Every Environment Special

Tropical Rainforest Conservation &
Research Centre

WWF-Malaysia

Sabah Wetlands Conservation
Society

Camp Borneo

Centre for Environment, Technology
& Development, Malaysia

Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia

Institut Rimbawan Malaysia

PACOS Trust

Malaysian Environmental NGOs

MNS Branches: Langkawi, Kedah,
Penang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri
Sembilan/Melaka, Johor, Pahang,
Terengganu, Kelantan, Kuching, Miri,
Sabah and Sandakan



The launch of MY forest was followed by the first meeting of the project's National Stakeholder Committee, made up of government agencies, NGOs, civil society organisations and interested parties (Credit: MNS Conservation Division & Rosli Omar)





Catching up with the Orang Asal

EARLIER IN August, MY forest supported a national-level seminar in conjunction with the three-day World's Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebrations to mark the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), held in Keningau, Sabah.

Titled "A Decade of UNDRIP in Malaysia; Perspectives, Experiences and Hopes of the Indigenous Peoples of Malaysia", it was attended by some 350 members of indigenous communities around Malaysia, including members from MY forest's target area of Belum-Temengor.

The seminar aimed to broadly assess the effects and changes that have happened since the adoption of UNDRIP. Events on the day comprised a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Colin Nicholas, coordinator of the Center for Orang Asli Concerns, with speakers from PACOS Trust, Malaysian Bar Council, Malaysian Human Rights Commission and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact; Q&A session; and workshop.

Seminar objectives:

- To evaluate the implementation of UNDRIP

on the ground (at the community level), in courts and jurisprudence, as well as at the national, regional and international levels;

- To share experiences and lessons on engagement, and use of UNDRIP; and
- To discuss further strategies in strengthening indigenous rights advocacy, and the implementation of UNDRIP nationwide.

It was noted in the closing speech by Thomas Jalong, Secretary-General of Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia (JOAS), the local authority for indigenous peoples of Malaysia, that the workshops provided the opportunity for learning, sharing, reflection and strengthening solidarity among participants from all three regions (Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak).

It also helped spark curiosity about UNDRIP among those initially unaware of the UN declaration, while he also noted that the outcome of the workshops also seemed to be a revival of the spirit for older activists, and saw young members of indigenous communities taking the lead as facilitators and group leaders. – *With Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia*



The seminar within the World's Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebrations brought into the MY forest fold indigenous communities who could be a strong player in keeping a watch on Malaysia's forest spaces
(Credit: Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia)



Central Forest Spine Roundtable

AT THE end of November, the spotlight was shone on the Central Forest Spine (CFS), with NGOs and civil society organisations sitting down to work on protecting Peninsular Malaysia's green backbone.

Organised by Treat Every Environment Special Sdn Bhd (TrEES) and supported by MY forest, the roundtable session was a platform to share information and brainstorm ways to work with the government on the implementation of the CFS Master Plan, which is the government's long-term programme to link isolated forests along the spine (see box on the next page).

In his welcoming speech, MNS President Henry Goh cited the apparent lack of progress of the 10-year-old CFS Master Plan, but said non-governmental agencies had to shoulder part of the blame. "We the civil societies have not come together as one, to highlight issues with the CFS Master Plan and utilise our vast experience to ensure that it truly protects this ecologically important area.

"This is the part you, the NGOs and MNS Branches, play," he said, adding that "by sharing your experience and successes within this area or in similar projects, we can

develop a framework that can assist the government in conserving the Central Forest Spine."

The first session was given to short introductions – on projects and areas of interest – by each of the attendees, which included the Environmental Protection Society Malaysia, Global Environment Centre, Institute of Foresters, Malaysia, The Management & Ecology of Malaysian Elephants, WWF-Malaysia, Pertubuhan Pelindung Khazanah Alam Malaysia, Regional Environmental Awareness Cameron Highlands, Traffic-Southeast Asia and Tropical Rainforest Conservation Research Centre, along with eight MNS State Branches.

This was followed by the roundtable session, where the participants laid out issues they would like to see addressed, and these points will be collated into the CFS Roundtable Statement. TrEES plans to deliver the statement to the Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment, as well as the respective Menteri Besar of the states of Kedah, Perak, Pahang, Kelantan, Terengganu, Johor, Negeri Sembilan and Selangor, whose territories are within, and affected by, the CFS.

The Central Forest Spine Roundtable involved sharing knowledge and experience towards the protection of Peninsular Malaysia's green backbone (Credit: MNS Conservation Division)



Ecological spine of Peninsular Malaysia

THE CENTRAL Forest Spine (CFS) is the green backbone of Peninsular Malaysia, running from Johor all the way to the border with our northern neighbour Thailand. It supplies its people with life-giving water, and is home to part of the amazing flora and fauna that has given Malaysia pride of place as one of the most biodiverse countries in the world.

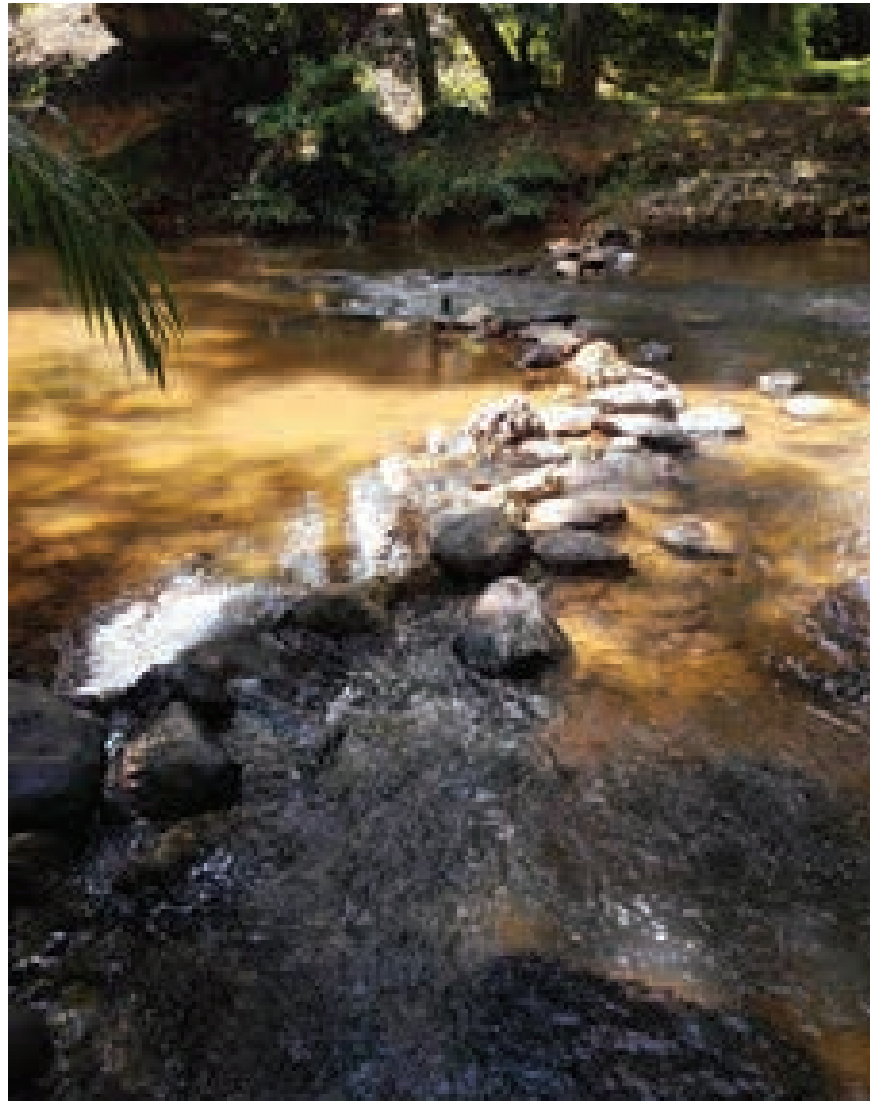
Unfortunately, over the years, this expansive stretch of forests and wetlands with a rich diversity of flora and fauna and associated ecosystems has been chipped away by land development, infrastructure provision and other economic activities. This has led to loss of forest cover, affected their ecological services and created islands of forest complexes that are isolated from each other.

The negative effect on wildlife include squeezing their habitats as well as feeding and mating ranges, partly contributing to the loss of the country's large mammals such as the Asian elephant, Malayan tapir, Sumatran rhino and Malayan tiger. Then there is human-wildlife conflict, which includes the encroachment of animals into farms, villages and more recently even in suburban areas, and the ever-increasing consequences of roadkill when these animals venture onto our highways and road system.

The CFS Master Plan is the government's initiative to link these complexes towards a physically and functionally unbroken link of forests, involving the Titiwangsa Range-Bintang Range-Nakawan Range; Taman Negara-Eastern Range; Southeast Pahang, Chini and Bera Wetlands; and Endau Rompin National Park and Kluang Wildlife Reserve.

The plan revolves around recognising the needs of both the eco-tourism and resource-based industries, which are central to the economy, and therefore balancing conservation, use of natural resources and economic activity in these areas.

According to the plan, the overriding benefit will be related to arresting the negative impacts of forest fragmentation on biodiversity, thereby helping ensure the conservation of species found in our forests, as well as to maintain the host of ecological processes taking place within it.



The importance and need of connectivity between fragmented forest complexes:

- Conservation of environment and biodiversity
- Protection and management of water catchment
- Exploitation of nature-based tourism and recreational potentials
- Integrated management of interstate forest
- Enhancement of international prestige

The issues and challenges facing the CFS:

- Reduction of forest cover
- Fragmentation of forest
- Environmental degradation to highland areas
- Damage to the water catchment and river system

The Sungai Yu recreation area in Merapoh is where conservation and eco-tourism meet, being part of the wildlife corridor between two large and isolated forests in the Central Forest Spine (Credit: MNS Conservation Division)



- Damage to potential recreation and tourism areas
 - Loss of tourism development resources and national natural heritage
 - Elimination of medical resources, education and research potential
- Made up primary and secondary linkages, these ecological corridors must provide forest cover, food, water, protection from dangers and minimal disturbance for, and be appropriate to, the species that use them.

Primary linkages are identified in areas where it is crucial to re-establish forest connectivity, inevitably located between the most important blocks of forests. Primary linkages are normally linear corridors, and cater for movement of large mammals. The complementary secondary linkages are in areas where it is unfeasible to create a primary linkage due to physical, land use, biological and socio-economic constraints such as vast areas of non-forested land or long distances between forests, or high human population and activities. Secondary linkages are usually stepping stones, and meant to be used by small animals, birds and insects. 🐾



The Central Forest Spine and the plan to link isolated forests towards a physically and functionally unbroken link of forests from Johor to the Thai border (Credit: CFS Roundtable)

MAP legend

- 1: Titiwangsa Range-Bintang Range-Nakawan Range
- 2: Taman Negara-Eastern Range
- 3: Southeast Pahang, Chini and Bera Wetlands
- 4: Endau Rompin National Park and Kluang Wildlife Reserve

CFS1: Kedah, Perak, Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang
CFS2: Johor, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan and Selangor
PL: Primary linkages
SL: Secondary linkages
FR: Forest reserve

Links

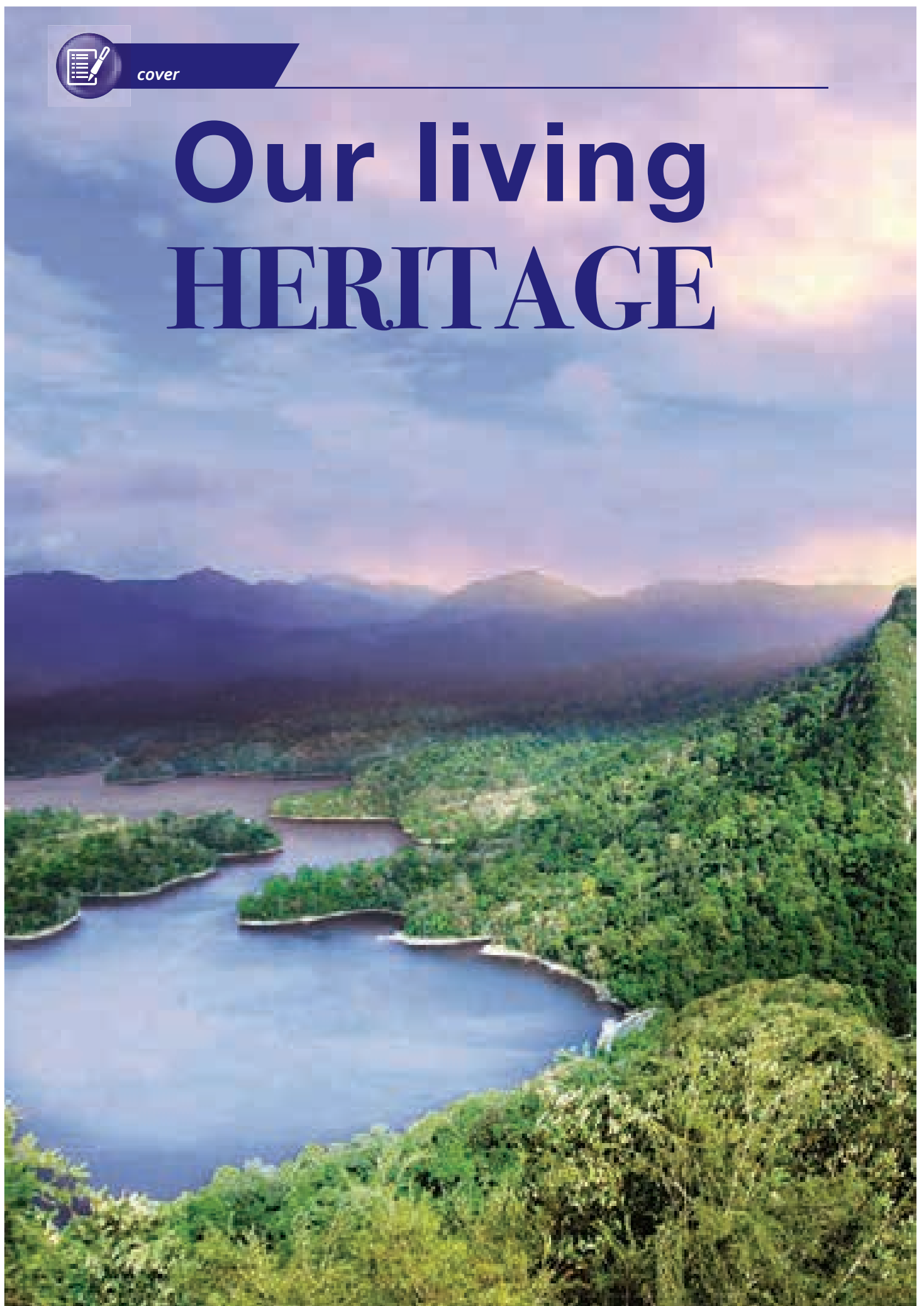
- 1 CFS1 PL1: Sungai Yu FR-Tanum FR-Taman Negara
- 2 CFS1 PL2: Belum FR-Royal Belum FR-Temenggor FR
- 3 CFS1 PL3: Lojing FR-Sungai Brok FR
- 4 CFS1 PL4: Padang Chong FR -Sg. Kuak FR - Belukar Semang FR
- 5 CFS1 PL5: Ulu Muda FR (Ulu Muda)-Gunung Inas FR (Bintang Hijau)
- 6 CFS1 PL6: Ulu Jelai FR -Hulu Lemoi FR -Bukit Bujang FR -Bukit Jerut FR
- 7 CFS1 PL7: Taman Negara-Lebir FR -Tembat FR (Greater Taman Negara)
- 8 CFS1 PL8: Kenderong FR (Bintang Hijau)-Bintang Hijau (Hulu Perak) FR-Belukar Semang FR
- 9 CFS1 PL9: Bintang Hijau Larut Matang FR-Bintang Hijau Kuala Kangsar FR
- 10 CFS1 SL1: Lebir FR-Relai FR-Ulu Temiang FR-Serasa FR-Jentiang FR-Gunung Stong FR
- 11 CFS1 SL2: Krau Wildlife Reserve-Som FR-Yong FR-Benchah FR-Kerambit FR-Gunung Benon FR
- 12 CFS1 SL3: Bintang Hijau (Hulu Perak) FR-Papulut FR-Piah FR
- 13 CFS1 SL4: Jerangau FR-Pasir Raja Barat FR-Besul Tambahan FR-Besul FR-Bukit Bauk FR
- 14 CFS1 SL5: Pak Kancil FR-Hulu Setiu FR
- 15 CFS1 SL6: Gunong Nabong FR-Chiku FR-Relai FR-Taman Negara
- 16 CFS1 SL7: Ulu Muda FR-Pedu FR-Chebar FR
- 17 CFS1 SL8: Ulu Muda FR-Rimba Teluai FR
- 18 CFS1 SL9: Jeli FR-Sungai Sator FR-Jedok FR-Sokortaku FR
- 19 CFS1 SL10: Temangan FR-Chabang Tongkat FR-Ulu Sat FR
- 20 CFS2 SL1: Lepar FR-Bekelah FR
- 21 CFS2 PL5: Ibam (Rompin) FR-Kedondong FR, Pekan FR & Nenasi FR
- 22 CFS2 PL6: Bera Ramsar Reserve-Ibam FR
- 23 CFS2 PL2: Resak FR-Lesong FR
- 24 CFS2 SL7: Angsi FR-Berembun FR
- 25 CFS2 SL4: Mersing FR-Jemaluang FR
- 26 CFS2 PL3: Panti FR-Ulu Sedili Selatan FR
- 27 CFS2 SL5: Panti FR-Kuala Sedili FR
- 28 CFS2 SL6: Setul FR-Triang FR
- 29 CFS2 PL1: Labis Timur FR-Mersing FR & Lenggor FR
- 30 CFS2 SL2: Chini FR-Lepar FR
- 31 CFS2 SL3: Raja Musa FR-Bukit Tarek FR-Bukit Gading FR
- 32 CFS2 PL4: Bukit Ibam FR-Sungai Marong FR & Lesong FR

Source: Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia



cover

Our living HERITAGE





As Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor turns 10, we look at Peninsular Malaysia's third-largest state park and its contribution to our needs, health and wellbeing

TEXT BY CHRISTA HASHIM & LEELA PANIKKAR

TAMAN WARISAN Negeri Selangor (or Selangor State Park) truly embodies our living heritage, with its rich history and heritage, both going back much further than its mere 10-year tenure as a state park. It was declared a state park in August 2005 by then Deputy Prime Minister Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak and former Selangor Chief Minister Dr. Khir Toyo, as a result of a project partnership between the community and government. On 25th January, 2007, the gazette notice was published, making the area legally a state park under the National Forestry Act, Selangor Enactment.

The third-largest park in Peninsular Malaysia, Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor has the potential to be considered one of Malaysia's National Heritage Sites. The park's importance as a water catchment area for the Klang Valley and as a hotbed of biological diversity cannot be overstated.

Despite its grand size and stature – its full size is 108,000ha, running from Hulu Bernam at the northern tip of Selangor down through Uu Gombak and into Hulu Langat – not many people have heard

of the park. If you have ever driven from Kuala Kubu Baru to the Gap, or along the Karak Highway before the Genting tunnel, or down to Semenyih dam, you would definitely have driven through parts of the park. There are also at least 15 recreational sites in and around the park, so chances are, you have visited Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor and may not have even known it.

Iconic natural heritage

In terms of natural history and heritage, the richness of Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor rivals that of parks around the world. Located in the foothills of the Titiwangsa mountain range, also known as the Main Range and part of the Central Forest Spine of Peninsular Malaysia, the park contains an array of forest types from lowland evergreen rain forest to a lower montane rain forest. Due to its size, there are many distinct, special features found in its overall landscape.

One such feature is the majestic Gombak Selangor Quartz Ridge, the iconic feature of Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor. It is believed to be the longest quartz outcrop in the world and is estimated to be



Opposite page:
The breathtaking
Selangor Gombak
Quartz Ridge, which is
being considered as a
Malaysian Heritage Site
as well as a UNESCO
Heritage Site (Credit:
Iska Hashim)

This page:
White-throated fantail,
Fraser's Hill (Credit: Rosli
Omar)



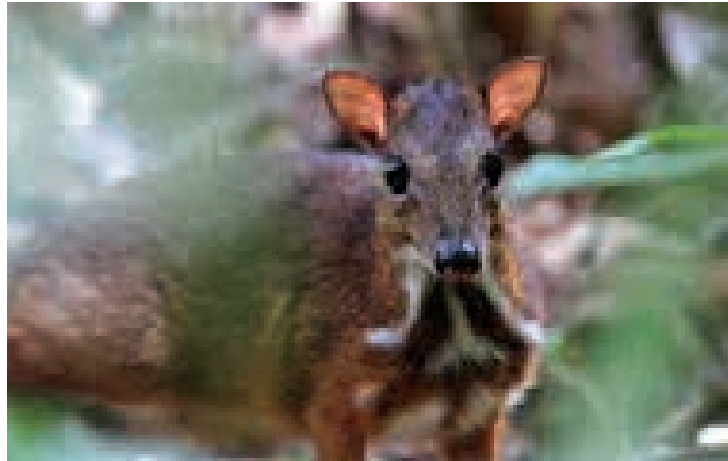
about 170 million years old. It is currently proposed for consideration as a Malaysian Heritage Site as well as a Unesco Heritage Site. The ridge has been documented as probably the most unique in Asia or even the whole world. Running for more than 14km above ground, jutting over the Gombak landscape like a sleeping dragon's back, it includes an unusual vegetation type that is adapted to the harsh, infertile conditions of the quartzite rocks and there are at least five endemic species of plants found here that occur nowhere else in the world.

Also commonly known as Bukit Tabur, it is a popular hiking trail with breathtaking views of both the forest and city. But don't be fooled by its beauty, as it is also a treacherous site and hikers have been injured or have lost their lives while traversing this geological wonder.

The ridge also acts as a natural barrier for the Klang Gates Dam and water catchment basin. The dam, completed in 1958, was built within the quartz formation at the small natural opening separating the two main stretches of the ridge.

Landscape that shaped our history

The forests of Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor are the source of three major rivers that shaped the landscape and history of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, and are the catchment forests for five of the major reservoirs in Selangor – the Sungai



The forests of Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor house impressive biological assemblages and rich natural diversity, including a range of fauna (Credit: Rosli Omar)

Selangor, Batu, Klang Gates, Langat and Semenyih dams.

The park contains some of the oldest recreational sites and forest reserves in the country. Ulu Gombak, the Ampang and Hulu Langat forest reserves are among the oldest forest reserves in the country, being gazetted in the early 1900s.

The Kanching area is one of Malaysia's oldest forest recreation areas, including the well-known Templer's Park. Sungai Tekala, another recreational site found within the park, is one of the most visited recreational forests in the country for day trips.

Along Federal Route 55, which traverses through the park, is where Sir Henry Gurney was killed by communist guerrillas in 1951. The ruins of a once-popular hill station can be found on Bukit Kutu. The area was bombed by the Japanese during World War II, and now all that remains are skeletons of the old bungalows.

Today, much of the park's borders are still semi-rural. The *kampung* (village) homes that buffer Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor express the rich culture of the people living in the area. There are also Orang Asli (indigenous people) settlements within, or along its fringes. All are settled Temuan communities that still depend a fair deal on the forests for their subsistence and income-generating needs.

Other areas, particularly in the Ampang and Gombak areas, are rapidly becoming highly urbanised. While this makes for a very interesting contrast in landscape, it also presents a growing challenge for the park's sustainable management.





Richness of biodiversity

Despite being next to the most developed region in the country, the forests of Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor still house impressive biological assemblages and rich natural diversity. The wealth of the park's biodiversity contributes to Malaysia's classification as one of the mega-biodiverse countries in the world.

There are many unique and wonderful aspects of natural history documented here, including new discoveries such as the tree species *Vatica yeechongii* occurring only along a few forest streams, and arthropod species found in bamboo internodes.

The forests of the park are especially important in providing habitat for our dwindling wildlife. Believe it or not, the forests of Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor form the habitat for the Malayan tiger, the animal that graces our national crest, as well as many other endangered and threatened species including the pangolin, serow (a type of mountain goat), tapir and our beloved *kancil* (mousedeer). The park is also home to wildlife such as bats, key pollinators and seed dispersers that are important to fruit farms located outside Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor. The park also abounds with birds and insects, and many of its recreational sites are popular birding locations.



The park's large, contiguous forests provide wildlife and bird species with a broad range and habitat, vital to their long-term conservation.

The ecological bill

If Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor could send us a bill, we would be in trouble. The ecological services it provides for free to Selangor, KL and Putrajaya should be valued in millions, maybe even billions, of ringgit. They include clean air, climate control, heat reduction and flood mitigation to the nine million residents of these cities and their booming economy. In addition, Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor protects the source of over 90% of Selangor's in-state water supply.

Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor is challenged by issues such as pollution, demand for water, disposal of rubbish, poaching and forest fragmentation, which affect its wildlife and ability to serve its ecological functions including its role as a pristine water catchment area (Malayan tiger, Credit: Omar Ariff; Sungai Selangor reservoir, Credit: TrEES)





The park also plays a critical role not only to the nation's eco-tourism industry, with over one million visitors enjoying the recreational sites, but also to the people's overall well-being, delivering stress relief only nature can provide. The entire park is not more than a two-hour drive from KL. Some sites, such as Templer's Park, are only half-an-hour from the centre of KL.

This close proximity to the nation's capital also places tremendous pressure on the park. The conservation and sustainable management of Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor is often challenged by issues such as pollution, demand for water, disposal of rubbish, poaching and forest fragmentation.

These issues impede on wildlife health and movement and the ability of the park to serve its ecological functions including its role as a pristine water catchment area.

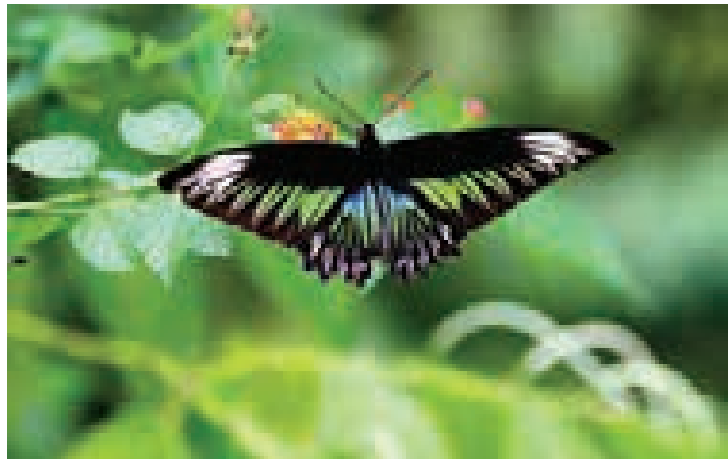
Our park, our responsibility

Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor is part of our living heritage. Its establishment was the result of a passionate community effort. Driving the endeavour was the Selangor State Government working in partnership with Treat Every Environment Special (TrEES), a local environment NGO, to undertake the "Project Towards the Establishment of the Selangor State Park" back in 2003, which ultimately led to the Park's declaration in 2005 and gazettment in 2007.

While these two groups were the main catalysts, it was truly a community effort, with other NGOs like the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) and WWF-Malaysia, resident groups, and nature lovers all working together to make Taman Warisan Negeri Selangor a reality.

While we celebrate the park's 10-year anniversary and continue to enjoy all that it offers, we call upon the people to take a more active role in the park's conservation and protection. 🦋

Christa Hashim & Leela Panikkar are co-founders of TrEES.



COUNTING ON THE BIRDS

MALAYSIAN

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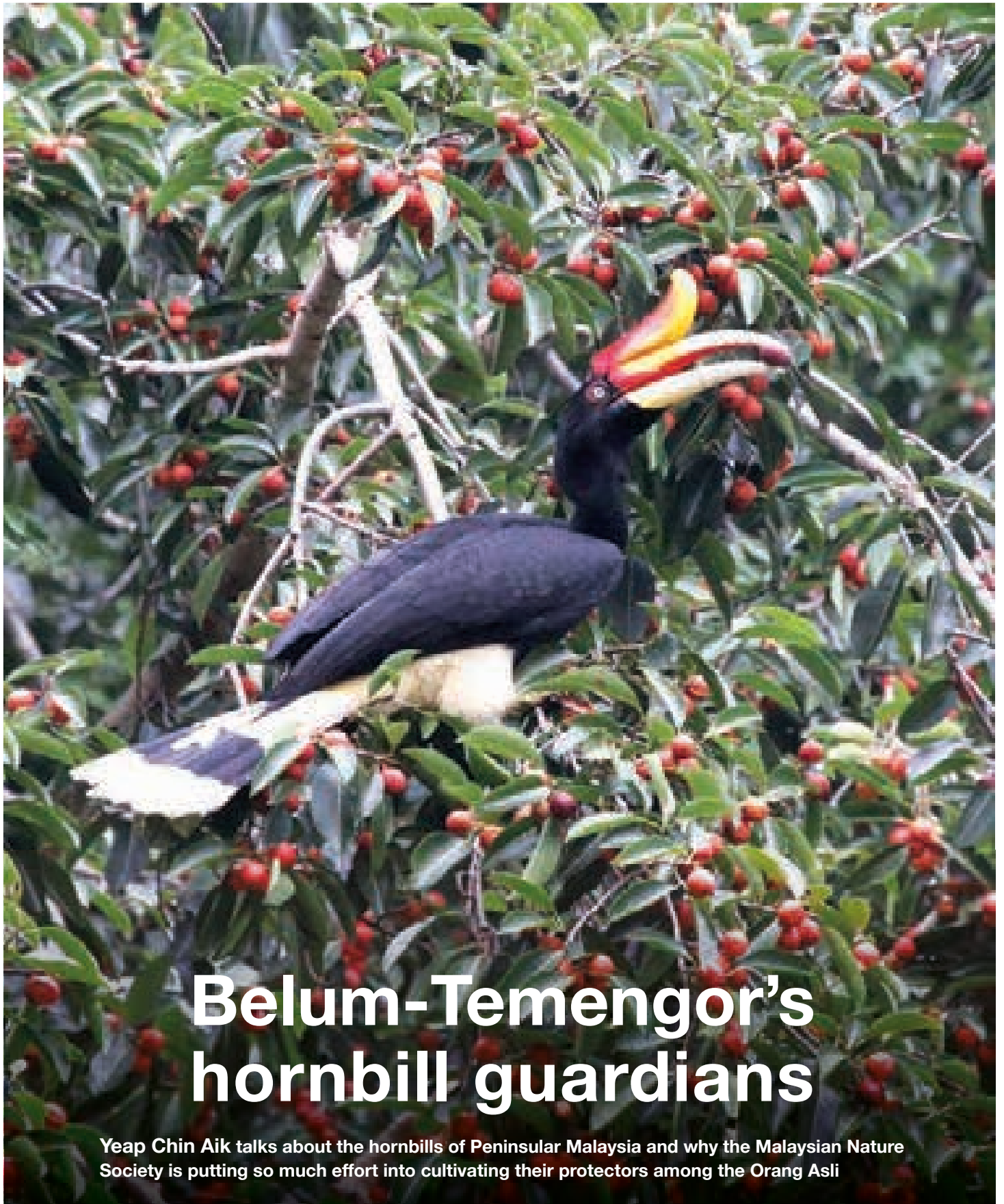


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Belum-Temengor's hornbill guardians

Yeap Chin Aik talks about the hornbills of Peninsular Malaysia and why the Malaysian Nature Society is putting so much effort into cultivating their protectors among the Orang Asli



THERE IS A juvenile hornbill chain going, following their dad as they travel from feeding to roosting site. Casques are dipping to and fro, wings are flapping and there are various hornbill sounds coming from young throats. And a lot of laughter in this clearing within the lush forest of Belum-Temengor.

Yes, laughter, because these are not real hornbills but young Orang Asli (indigenous) children donning hornbill head gear and pretending to be some of the majestic birds that can be found in their home ground within the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex (BTFC). It's fun and games for some, but it's also part of awareness and education outreach that hopes to teach youngsters about protecting their forests, wildlife and natural heritage through play.

On a wider perspective, the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) aims to spread knowledge about the hornbills, their importance to forests and the necessary steps towards their protection. These "farmers of the forest" play an important role in tropical forest ecosystems as seed dispersers. It has been estimated that a hornbill can "plant" 14,600 trees in its lifetime, which helps forests prosper and also assist in regenerating degraded forests.

Within this objective, the Society aims to develop and nurture Orang Asli Hornbill Guardians in Belum-Temengor, first among the adults and then trickling down to the younger generation. Part of this initiative was generating awareness among the Orang Asli villages in Belum-Temengor, with the first efforts culminating in the event at Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Tiang in the Royal Belum

State Park on 20-22 December 2017. Co-organised with WWF-Malaysia, the event was themed environmental education for indigenous communities, with a focus on knowledge sharing on wildlife conservation efforts in this protected area.

Some 300 Orang Asli villagers, young and old, from Kampung Sungai Tiang and Sungai Kejar attended the event, which featured presentations from MNS and WWF-Malaysia, a mini exhibition and adult classes on craft-making, cooking and baking. The children, meanwhile, took part in colouring activities and games.

All for the sake of fostering a sense of wonder and appreciation for the 10 species of hornbill that make their home in BTFC, which is in the northeastern part of Perak just south of the Thai border and is one of the last wild frontiers in Peninsular Malaysia.

Hornbills all in a row; the Orang Asli community learning and playing at the awareness event at SK Sungai Tiang (Credit: Images by Yeap Chin Aik)





On the trail

Hornbills and MNS share a long history together. In the 1990s, the Society organised two scientific expeditions into BTFC, where participants observed and documented all hornbill species, including plain-pouched hornbills – a first for Malaysia. Even more astounding, more than 2,000 of the plain-pouched hornbills were recorded flying to an unknown location(s) on single evenings.

In 2003, the author and Glenda Noramly, representing MNS, participated in another BTFC expedition led by the Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia. Amazingly, large flocks of plain-pouched hornbills were seen still using their familiar flight paths in this forest landscape, indicating that this phenomenon occurs annually. Following our return from the expedition, plans were drawn up by MNS to secure funds and establish the MNS Hornbill Conservation Project (MNS HCP) in Belum-Temengor.

The choice to invest in hornbill conservation was timely for the following reasons:

- Not much was known about their biology, ecology, populations and/or conservation needs in their natural forest habitats;
- There were no long-term hornbill field studies in Malaysia to address the knowledge gaps;
- Government wildlife/forestry agencies were not actively investing in hornbill conservation in Peninsular Malaysia, thus hornbills were not given adequate conservation attention or resources compared to charismatic mammals;
- This would be a clear demonstration of MNS's long-term commitment to the conservation of BTFC, one of the two sites in Malaysia that supports all 10 hornbill species in a single location; and
- To promote hornbills as one of the flagship species for tropical forest conservation in Malaysia.

The MNS HCP was established in 2004, with the aim of conserving hornbills of BTFC in their natural habitat. The scope includes primarily basic research and survey/monitoring, together with capacity-building and communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) activities.

Engaging people is central to conservation projects. Similarly, the MNS HCP has conducted workshops in basic hornbill conservation techniques and short seminars for government wildlife/forestry/protected area agencies to inform them about the project's findings and also share the importance of hornbills to forests and how to conserve them.

The MNS HCP also invests in education through its extensive national MNS Kelab Pencinta Alam (School Nature Club) network. To date, the project has reached out to more than 1,700 students, student facilitators and educators from 130 schools nationwide.

Great hornbills
(*Buceros bicornis*)
of Belum-Temengor





Sadly, hornbills are not currently in mainstream conservation efforts in Malaysia compared to other charismatic fauna such as the Malayan tiger, orangutan and Asian elephant. National policies do acknowledge hornbills in general, but no resources are specifically allocated for hornbill conservation, except possibly for Sarawak.

To advance hornbill conservation, it is vital to engage in hornbill advocacy consistently to ensure these birds are accorded due policy recognition and resources. In Peninsular Malaysia, MNS is currently one of the key NGO stakeholders in several national level project committees related to the Central Forest Spine (CFS) and protected areas.

The CFS concept is akin to the Heart of Borneo (HoB) concept, whereby maintaining ecological connectivity and integrity of protected areas and forest reserves are considered crucial in preventing species extinction and decline. The remaining hornbill populations in Peninsular Malaysia depend almost entirely on the CFS remaining intact.

And with the awareness and education outreach activities such as that carried out at Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Tiang, it is hoped that the Orang Asli could act as the eyes and ears to better protect Belum-Temengor and its wildlife.

Yeap Chin Aik is Senior Conservation Officer/Project Manager for the MNS Conservation Division, and currently Forest Officer for the MY forest project. He is also pursuing his PhD in the Faculty of Forestry, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

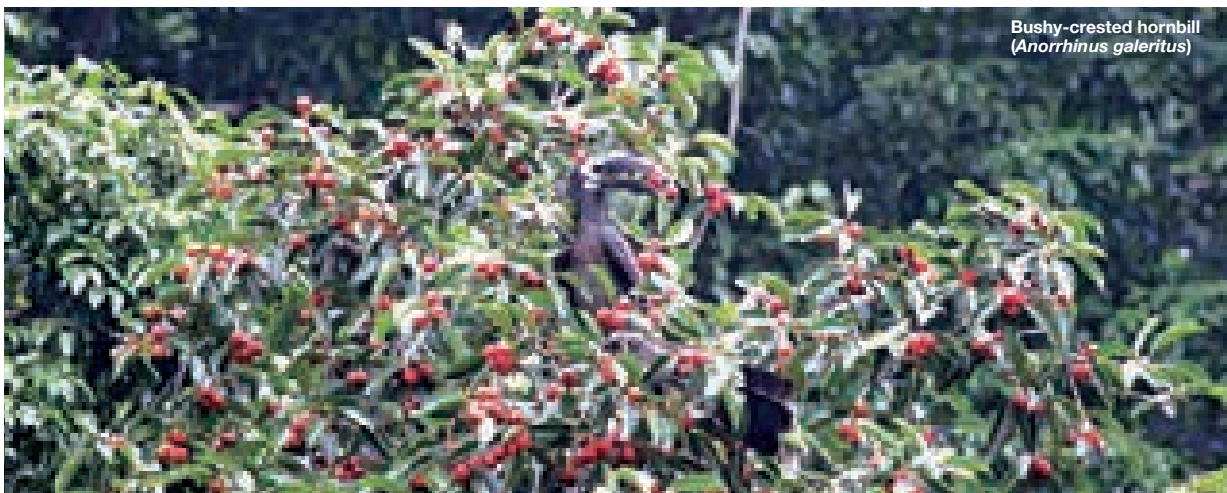
Hornbill successes

The MNS Hornbill Conservation Project has achieved incremental milestones since its inception in 2004, despite constant challenges in maintaining a field-based conservation project:

- Established the hornbills' breeding/non-breeding periods in Belum-Temengor Forest Complex.
- Located more than 80 nests of eight hornbill species (out of 10) in the forest landscape. The most common are the oriental pied, bushy-crested and rhinoceros hornbills.
- Identified at least eight tree species used as nest trees: *Koompassia malaccensis*, *K. excelsa*, *Intsia palembanica*, *Hopea odorata*, *Shorea* spp., *Dysoxylum grande*, *Tetrameles nudiflora* and *Terminalia bellirica* from five families (Dipterocarpaceae, Leguminosae, Meliaceae, Tetramelaceae and Combretaceae). All nest trees discovered measure at least 250cm in girth at breast height (GBH).
- Developed the innovative HB-IRD (Hornbill Breeding Improved Recording Device) with a technology company to remotely monitor active breeding hornbills at their nest tree. This is a first for hornbill conservation in Malaysia, and possibly for forest monitoring of hornbills in Asia.

Findings for plain-pouched hornbills include:

- The species visiting BTFC annually in varying population numbers based on monitoring efforts at Kampung Tebang, Temengor Forest Reserve. The visitation patterns seem to alternate between high and low throughout the years.
- The highest count ever recorded in a single session was some 3,200 individuals in 2008.
- Documented feeding on emerging mayflies (belonging to the order Ephemeroptera) on several occasions in Kampung Tebang during dawn, possibly a new feeding behaviour. [Note: this behaviour was not seen after the Pos Chiong bay became silted.]
- Noted using several types of trees to rest, prior to and after emerging from their night roost(s).
- Suspected of roosting south of Temengor. However, it was discovered in 2010 that they could also be roosting in the upper reaches of Sungai Temin (Royal Belum State Park).
- Noted to feed on several kinds of fruits including strangling figs (*Ficus* spp.).



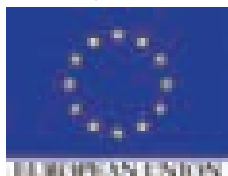
Bushy-crested hornbill
(*Anorrhinus galeritus*)



A family of plain-pouched hornbills
(*Rhyticeros subruficollis*)



Funded by:

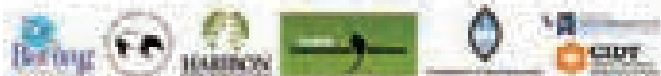


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MY Forest Watch

The Belum-Temengor Forest Complex and its hornbills are a major part of the Malaysian Nature Society's new project titled "Strengthening Non-State Actor Involvement in Forest Governance in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea".

The project will over five years (2017-2021) work towards giving non-state actors the skills and knowledge to inform and change policies towards better management and use of Malaysia's forests. This involves conducting capacity building, training and awareness activities among non-governmental organisations, civil societies, local communities including the Orang Asli, the private sector and the public.

MY forest has identified three areas as its target implementation, namely selected Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs), the Heart of Borneo initiative and Peninsular Malaysia's Central Forest Spine, the last of which encompasses BTFC. MY forest is funded by the European Union and led at the regional level by BirdLife International.



Hornbills of Peninsular Malaysia

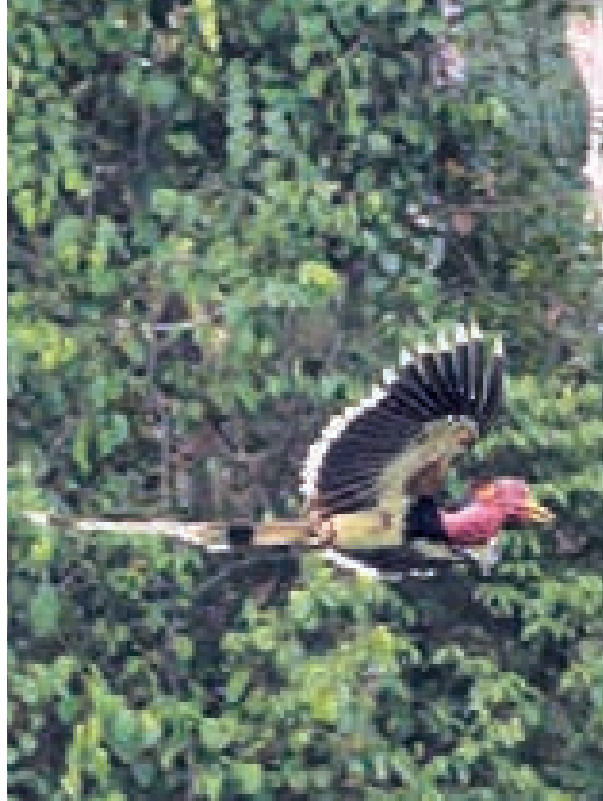
Mention hornbills and most Malaysians would think of ceremonial feathers, red, yellow and black beads and the tag “Bumi Kenyalang”. That’s the power of branding, with the East Malaysian state of Sarawak (its flag is red, yellow and black) recognised as Land of the Hornbills. The rhinoceros hornbill also takes pride of place on the state’s coat of arms, while the bird is deeply embedded in the cultures of her indigenous peoples, especially the Dayak, whose ceremonial costumes and ornaments strongly feature feathers of both the rhinoceros and helmeted hornbill.

And when you say the words hornbills and Peninsular Malaysia, you might, half of the time, get a puzzled look, showing that many people are unaware of these continental hornbills. Much less that there are 10 species that call the peninsula home, two more than those found in Borneo:

- Rhinoceros hornbill (*Buceros rhinoceros*)
- Helmeted hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*)
- Oriental pied hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*)
- Black hornbill (*Anthracoceros malayanus*)
- White-crowned hornbill (*Berenicornis comatus*)
- Bushy-crested hornbill (*Anorrhinus galeritus*)
- Wreathed hornbill (*Rhyticeros undulatus*)
- Wrinkled hornbill (*Rhyticeros corrugatus*)
- Great hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*)*
- Plain-pouched hornbill (*Rhyticeros subruficollis*)*

*not found on Borneo

There are 57 species of hornbills identified globally, with 25 found on the African continent and 32 distributed across 19 Asian countries. Peninsular Malaysia’s 10 marks the second highest diversity in the region, tied with Myanmar and the Philippines,



Helmeted hornbill
(*Rhinoplax vigil*)

and below only Thailand and Indonesia with 13 species each.

Hornbills in Malaysia are found in a variety of habitats, ranging from coastal mangroves to the hill/submontane forests. The most common and adaptable species, the oriental pied hornbill, can be encountered not only in mangrove and lowland forests, but also in agricultural land and orchards.

Other species, such as black, white-crowned, bushy-crested, great, rhinoceros and helmeted hornbills, are more selective and sensitive, requiring more intact, closed-canopy forests usually found in protected areas and forest reserves in Malaysia.

Nearly half of Asia’s hornbills are threatened with extinction, with declining populations owing to habitat loss and degradation, poaching and hunting. The helmeted hornbill, one of the most enigmatic species in this region, had its IUCN Red List of Threatened Species status upgraded in 2015 from Near Threatened to Critically Endangered, owing to intense poaching pressure in Indonesia for its casque.

Hornbills in Malaysia face similar, though less severe, perils, with habitat loss and degradation being the primary threats across the country. In East Malaysia, the situation is compounded with the threat of poaching/hunting, as hornbills are totally protected in Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak under the respective wildlife laws, but permitted to be hunted under strict conditions in Sabah. 🦜🦜

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BELUM RAINFOREST SUMMIT 2018

Belum Rainforest Summit 2018 (BRainS 2018) will be back for its second edition from 7-9 May 2018 at the beautiful Belum Rainforest Resort on Pulau Banding Perak, Malaysia.

Join us for three days in the 130 million year old Belum-Temengor Rainforest Complex as we share our knowledge and foster collaboration on how best to conserve our tropical rainforest biodiversity. We welcome students or anyone working in conservation, sustainable forestry and government policy.

BRainS 2018 is organised in conjunction with the 10th year anniversary of the Pulau Banding Foundation (PBF). The Summit is organised by PBF in collaboration with the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), Perak State Government, Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) and World Wildlife Fund Malaysia (WWF-Malaysia).

Themes of BRainS 2018



PARTICIPANT	EARLY BIRD (6 March - 1 May 2018)		REGULAR RATE (2 March - 9 May 2018)	
	FOREIGN	LOCAL	FOREIGN	LOCAL
President	-	-	-	-
General	USD 300	RM 400	USD 350	RM 450
Student	USD 100	RM 100	USD 150	RM 150

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Networking to protect urban community forests

TEXT AND IMAGES BY MNS CONSERVATION DIVISION

BELIEVING THAT communities are the best protectors of their green surroundings, especially in urban areas, the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) has put this to the test over its long history as the country's oldest environmental NGO.

And the results are encouraging, with efforts over the years including the protection of Templer's Park, Kota Damansara Community Forest, Bukit Kiara, Bukit Gasing and Batu Caves. Within urban areas outside of the Klang Valley, MNS has worked on the Penang National Park, Kuala Selangor Nature Park and Piasau in Miri, among others.

Current ongoing projects include the Society's support for Taman Tugu and its setting up of the Urban Community Forest Bukit Persekutuan, both in the heart of Kuala Lumpur and whose presence can only be beneficial for the wellbeing of its residents and visitors.

Now MNS is taking the urban forest and community link beyond its borders, with the Urban Community Forest (UCF) Network, a platform to share knowledge, information, experience and skills in protecting and managing remnant or regenerating forests within urban spaces around the world.

The aspiration, says its key man Sonny Wong, MNS Wetlands and Marine Conservation Manager, is to bring together non-state actors – NGOs, civil society organisations, local communities, the public and the corporate sector – both among those already successful in protecting and managing urban forests and those seeking inspiration to start.

"We believe and we have seen that non-state actors are key to protecting and managing these remnant forests, and their experience and skills could benefit other groups and organisations who are interested in creating their own Urban Community



(L-R) Calvin Raqem Jacob, TPr. Ishak Ariffin, Tan Sri Dr. Salleh Mohd Nor, Henry Goh, Ar. John Koh and Dr. Hum Bahadur Gurung at the Urban Community Forest Networking Session in February

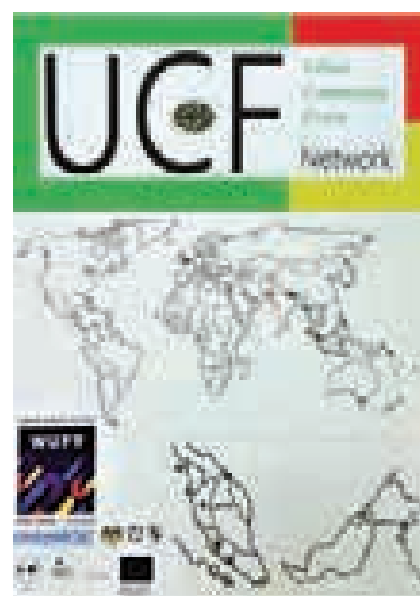
Forest programmes,” Wong said in the run up to the announcement of the UCF Network at the ninth edition of the World Urban Forum (WUF) held here in Kuala Lumpur in February.

During WUF 2018, MNS conducted a networking session titled “Role of non-state actors in the protection of urban green environment – Case study: Malaysia”, presenting views from six proponents of forest spaces in urban areas for the wellbeing of the people.

UCF Networking Session Speakers

- Henry Goh, MNS President
Topic: MNS involvement in promoting and establishing Urban Community Forests
- Ar. John Koh, MNS Board of Trustees Chairman
Topic: Blending hard and soft landscapes within an urban setting; human landscapes
- Tan Sri Dr. Salleh Mohd Nor, former MNS President, current MNS Senior Advisor, Merdeka Award Winner for Environment
Topic: Conserving the last forest patches within the urban landscape
- TPr. Ishak Ariffin, Malaysian Institute of Planners
Topic: Planning for the urban green environment and mainstreaming biodiversity
- Calvin Raqem Jacob, Khazanah Nasional Bhd, Taman Tugu Project Director
Topic: Taman Tugu & National Heritage Bill; private-sector funding
- Dr. Hum Bahadur Gurung, BirdLife International
Topic: Environmental education and community outreach centres

UCF Network



bukitpersekutuan.wordpress.com

UCFnetwork2018@gmail.com

This seminar was supported by the project Strengthening Non-State Actor Involvement in Forest Governance in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea



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Heritage, health and hope

The Malaysian Nature Society's proposal to create the Urban Community Forest (UCF) Network is based on its commitment towards protecting the architectural and natural heritage of Bukit Persekutuan, where its headquarters is based, says Ar. John Koh, the MNS Board of Trustees Chairman.

Speaking to the Malaysian Naturalist after the Networking Session at WUF 2018, Koh says MNS's location within building JKR641 on Jalan Kelantan, itself a Federal Hill heritage landmark, led to the Society's commitment towards its surroundings.

"Ten years or so ago, I mooted the idea that MNS should work with other interest groups interested in saving Federal Hill," which resulted in Badan Warisan Negara sitting down with MNS on this initiative, he says. And despite a failed bid to get the Museum of Natural History to be set up in the area (it is now in Putrajaya), he hopes there will still be opportunities to boost architectural restorations and natural heritage protection for the area.

Bukit Persekutuan is one of the last remaining green lungs in Kuala Lumpur, and the only low-rise forested areas in the highly developed Bangsar-KL Sentral-Damansara triangle. It is a historical site dating back to the formation of the Federated Malay States, with representation of eight states in the road names and its build up in the



British Colonial era. The buildings were erected from early in the 1900s, and used as government offices and residences for British officers. JKR641 itself once housed the National Science Centre and was marked in area maps as far back as the 1920s, while prominent buildings are the Galeria Sri Perdana on Jalan Terengganu, the former residence of the Prime Minister now run as a museum, and the palaces of the states of Kedah, Perak and Negeri Sembilan.

UCF Bukit Persekutuan is an initiative to empower local communities to protect their green spaces, and is a novel endeavour for the city centre, offering city dwellers a place to appreciate nature, in doing so improve their well-being. The initiative now



boasts new forest trails, a nursery focusing on forest trees to assist in replanting efforts across the country and a resource centre for the use of the community.

Things to see and enjoy within this 74.4ha of regenerated forests include an impressive range of flora and fauna within such a small area, as found by a survey in 2007. They include bats, six species of amphibians, 65 types of birds, 39 types of butterflies and moths, and two types of fireflies.

Koh says MNS has become the custodian of these treasures, and seeks to boost the participation of a wide range of people in its protection. This includes local communities, young children and uniformed groups as well as MNS members, volunteers and corporate sector supporters, coming together for recreational and CSR activities at UCF Bukit Persekutuan, such as tree-planting and nature walks.

His hopes also go far beyond this, with ambitions for green connectors linking UCF Bukit Persekutuan to the Perdana Botanical Gardens, Taman Tugu and Carcosa Seri Negara to create an extensive green network and flyway. Koh is also proposing JKR641 to be upgraded into Rumah Tapir, a central meeting point that is welcoming to MNS members, local communities, resident associations and anyone keen on promoting and living a green life.

To some, Kuala Lumpur may seem to still be verdant, but its green lungs currently stand at a depressing 6.2% of the total land area of the city (demarcated as “open space”,



and not necessarily forest cover, as noted in the KL Structure Plan). This, MNS believes, is not enough to ensure the health and wellbeing of those who live in, and breathe the air of, Kuala Lumpur.

MNS wants to impel a change in people's mindset about cherishing urban forests to make a city truly liveable and healthy. “If we want to be a developed nation, it's not about high income. It's the ability to inculcate environmental values that raises us beyond merely ‘making a living’,” Koh says.

Right:
Ar. John Koh is leading the way in protecting Bukit Persekutuan, one of the last remaining green lungs of Kuala Lumpur

Left:
UCF Bukit Persekutuan is an initiative featuring forest trails, nursery and resource centre, which offer city dwellers a place to appreciate nature, in doing so improve their wellbeing

Below:
Koh's vision for Rumah Tapir, the central point for UCF Bukit Persekutuan



WUF9: A meeting of minds

AT THE conclusion of the ninth edition of the World Urban Forum (WUF9), the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Cities 2030 was issued. It said the participants – representing national, subnational and local governments, parliamentarians, civil society, older persons, women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, grassroots groups, indigenous peoples and local communities, private sector, foundations and philanthropies, international and regional organisations, academia, professionals and other relevant stakeholders – had gathered to localise and scale up the implementation of the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sharing their aspirations for the cities for all, where no-one and no place is left behind, they called for all efforts, means and resources to be deployed to ensure that “all inhabitants, of present and future generations, without discrimination of any kind, are able to inhabit and produce just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements to foster prosperity and quality of life for all”.

The framework of the New Urban Agenda include:

- Strengthening the role of subnational and local governments, urban governance systems that ensure continuous dialogue among different levels of government and participation of all actors, and increasing multilevel and cross-sectoral coordination, transparency and accountability;
- Encouraging sharing of creative solutions and innovative practices which enable a shift in mindset necessary to drive change;
- Building inclusive partnerships and strengthening age and gender responsive environments to ensure meaningful participation and engagement at all levels;
- Adopting integrated territorial development, including through appropriate urban planning and design instruments, to ensure sustainable management and use of natural resources and land, appropriate compactness and density, diversity of uses, and revitalisation of cultural heritage; and
- Deploying monitoring and reporting

mechanisms, including assessment of impacts, that encourage best practices for effective policy making.

The declaration also drew attention to the persistent challenges faced by cities and human settlements, such as:

- Limited opportunities and mechanisms for youth, women and grassroots organisations, as well as other civil society organisations, local, subnational and national governments, international and regional bodies to work together in planning, implementation and monitoring;
- Inequitable access to the city, including to decent jobs, public space, affordable and adequate housing and security of land tenure, safe, efficient and accessible public transport and mobility systems, infrastructure and other basic services and goods that cities offer;
- Insufficient protection from human rights violations, including forced evictions and inadequate inclusion of people living in poverty, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups in urban planning, design, and legislation processes; and
- Gender inequalities in urban economic and leaderships spheres.

They stated that emerging challenges required urgent actions, such as acknowledging that crises are increasingly urban and require inclusive urbanisation tools adapted to local contexts and to the nature of natural and human made disasters and conflicts; managing the complexities of increased migration into cities; understanding the impact of new technologies and potential of open and accessible data; addressing inequalities; and responding to environmental degradation and climate change concerns.

Actionable recommendations – Frameworks:

- Encourage the formulation of implementation frameworks for the New Urban Agenda at all levels, aligning to the efforts and actions of the 2030 Agenda and other international, regional, national, subnational and local development frameworks.
- Support the creation and consolidation of inclusive platforms and agendas for dialogue among all levels of government,

decision makers and stakeholders that can strengthen policy review and assessment of impacts.

- Further develop and advocate for integrated territorial development; integration among the different spheres of government; spatial integration across the urban-rural continuum; improved coordination across actors; and enhanced alignment of national, subnational and local policies with international agendas.
- Adapt innovative and robust mechanisms for the diversification and expansion of the means of implementation, to cater for complex and integrated approaches promoted by the New Urban Agenda.

Actionable recommendations – Governance and partnerships

- Adopt multiple collaborative governance mechanisms that actively engage national, subnational and local governments, all groups of society, including youth, women and grassroots organisations and particularly the excluded, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
- Promote multi-stakeholder constituency-based coalitions to use the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to better prevent, prepare and respond to urban crises.

Actionable recommendations – Innovative solutions

- Foster a culture of creativity and innovation to be embedded in the way cities and human settlements operate.
- Develop monitoring and data collection mechanisms, including community generated data, to enhance availability of information and disaggregated and comparable data at city, functional urban areas and community levels. This would promote informed and evidence-based decision making and policy formulation, assessing progress and impact at all levels.
- Create an enabling environment and develop capacities for scaling up of good practices including municipal finance, sustainable private and public investments in urban development and job creation, and generating value while advancing the public good.
- Adopt accessibility and universal design as core principles into national, subnational and local action plans for implementing the New Urban Agenda through inclusive, accessible and participatory processes and consultations. 🦿🦿



The World Urban Forum (WUF), organised by UN-Habitat, is the world's premier conference on urban issues. It was established in 2001 by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: rapid urbanisation and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies. Malaysia was the host country for WUF9, which was held from 7-13 February 2018 at the KL Convention Centre. For more information, visit www.wuf9.org

MALAYSIA FOREST WATCH

An eye to our green spaces, resources and habitats

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STRENGTHENING NON-STATE ACTOR INVOLVEMENT IN FOREST GOVERNANCE

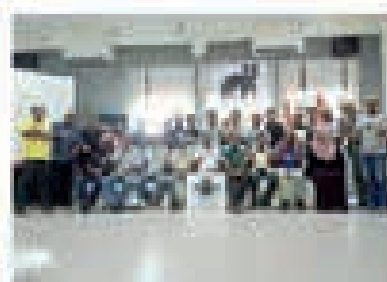
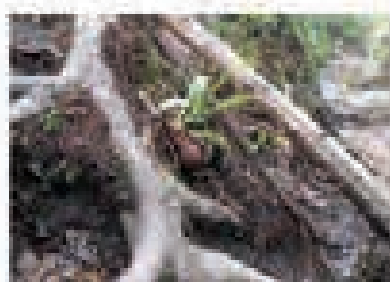
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The project addresses the constraints that may be faced by governments in handling illegal and unsustainable logging, and over the years seeks to build the capacity of non-state actors, which include local communities, civil society organisations, indigenous peoples, the public and the private sector, to engage more effectively with the government in promoting good forest governance.

The project is funded by the European Union and led by Earthlife International. The Malaysian Forest Watch is the implementing agency for Malaysia.

MY forest, MY wildlife, MY responsibility



THREATS TO MARINE TREASURES

MALAYSIAN

Naturalist

RM12 VOLUME 71-4 JUNE-AUGUST 2018



PUBLICATION OF THE
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PP5527/09/2012(031178)



The essence of water

TEXT AND IMAGES BY EZANOR M. K. FOR MNS CONSERVATION DIVISION

IN AREAS OF the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex covered by water, it's easy to marvel at the abundance of this liquid on which we count for our very existence. The lake complex is vast, the valleys that used to be home to flora and fauna now underwater go down hundreds of metres. Surely there's plenty of water for everyone, for a long time to come?

Scientists, researchers and resources experts may tell you otherwise. Already, there is a clamour that humankind have mined the Earth's resources to unsustainable proportions, and this includes the lack of clean, drinkable water. Just this year, Cape Town faced the direst of water warnings among major cities, bringing activity, commerce and good health to a grinding halt. The rest of the world may not be far behind.

We're not exempt, here in Malaysia, with recent years marked by drought despair – affecting supply in almost all states in the Peninsula and also Sabah and Sarawak – and the ubiquitous water tankers with queues hundreds-long in residential areas.

Yet, when you're in the middle of the man-made body of water that is the Temengor dam, you can lose sight of this issue, just as much as when the taps are running full in your house. That is one of the lessons we learnt during an expedition of the country's water sources, organised by the Department of Drainage and Irrigation (Jabatan Parit dan Saliran, or JPS) for the media and NGOs. The first expedition, in July 2017, was on the Perak River.

Starting at the JPS training centre in Ipoh, the expedition included touristy bits such as the Perak Man museum in Lenggong, Sultan Azlan Shah Gallery in Kuala Kangsar (on the site of the old Istana Ulu), Terrapin Conservation Centre in Bota Kanan and Pasir Salak Historical Complex, with dioramas of the state's historical events. Each is worthy of a long and winding article (especially since this writer is enamoured of historical buildings, but let's save that for another time).

The main lesson here, however, is on the water (literally, as we spent the better part of a day in boats), which included



a briefing at TNB's Bersia hydroelectric station, presentations by Professor Ismail Abustan of Universiti Sains Malaysia and Dr. Hezri Adnan, an Academy of Sciences Malaysia fellow, and a visit to a water processing plant.

The takeaway from the briefings is this: Yes, there is water, but if we continue to go on as we have, disregarding the importance of conserving water, not protecting catchment areas and mismanaging resources, the bad times are fast approaching.

Issues highlighted include:

- Logging around reservoir and catchment areas, with debris polluting water and clogging up processes at hydroelectric dams;
- Malaysia's weather, with rains topping up reservoirs only during the monsoon season, and droughts severely affecting water levels;
- Lack of awareness in river communities, which continue to dump garbage into waterways;
- Lack of awareness on ecological services provided by the environment, including to humankind's comfort;
- Improper sand dredging and management of our rivers, contributing to severe flooding;

- The world's focus on energy and food, and disregard for water security, as the population explodes to 9.2 billion people by 2050; and
- That the world is facing a 40% water deficit as close as the year 2030.

And on the water, an expedition such as this brings home the truth: as a people, Malaysians are still blasé about the essence of water – where we get it from, why we should keep waterways clean, and why we need to preserve precious resources related to water, such as our forests.

The waters of Temengor dam are clear down to half-a-metre or so, drawing to dark green in its depths. Our boat rides there were enjoyable, as we zoomed around to visit sights for which Belum-Temengor is famous, such as the Rafflesia flower and elephant-favoured salt licks (with the accompanying dung liberally scattered around). Even the downstream Bersia dam offered idyllic views from atop its hydroelectric plant.

As the Perak River meandered onward to the sea, however, development and human habitation take their toll. In the Royal town of Kuala Kangsar, it is a dark *teh tarik* brown (like tea with milk), and the state's river beautification project, despite

Plenty of water for everyone? Not if we continue our destructive rate of living.



a new riverfront and tourism opportunities, suffers greatly from it. That's not taking into account the massive flooding along the river in 2014, from which our inn was just recovering. Three years on, and this business in a tourist-heavy town had just reopened. There were still marks on the walls from when the river inundated the building up to one storey high.

From Kuala Kangsar, it was boats all the way to Bota Kanan, an 80km ride with seldom-seen views of trees and mountainous backdrop, interspersed with riverside garbage dumps, forests cleared for agriculture, sand dredging operations, and erosion. Meanwhile, the water crept from *teh* to Nescafe *tarik* (milky coffee), with bits floating in it, most made from plastic.

From this river we disembarked onto a jetty for the riverside water treatment plant. And yes, we got to see for ourselves, this very water funnelled into the plant, to be treated via filters and chemicals, and piped into our homes.

And while we enjoy our very clean water to make our food, wash our cars, do our laundry and have long showers, are we truly contemplating its true value? Water processing plants such as this one, and around the country, are facing multiples challenges to meet our needs. These include low river levels, the worsening quality of raw water, the high cost of upgrading plants, pollutants from industrial waste and the ever-increasing demand from burgeoning population and development. Finally, as our rivers finally flow into the sea, are we fully cognisant of everything they are carrying into our marine environment, our beaches, our reefs? Are we truly aware of the detrimental effect one piece of plastic bottle, one plastic bag of garbage that we casually toss into our waterways, has to our planet as a whole?

As we travelled along the river, and ended the expedition on another riverside in Pasir Salak, the words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge kept coming to my mind: "Water, water, every where, Nor any drop to drink" (The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, 1798).

Now, the poem tells the story of a sailor who had shot and killed an albatross (thought to be a lucky omen) and the resultant stranding of the ship in absolutely calm water and the deaths of all



Above:
The expedition included sights in the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex, including a salt lick favoured by our wildlife, and lessons on the need to protect our environment

the crew. The mariner was saved only after he appreciated the beauty of the marine animals he saw from the ship, but was cursed to eternally walk the earth and share his story as a warning to others.

Nevertheless, we can draw a parallel here to our own ravaging of Earth as we seek the fulfilment of a lifestyle of convenience, of ever-increasing development, of a throwaway culture. Let's not destroy everything Nature has to offer and only then discover its value. We might be cursed with wandering the planet trying to share the message of environmental conservation, of our precious water, and it would be far too late.



Hornbill Festival

Date: 16th September

Venue: Belum-Temengor Forest Complex



www.myforestwatch.com.my



Belum Rainforest Summit 2018

Date: 18th-20th September

Venue: Belum-Temengor Forest Complex



www.brains2018.com



From river to tap

It's easy to take for granted the clean, drinkable water that gushes out from the taps in our home. But a visit to a water treatment facility such as this one under Lembaga Air Perak brings home the reality – much of our water is sourced from rivers that are dirty and polluted.



Above:
Where we get our water

Left, right & bottom:
Several levels of
screening, aeration,
sedimentation, filtration
and treatment, before it
even gets close to the
clean water we need for
our survival





Celebrating Belum-Temengor

Helping to bring the wonders of Belum-Temengor Forest Complex to the general public, the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) through its MY forest project in April held a launch for BirdLife International publication, “Asia’s Wildlife – A Journey to the Forests of Hope”.

The book, by Fanny Lai and award-winning photographer Bjorn Olesen, is a visual journey into eight forests connected to BirdLife conservation programmes, including Belum-Temengor, one of the last bastions of Malaysia’s wildlife.



In opening the event, MNS President Henry Goh said the Society had been involved in conservation efforts in Belum-Temengor since 1993, leading to the gazettment of the Royal Belum State Park in 2007, and ongoing push for the protection of the adjoining Temengor Forest.

The Belum-Temengor Forest Complex and is also one of the target areas under MY forest, the Malaysian implementation of the forest governance project funded by the European Union and run by BirdLife International, aside from the country’s Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs).

Signed copies of the book were also presented to MY forest National Stakeholder Committee members, who make up the partners that are hoped will ensure the project achieves its aims of providing non-state actors with the capacity, skills, experience, information and network to influence policy making decisions on the protection and management of Malaysia’s forests. 🐼



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Asia's Wildlife – A Journey to the Forests of Hope

REVIEW BY YEAP CHIN AIK

WHAT IS hope? It means different things to different people. But if you asked Emily Dickinson, 19th century American poet, “hope” is the thing with feathers. I am certain our feathered friends could not agree more, which brings us into their forest domain in Asia.

Birds are found on every continent and habitat type on the planet, but tropical forests support the highest diversity of them all. Think broadbills, pittas, hornbills, trogons, pheasants, leafbirds, bulbuls, babblers, forest raptors and florican, to name a few. Hot on the heels of their two previous books, Fanny Lai and Bjorn Olesen have once again produced a top-notch publication, which also benefitted from the editorial support and scientific input of Dr. Yong Ding Li of BirdLife International, who is a prolific bird writer himself.

This new publication is a sheer 266 pages of photo-gasmic experience. Observing wildlife in their natural surroundings is already a challenge, let alone photographing them. Olesen's patience definitely paid off, as some of the images show the birds and mammals in their element, with many of the subjects on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Lai and Olesen take readers on a journey across eight forest sites – Nepal (Bardia), Sri Lanka (Sinharaja), India (Doyang, Nagaland), Vietnam (Khe Nuoc Trong), Cambodia (Western Siem Pang), the Philippines (Mount Irid-Angelo), Indonesia (Harapan, Sumatra) and of course Malaysia (Belum-Temengor).

These forests are part of BirdLife International's Forest of Hope Programme, which focuses on three key areas:

- Conserving and restoring significant areas of natural forests;
- Combating climate change; and
- Working with the local people and community and stakeholders in improving forest governance and management.



Each of the Forest of Hope sites tells a different story and the conservation challenges they face. Their successes in overcoming these challenges are also shared with the readers to prove that hope does shine through in the oft-felt bleakness of conservation work organisations do.

In the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex (BTFC), the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) and her allies have advocated for its protection and conservation since the 1990s. To date, nearly half of this forest landscape has been gazette as a protected area while the remaining landscape remains under both “production and/or protection” functions.

Nevertheless, this forest landscape still supports amazing biodiversity (think hornbills, tigers, elephants and tapirs, for

Authors:
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a start) and remains a “jewel” in northern Peninsular Malaysia. Under MNS’s current MY forest project, the Society continues to advocate for better site protection and explore innovative conservation initiatives, such as involving and developing the conservation skills of local indigenous communities in the landscape by using hornbills as the flagship species.

Dare we hope for our tropical forests? Emily Dickinson’s poem continues; “hope is the things with feathers that perches in the soul, and sings the tune without words and never stops – at all.”

We need hope, as with it comes our resolve and determination to pursue the right actions. For without it, Malaysians would be left poorer in terms of natural heritage.

Where to get a copy

“Asia’s Wildlife – A Journey to the Forests of Hope” is anticipated to arrive in Malaysian bookstores later in the year, but is available for pre-order through Kinokuniya.

Proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to BirdLife International, which in turn helps advance its Forest of Hope Programme (including MNS’s efforts in Belum-Temengor).

 www.malaysia.kinokuniya.com

The launch of this book was supported by MY forest, the Malaysian implementation of the project Strengthening Non-State Actor Involvement in Forest Governance in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea

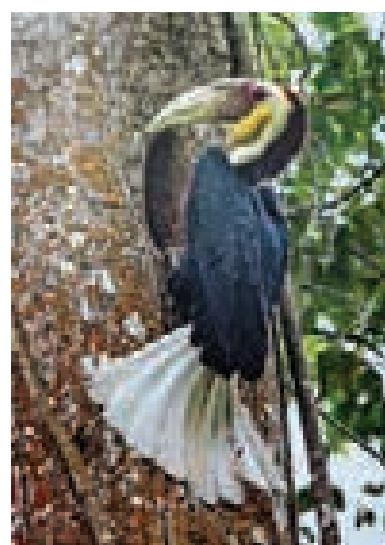
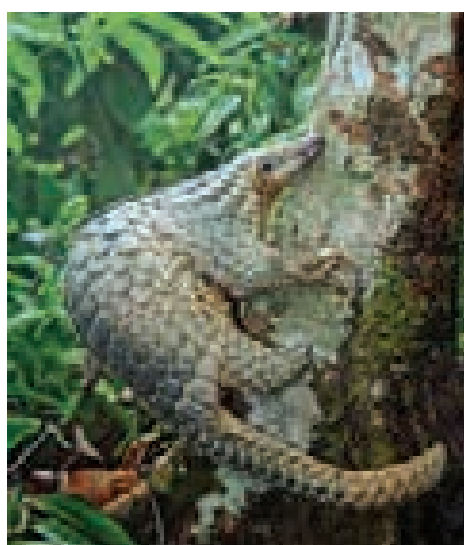
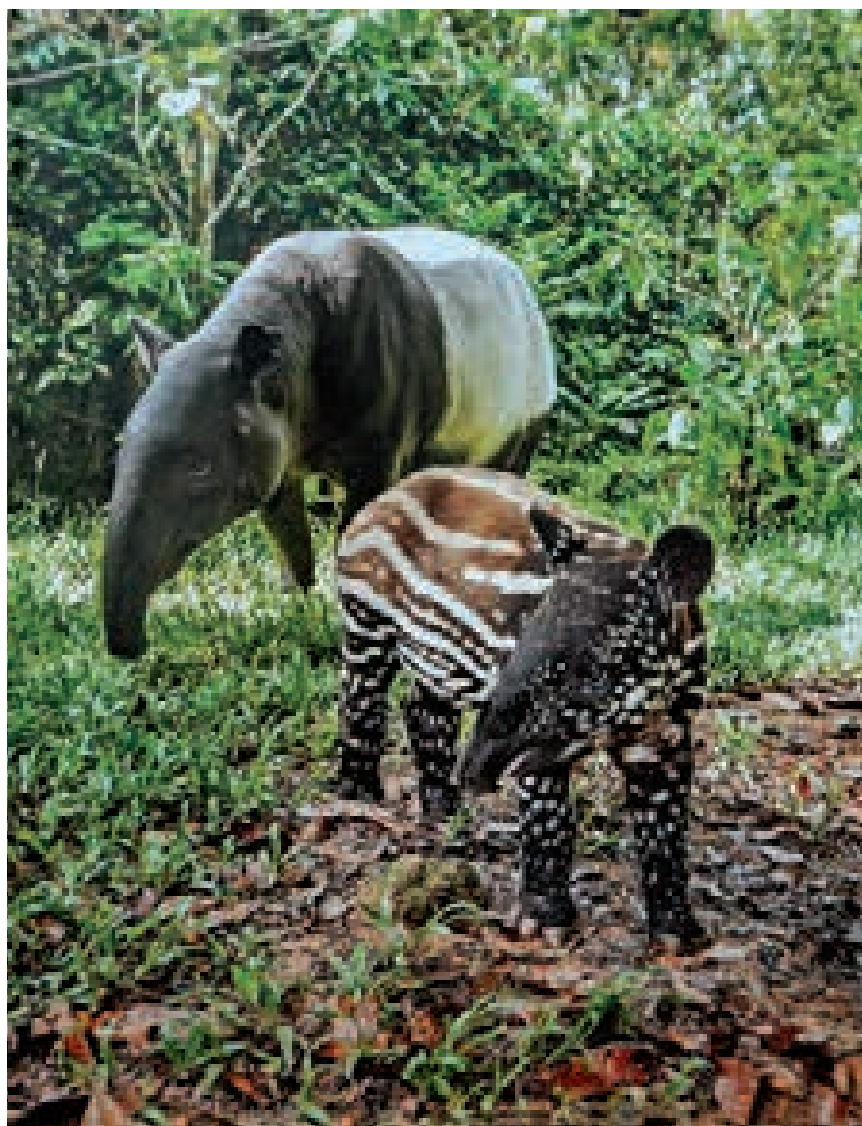
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The Journey

The authors visited eight of the most breathtaking and remote forests in Asia in eight different countries, to observe, photograph and describe their most distinctive and endangered animal species. Here are the remaining seven featured forests.

The Destination

Cambodia: Western Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary

- One of the most important areas of deciduous dipterocarp forest remaining in Cambodia
- Recent threats comprise demand for timber and land, and new infrastructure development
- The sanctuary is part of a forest landscape spanning over 700,000ha in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, allowing free movement of some of the rarest animal species in Asia

India: Doyang, Nagaland

- Small, mountainous state covering 16,579 sq km, populated by 16 indigenous tribes
- Threats include logging, slash-and-burn cultivation and poaching, especially with wildlife hunting being an established tradition

Indonesia: Harapan Rainforest, Sumatra

- Former logging concessions currently managed as Ecosystem Restoration Concession areas
- Represents a significant portion of remaining tropical lowland forests in Sumatra, surrounded by palm oil, rubber and pulp wood plantations
- Part of the restoration strategy is the establishment of tree nurseries towards rehabilitation of the area and income for local communities

Nepal: Bardia National Park

- The 968 sq km of wilderness surrounded by a 507 sq km buffer zone features a mosaic landscape of forest, grassland and riverine habitats
- Area recovering from historic poaching during the Maoist insurgency, which affected many larger wildlife species
- Conservation work in Nepal includes working towards improving and securing local livelihoods in and around protected areas such as Bardia

The Philippines: Mount Irid-Angelo, Luzon

- Never having been connected to continental Asia, the isolation of Luzon results in unique animal and plant species



- Mount Irid-Angelo is within the Sierra Madre, one of three major mountain ranges and collectively the most important areas for Luzon's wildlife
- Haribon Foundation's conservation work involves 40,000ha gazetted for restoration of degraded forests, which includes planning environmentally friendly land and water usage, public awareness and engagement with local communities

Sri Lanka: Sinharaja Forest Reserve

- Island's forest cover currently stands at only 30% of total land area, owing to plantations, rice paddies and human settlement
- Sinharaja represents the most intact lowland rainforest remaining in the southwest wet zone, rescued from a controversial logging project
- In 1988, it was listed as a Unesco World Heritage site

Vietnam: Khe Nuoc Trong Forests, Quang Binh Province

- Lowland forests of the Annamite mountain range are home to rare wildlife
- Threats include degradation, fragmentation, encroachment and illegal hunting for exotic bushmeat, while the forests still suffer the after-effects of the war
- An environmental lease to Viet Nature Conservation Centre covers 768ha, which will be the base for scientific research and biodiversity conservation activities

Excerpted from "Asia's Wildlife – A Journey to the Forests of Hope"



FOCUS: BIODIVERSITY

MALAYSIAN

Naturalist

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Saving the sun bear

Combining assets and funds
to rescue a threatened species



PUBLICATION OF THE
MALAYSIAN NATURE SOCIETY (MNS)
PP5527/09/2012(031178)



Celebrating the small and bright

In July, the Malaysian Nature Society launched its inaugural World Firefly Day celebration as part of a new global initiative to create awareness about these little beetles that are an essential and beneficial part of the ecological landscape.

Themed “We’re small and bright, please don’t forget us”, the two-day celebration was held at Kampung Kuantan Firefly Park, one of Malaysia’s most famous firefly tour ventures that heavily involves the local community. The event featured exhibitions, talks, activities for schoolchildren and firefly boat tours. There was also engagement with local communities, which included river cleaning, planting of mangrove seedlings and visiting the nursery, which was set up to provide mangrove samplings to replant along the river banks.

Also launched was MNS’s latest local community empowerment initiative, called Komuniti PAKAS (Pusat Aktiviti Kesedaran Alam Sekitar, or Environmental Awareness Activity Centre). A sister initiative to MNS’s Urban Community Forest, PAKAS is focused on local communities living within and near environmentally sensitive areas in rural and non-urban areas. (See also PAKAS article on page 45)

In his welcoming speech, MNS President Henry Goh said World Firefly Day served to shine the spotlight on fireflies, which served as an indicator of an ecosystem’s health and biodiversity, and a possible income generator for local communities.

Using Kampung Kuantan as a prime example of community-involved ecotourism ventures, he said the firefly night tour, which was set up in the 70s, benefited from a push by MNS in the form of promotions, and protection as a restricted-activity area. The area has now become famous world over for its synchronous fireflies.

He said this was part of MNS’s focus on community empowerment, which would be boosted by the Komuniti PAKAS initiative. He said through PAKAS, MNS would be able to assist local communities in capacity building, in line with good forest governance practices.

As part of PAKAS, the celebration saw the formation of the Firefly Community, as well as workshops and sharing sessions with MNS’s existing groups under the Wetlands Community, Flyway Community and Wildlife Community.

The community at the inaugural World Firefly Day 2018, which gathered to celebrate the small beetles that are an essential and beneficial part of the ecological landscape



Goh hoped World Firefly Day would be an impetus for everyone to appreciate the importance of fireflies. “We hope our efforts will ensure these bright sparks are never extinguished.”

The launch of World Firefly Day 2018 and Komuniti PAKAS was officiated at by Azman Dahlan, Setiausaha, Majlis Daerah Kuala Selangor, on behalf of its Yang Dipertua, Rahilah Rahmat. In his address, Azman reiterated the role of fireflies in securing a source of ecotourism income for the people of Kampung Kuantan, especially the boat rowers.

He said according to MDKS figures, in 2018 up until April, some 20,000 visitors bought tickets for the boat tours, netting the rower collective approximately RM250,000, which was in line with the Council’s annual projections.

Nonetheless, he said more could be done in protecting firefly areas, and welcomed World Firefly Day one way to

create public awareness and highlight the message that everyone should work together to handle environmental issues.

World Firefly Day, which is slated for the first weekend of July each year, was mooted by the Fireflyers International Network, of which MNS is honorary secretary. In her World Firefly Day message, FIN Chair Dr Sara Lewis said the celebration “provides an opportunity for everyone – even those who have never seen fireflies – to get familiar with these charismatic yet mysterious insects: their biodiversity, ecological roles, challenges faced, and socio-economic importance as a tourist attraction”.

She added that the theme broadcast the message that fireflies were magical to see, yet also required protection. This is because around the world, fireflies faced challenges, greatest among which were destruction of habitat through agricultural conversion, along with pesticide use, light pollution and commercial harvesting. – *MNS Conservation Division*

The event at Kampung Kuantan Firefly Park featured exhibitions, talks, activities for schoolchildren, firefly boat tours and engagement with local communities, which included river cleaning, planting of mangrove seedlings and visiting the nursery, which was set up to provide mangrove saplings to replant along the river banks



Bringing back living rivers

MNS Conservation Division visits the River of Life project in the heart of Kuala Lumpur to see how communities can help to keep our waterways clean and healthy

THE WATER is clear, the colour a mirror of the blue sky in a somewhat rare sunny day for this metropolitan capital. There's also koi swimming about, while the skyline of high-rises, including the KL Tower, are reflected on the still surface.

The man in front of us reaches down to scoop some water in his palm, then lets the translucent liquid flow between his fingers. Next to him, another man dips his hand in and uses the water to splash his face. With Masjid Jamek in the background, the scene is reminiscent of a time not too long ago, when those attending prayers at the mosque performed their ablutions in the two rivers – Sungai Gombak and Sungai Klang – that join up at the point for which Kuala Lumpur is named.

Today, this clean water is restricted to the Blue Pool on the eastern bank of the merged waterway and the dancing fountain surrounding the tip of the mosque grounds. But, if things go to plan, the whole river will flow with sparkling water, bringing vitality back into the heart of Kuala Lumpur and in the process, raising the quality of life of its inhabitants.

Pushing that plan is the Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia in the River of Life project, alongside 25 government departments and agencies and NGO Global Environment Centre. And showing the gathered media his confidence in the process – this is actual river water that has gone through the Interceptor system – are Md. Khairi Selamat, DID Director of the River Basin Management Division, and the face-washing K. Kalithasan, Rivercare Coordinator of GEC.

Is this too hard to believe, though? Beyond the Blue Pool, the river runs a murky green, with pieces of garbage regularly left stranded on the banks and caught in traps. It is at best, Class III water, says Md. Khairi, running up to Class IV, both unsuitable for any type of recreational use.



Md. Khairi Selamat, Director of the River Basin Management Division, Drainage and Irrigation Department Malaysia, speaking to reporters on the River of Life project (Credit: MNS Conservation Division)

The River of Life aims to bring it down to IIB, he says, which means it is acceptable for body contact, as he ably demonstrates. In the long run, after the initial stage of river cleaning by end-2020, the project involves beautification, followed by commercialisation and tourism, under Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

Changing mindsets

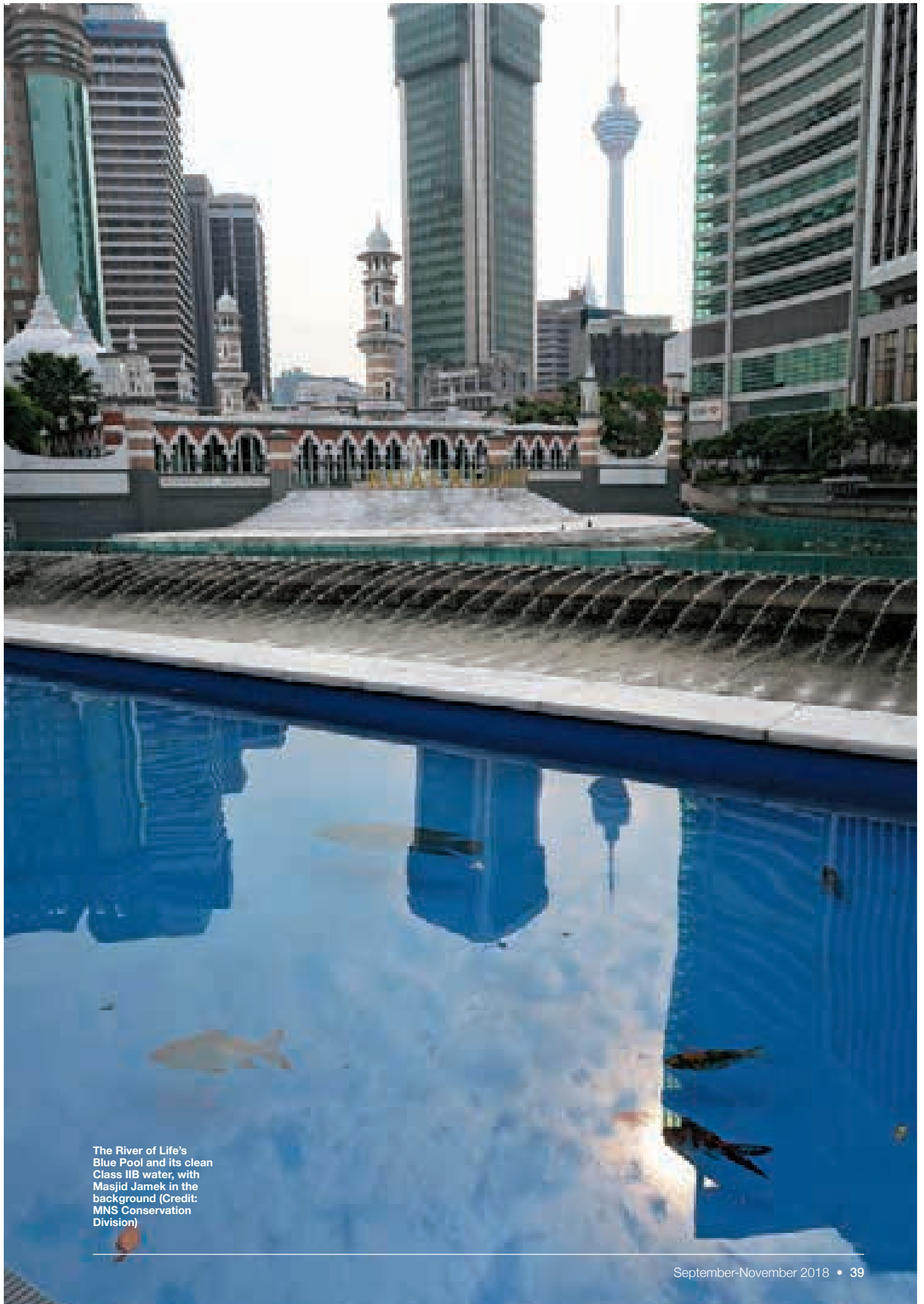
Md. Khairi says the River of Life project can only work with the commitment of the people, especially those who live, work and affect all the waterways that flow into Sungai Klang. This is the thrust of the ROL Public Outreach Programme (ROLPOP), which aims to create awareness among Malaysians about the discharge of waste into rivers.

According to DID findings, 80.1% of the source of pollution to Sungai Klang is sewage effluent; 12.6% waste water effluent from residential, workshops, car washes and wet markets; 3.9% fat, oil and grease effluent from restaurants; and 3.4% industrial effluent. Imagine all these waste

Water classifications

- ☐ **Class I**
Uses: Conservation of natural environment; Water Supply I - Practically no treatment necessary; Fishery I - Very sensitive aquatic species
- ☐ **Class IIA**
Uses: Water Supply II - Conventional treatment; Fishery II - Sensitive aquatic species
- ☐ **Class IIB**
Uses: Recreational use body contact
- ☐ **Class III**
Uses: Water Supply III - Extensive treatment required; Fishery III - Common, of economic value and tolerant species; livestock drinking
- ☐ **Class IV**
Uses: Irrigation
- ☐ **Class V**
Uses: None of the above

Source: National Water Quality Standards for Malaysia, Department of Environment



The River of Life's Blue Pool and its clean Class IIB water, with Masjid Jamek in the background (Credit: MNS Conservation Division)



products – and accompanying smells – flowing past our homes, in our towns and cities, and straight into our seas.

The outreach will target the general public, local communities, food establishments, workshops and wet markets, industry, the corporate sector, developers and educational institutions, with a focus on garbage disposal, to change old habits of not discarding rubbish at designated areas and dumping everything into rivers. The outreach to food and restaurant operators, meanwhile, will address the management of food waste and grease.

Md. Khairi says it is important to alter the mindset of the people, and this includes the misuse of waterways in recreational areas, such as the use of soaps and shampoos at waterfalls and rivers, and throwing food waste into the water and at picnic sites. “In Malaysia, it’s still prevalent that people will eat at recreational areas and leave their rubbish there. So we’ll try to change that, have them gather up the rubbish and discard it properly.”

“They don’t see the effect all this has on the river,” he says, and this is part of the challenge River of Life faces. “We can provide all the infrastructure, the river cleaning, but unless we get the commitment of the people, the project will not succeed,” Md. Khairi says, adding that some of the River of Life facilities have already been vandalised.

Utilising the public eye

Public commitment to our keeping our rivers clean and healthy can come in many ways,

and now includes providing feedback on instances of pollution through an app called ROL Citizen’s Eye.

Developed by GEC and tested for several months, the app has a section for reporting issues, including waste management, land clearing, water quality, solid waste disposal and river encroachment. Another section has a “good job” focus, where the public can give a thumb’s up on citizens, businesses and entities undertaking good practices.

GEC’s K. Kalithasan says the app is easy to use, and the public need only send in photos with their reports, and these will be channelled to the relevant agencies involved in River of Life. The qualification is merely user registration, and this is solely to ensure the veracity of the reports, he says.

The areas targeted under ROL Citizen’s Eye corresponds with ROLPOP, which Md. Khairi spells out as just downriver from the Klang Gates Dam and all the way to the area near Mid Valley Megamall, the border between Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

Urban conservation

This falls in line with the Malaysian Nature Society’s own local community-driven outlook, especially as the target areas include its Urban Community Forest (UCF) Network initiative attached to Bukit Persekutuan.

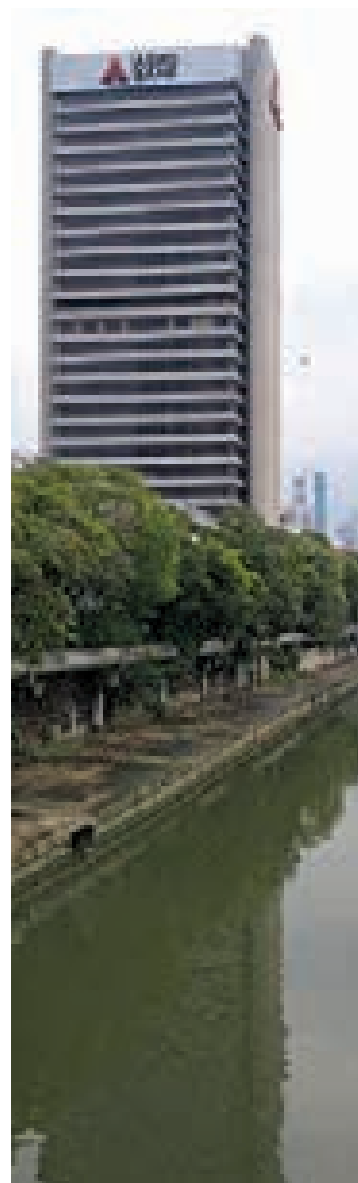
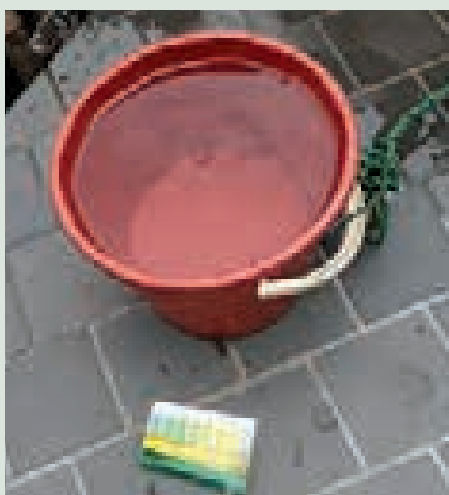
MNS Head of Conservation Balu Perumal says fans and friends of UCF can utilise ROL Citizen’s Eye to report the good and bad within and around Bukit Persekutuan,

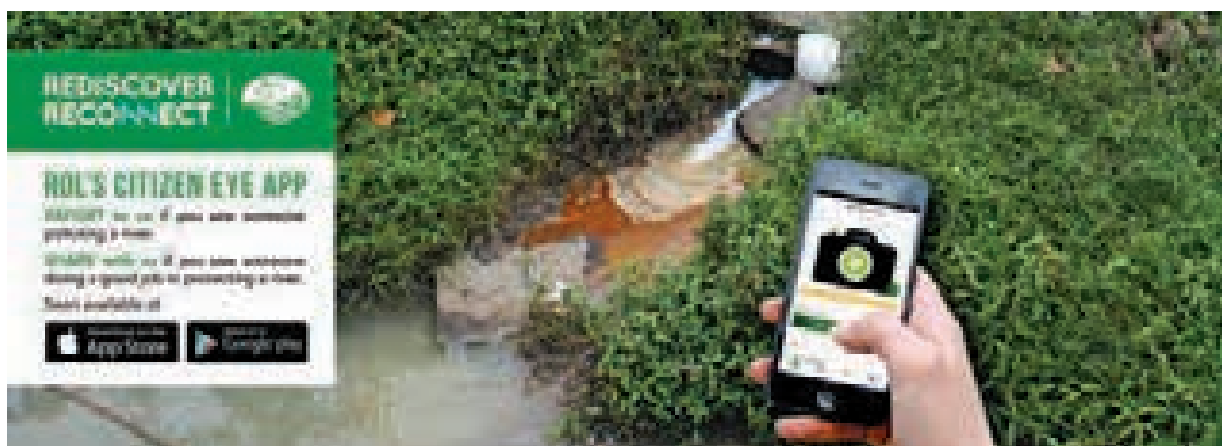
Right:
The ROL Citizen’s Eye app allows users to report all the good and bad relating to waterways, from the Klang Gates Dam to the KL-Selangor border (Credit: Global Environment Centre)

Below:
Sungai Klang, which runs through Kuala Lumpur, is a murky green, with pieces of garbage regularly left stranded on the banks and caught in traps (Credit: MNS Conservation Division)

The Interceptor

Under the brickwork around Masjid Jamek is a system of tanks, through which run discharge from the surrounding businesses and buildings. If ever the covers are open, you might baulk at the smell – this is the reality of human habitation, with sewage, waste water, oil, grease and industrial effluent flowing directly into the river system. The River of Life Interceptor system gathers this water and channels it through a process that includes bioreactors, filtration and aeration, resulting in the Class IIB water. As pictured right in the test tubes, untreated water tested for ammonia comes back green (higher part-per-million reading), with the treated water coming back yellow.





which is one of the last remaining green lungs in Kuala Lumpur. This 74.4ha secondary forest is bordered by high-density developments – Damansara to the north, Perdana Botanical Gardens to the east, KL Sentral and Brickfields to the south and Bangsar to the west – and urban pollution will affect the area and also run off into its waterways.

“Bukit Persekutuan is marked out as a low-density area, and its forests boasts an impressive range of flora and fauna, aside from performing ecological services, such as cooling the area and absorbing rainfall,” Balu says. A short biodiversity survey carried out in 2008 found an impressive number of species, including mammals, at eight (mostly bats), amphibians (six), birds (65, a good number of them migratory) and 39 types of moths and butterflies, with a surprising discovery of some forest species. Among the 163 species of flora, meanwhile, are two rare plants and two endemic trees.

“The protection of Bukit Persekutuan is important, and through ROL Citizen’s Eye, the public can report instances of poor food waste management, water pollution, illegal dumping of rubbish and land clearing and development. And of course, highlight good practices and inspirational deeds, to help create better environmental values among Malaysians,” he says.


Green values

It is these environmental values which Md. Khairi emphasises is essential – and challenging – to cultivate. He holds up as an example Japanese fans during the recent World Cup, where despite losing games, they proceeded to pick up rubbish in the stands.

“The people need to understand that what the government is doing, providing the infrastructure and systems, will ultimately benefit them. If the quality of our rivers improve, it will lead to the betterment of our health and environment. One day, we can even eat the fish in this river running through the city,” Md. Khairi says.

That’s not to mention economic opportunities along a clean, living river. Currently, there are fish in Sungai Klang, while otters have also been spotted near the section next to the Central Market. A clean river may host more life, including other types of fishes, and attract wildlife such as birds, thus providing possibilities for tourist-oriented pursuits.

Combine that with future beautification plans – think avenues of trees, clean air and plenty of seating – and River of Life could truly elevate the quality of life of everyone living and working in and visiting Malaysia’s capital city. 🌿



UCF Network

MNS’s UCF Network initiative is a worldwide link among proponents of healthy urban forests, promoting the involvement of local communities to protect and establish green lungs for the betterment of urban dwellers.

ucfnetworkbukitpersekutuan.wordpress.com



Return of the hornbill count

TEXT AND IMAGES BY MNS HORNBILL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

AT DAWN and dusk each day this August and September, eyes will be trained on the sky over Belum-Temengor. To hand are binoculars, scopes, tally clickers and notebooks. All for sighting the plain-pouched hornbill, once soaring over the forest landscape in the hundreds (or even thousands) and sometimes not at all.

A quick look at charts and figures from the MNS Hornbill Volunteer Programme tells a varied tale of the count, which follows the plain-pouched hornbill's seasonal migration within the triangle of Peninsular Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar. The highest tally ever in a single count was 3,200 individuals, captured in 2008. In the 2013 season, sightings ranged from zero and double-digits to 933 individuals. The following year, not even one plain-pouched hornbill was sighted over the whole two-month count period.

Now, following a three-year hiatus, the MNS Hornbill Volunteer Programme is back, and hoping to rev up understanding of these farmers of the forest and efforts towards their conservation.

MNS Executive Director I. S. Shanmugaraj says the Hornbill Volunteer Programme is an integral part of the Society's conservation work in the largest continuous forest in northern Peninsular Malaysia that is possibly the last bastion of the country's famed biodiversity. In fact, the Malaysian Nature Society was awarded the inaugural Merdeka Award for Environment in 2008 for "outstanding contribution to the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex Conservation Initiative". This forest complex is also globally recognised as an Important Bird & Biodiversity Area (IBA) for Malaysia, as well as being one of Asia's Forest of Hope sites.

The volunteer programme is part of the MNS Hornbill Conservation Project, which was established in 2004, and currently runs alongside environmental education efforts and engagement with the Orang Asli community. "The data we collect from the count, as well as hornbill studies and expeditions, help us understand the behaviour and needs of the plain-pouched hornbill, from the food they eat to the trees in which they prefer to nest," says Shanmugaraj.

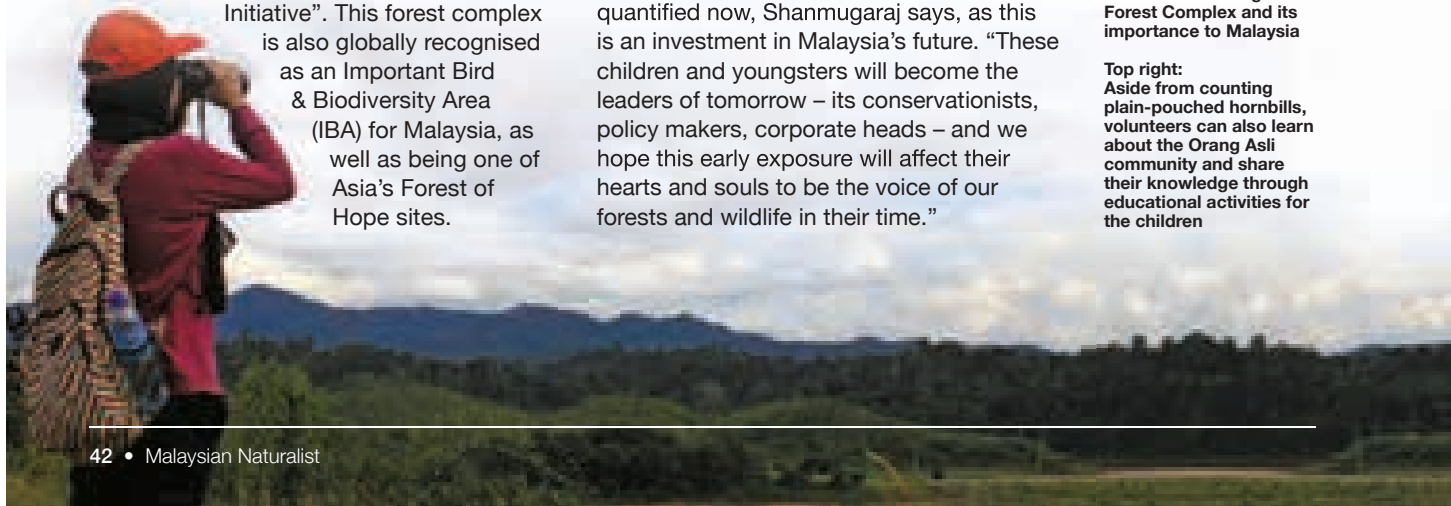
"Buttressed by similar efforts from our partner the Thailand Hornbill Project, this will allow a deeper understanding of the plain-pouched hornbill and what it takes to ensure their survival," he says. Furthermore, hornbills are not the only ones to benefit, as better forest governance leads to the protection of a wide range of flora and fauna and biodiversity as a whole.

"The information and insights are then shared in our environmental education work and community engagement, to raise awareness about the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex, and its importance to the country, in terms of biodiversity and the ecological services forests provide," Shanmugaraj says. "This will, it is hoped, highlight the dire need for its protection, and initiate dialogue and action."

In its years of Belum-Temengor work, MNS has undertaken a number of environmental education programmes, especially under its KPA (Kelab Pencinta Alam, or School Nature Club) umbrella, including taking children and youths into the heart of this vast forest complex. The results cannot be quantified now, Shanmugaraj says, as this is an investment in Malaysia's future. "These children and youngsters will become the leaders of tomorrow – its conservationists, policy makers, corporate heads – and we hope this early exposure will affect their hearts and souls to be the voice of our forests and wildlife in their time."

The MNS Hornbill Volunteer Programme is up and running again, with hopes that the information and insights can be shared in the Society's environmental education work and community engagement, to raise awareness about the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex and its importance to Malaysia

Top right: Aside from counting plain-pouched hornbills, volunteers can also learn about the Orang Asli community and share their knowledge through educational activities for the children





Speaking of the heart of Belum-Temengor, MNS has also been working with indigenous communities to develop the MNS Orang Asli Hornbill Guardians, protectors of the area's 10 species of hornbills, and all creatures found under, and flying over, the forest canopy. This includes adopting Orang Asli villages as hosts for the MNS Hornbill Volunteer Programme and awareness campaigns, as well as capacity-building and skills training.

In July, MNS organised a follow-up Basic Photography Workshop, led by Society member Leong Hon Yuen, and attended by five of the budding MNS Orang Asli Hornbill Guardians of Kampung Chuweh over four days.

It's the age-old adage "A picture is worth a thousand words", but still relevant today, and the Guardians had a hands-on course on telling the story of their ancestral home – their forest landscape and way of life; their trees, shrubs and wild flowers; their hornbills, tigers, elephants and tapirs. Indeed, aside from learning to snap great shots of their families, village and surroundings, they are more than keen to advance their knowledge about the power of photography (and videography) for use as an advocacy tool.

Jumping to the world arena, in August, three of the Guardians took part in the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (PHOAS) 2018 celebration in Bau, Sarawak. The event saw the participation of some 200 individuals, which included speakers, government representatives, indigenous communities and NGOs, to honour and protect the indigenous culture and heritage.

The participants also attended a seminar on "Strengthening Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCA)", held in conjunction with the celebration, and co-sponsored by MNS through its MY forest project.

The term ICCA covers customary territories; areas conserved by communities; natural sites Indigenous communities depend on for their livelihood; marine/mangrove areas conserved by Indigenous communities; and areas of sentimental value. All of these are conserved based on traditional knowledge and practices that include ecosystem management, as well as resource care and use.

The seminar worked on gathering feedback and input on ICCAs, especially developments of ICCA management on the international, national and grassroots level in every region (Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah). The outcome, it was hoped, would help Malaysia achieve its 30% conservation area goal in line with the country's commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity. 🐼



my forest



Also happening in Belum-Temengor


Hornbill Festival

Date: 16th September

 www.myforestwatch.com.my

Belum Rainforest Summit 2018

Date: 18th-20th September

 www.brains2018.com

First the learning, then
the lesson that they
can share through
photographs with the
world at large – their
families, their village and
their forest





Strengthening the community connection

THEY CAME from all over, and from a range of interests, but all for the sharing of knowledge and skills that have made these non-urban local communities a voice that's getting louder for the sake of environmental conservation. And when they met at World Firefly Day 2018 in Kuala Selangor, the first such celebration for these bioluminescent beetles that almost get lost by the wayside, it was the first for most of the community members to discover that they were not alone, and far from forgotten.

Indeed, as also launched during World Firefly Day was Komuniti PAKAS, a grouping under Pusat Aktiviti Kesedaran Alam Sekitar or Environmental Awareness Activity Centre. A sister initiative to the Malaysian Nature Society's Urban Community Forest (UCF), PAKAS is focused on local communities living within and near environmentally sensitive areas in rural and non-urban areas.

Those gathered included the Wetlands Community, represented by the Penang Inshore Fishermen's Welfare Association (PIFWA) and Sahabat Hutan Bakau (Friends of Mangroves) from Kuala Sepetang; the Flyway Community – Sungai Buloh Sasaran village and Sahabat Hutan Gambut (Friends of the Peat Swamp) from the Raja Musa Forest Reserve; the Wildlife Community – Sahabat Raja Rimba (Friends of the Tiger) from Merapoh in Pahang and Sahabat Beruang Matahari (Friends of the Sun Bear) from Trolak, Perak.

Alongside them were the Firefly Community – Inspirasi Kawa and Persatuan Pendayung Kampung Kuantan, while Kuala Sepetang Ecotourism's Cikgu Kairul shared his experience on firefly tourism and Cherating's "firefly whisperer" Hafiz shared his years of drawing fireflies, and tourists, to his small corner of Malaysia. Then there were MNS's own, namely its ecoCare Kertih environmental education centre as part of the wetland warriors, and MNS Selangor Branch Nature Guides.

And, over two days on 7th and 8th July at Kampung Kuantan Firefly Park, one of the country's first community-run firefly tours,



they met, talked and listened, and created a vibrant grouping under MNS's Komuniti PAKAS that will be able to assist, advise and empower one another towards having a stronger voice in the protection of the country's natural treasures. This fulfils MNS's own vision, for Malaysia's natural heritage and rich biological diversity to be effectively protected, managed and conserved for the benefit and appreciation of all Malaysians, as well as its commitment under the MY forest project to strengthen the involvement of non-state actors in forest governance.

Among the highlights was the firefly introduction from MNS Wetlands-Marine Programme Manager Sonny Wong, where the audience heard that these beetles could be traced back to the time of the dinosaurs (the Mesozoic era, specifically, 66 million

Komuniti PAKAS brings together disparate communities in a common aim, to be the voice for the protection of our natural resources (Credit: MNS Conservation Division)



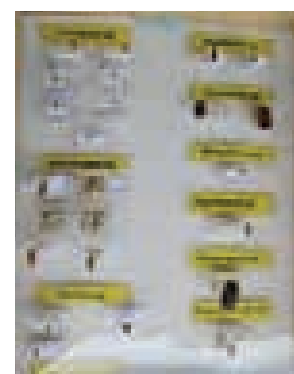
to 250 million years ago). There are more than 2,000 species of fireflies in the world, but there are gaps in the numbers found in Malaysia, owing to lack of research (which means each firefly sighting could be extra special!). He went on to stress the importance of protecting firefly habitats, which comprises not only the trees they prefer, but also the ecological health of the environment that provides them with their food supply.

The audience also heard from Zulkifli Soho from Kampung Endah, the first MNS PAKAS community to be established in 2000. Situated just off the Selangor coast 3km from Morib beach, Kampung Endah began humbly, but has risen in prominence as a homestay destination with “nature extras”, including night nature walks, birding trips, introduction to herbal plants, information on mangrove ecology, beach explorations, organic horticulture and 3R commitment.

Representing the local boys was Inspirasi Kawa, a group from Mukim Pasangan, the area in which Kampung Kuantan is situated. Made up of a mix of young and old, including those rowing the firefly tour boats and local youths, the group has grown from strength to strength since it started in 2013, running their own nursery, replanting trees and being in the public eye with monthly river cleaning sessions. And they’re not blink-and-you’ll-miss-it events, either, as the cleaning takes up a whole day and a multitude of boats, rowers and volunteers, with the group collecting more than 2,000kg of rubbish up until 2018.

Other topics touched upon were sustainability (for example, Sahabat Raja Rimba’s flower craft from the leaf of the rubber tree), drawing in sponsors and raising funds, the management of volunteers (how ecoCare Kertih primarily conducts its activities), PIFWA’s 24 years of experience in planting mangroves and the issue of open burning (Sahabat Hutan Gambut).

This isn’t the last time that Komuniti PAKAS will be meeting. Thanks to some little, twinkly insect, ground has been laid to allow local communities from various ecologically sensitive areas around Peninsular Malaysia to become the voice for nature. And we hope this voice soon will crescendo to protect our forests and biodiversity. 🦋



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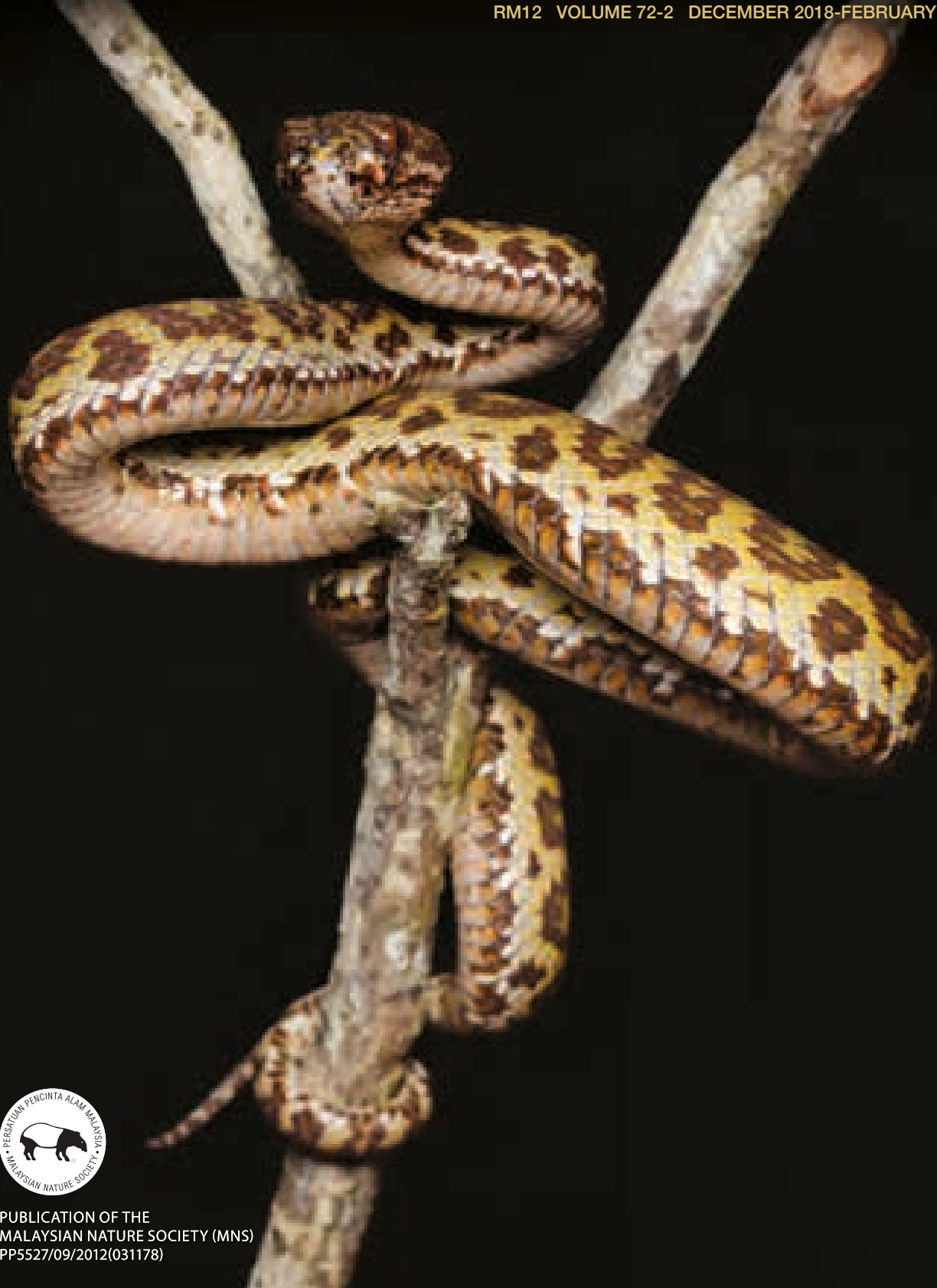
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YOUTH AND INSPIRATION

MALAYSIAN

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MNS at KL Eco Film Festival

In October, the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) participated in the KL Eco Film Festival 2018 at Publika Shopping Gallery.

October, the Society showcased information on its MY forest and Urban Community Forest projects, as well as merchandise from its various programmes throughout the years, including conservation work relating to hornbills, sun bears and fireflies. It also participated in two Film Curation sessions, with the MNS Marine Group addressing the audience on Marine Monday, and the MNS Conservation Division and guest speaker from the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre taking to the stage on Wildlife Wednesday. This activity is in line with MNS's local community capacity-building remit under MY forest, alongside a show of support for NGO EcoKnights, which is one of the National Stakeholder Committee members under the project Strengthening Non-State Actor Involvement in Forest Governance in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea. For more MY forest tales, go to page 39.

By MNS Conservation Division



Mamat the Tapir was one of the MNS crew working the booth at KLEFF2018, drawing visitors for a selfie with a special MY forest pledge frame, and sharing all about the Society's conservation work around Malaysia





Coming together for greater forest governance

TEXT AND IMAGES BY MNS CONSERVATION DIVISION



ONE IS the Minister of Environment, the other, a nosy journalist. Hard questions are asked and answered, and they walk away smiling. A few feet away, an NGO representative is talking to a serious money man, and hands are shaken after they agree to a RM10 million funding for the non-profit's gastropod project. Over there, another discussion is taking place between a teacher and policymaker on bringing environmental education to schools.

In the real world, things would not be so easy, and this is role play. But the underlying lesson is straightforward – building up confidence to approach, talk to, negotiate with, the necessary people to get what you want. And what they want here is greater forest governance to protect Malaysia's natural treasures.

That, however, can't come without knowledge and skills, and this was the main thrust of the National Improving Forest Governance Course, an intensive

two-week training in September for stakeholders of the MY forest project. Run by the Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT), a capacity training unit under the University of Wolverhampton, the course started from the basics – Forest Governance 101 – to the second phase of utilising what they learn in advocating for their little bit of green.

The course, at Resort World Awana, Genting in the first week and Belum Rainforest Resort, Perak in the second, was also a chance for the stakeholders to meet and bond. After all, they – government agencies, civil societies, local communities, NGOs and eco-friendly enterprises from around Malaysia – are in this together, to advocate for the future of the country's forests.

Networks and lessons

The chance to get together is a plus for many of the participants, who might have never had, or even thought about having, conversations with individuals or

Participants at the National Improving Forest Governance Course



entities from other sectors. Firdaus Nisha Muhammad Faizal of Ecocentric Transitions said when attending single-day courses, “you don’t get the level of relationship as when you stay together”, while non-formal conversations could be enlightening.

This relates to the fact that not only do the participants attend the course during the day, they take their breaks and meals in the same place, and even go on evening excursions in small groups. Nisha said this opened up possibilities for her sustainability-centric enterprise, “as it can help us improve the way we connect, and in identifying communities that can participate in our programmes”. Muhammad Mahfuz Al-Hafiz Muhammad Faizal interjected that the course also broadened Ecocentric’s network for projects partners in the future.

MNS Selangor Branch Flora Group member Subathra Kanagaraj said the course was a great effort by MNS, as it was not easy to bring multiple stakeholders together on one platform, while Melvin Ku Kin Kin of the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) lauded MNS for “bringing in the non-officially included, those not exactly in the circle”. He reckoned that stakeholder consultation was something new in Malaysia, and said, “Previously, everybody likes to work in silos, the government never likes to talk to the civil societies, so this is something good.”

Ku said the course content also allowed participants to be on the same page when it came to forest governance, although some modules, such as on the REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) and FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement) initiatives, could be a bit heavy for first-timers.

Alongside CIDT trainers Sarah Thomas and Téodyl Nkuintchua, the guest speakers who shared their wealth of experience were Victor Soosai of Control Union (Malaysia), who offered an overview of forest governance in Malaysia; Jessie Ooi, Asia Regional Coordinator & Assessor, Accreditation Services International – trade-based responses to poor forest governance; Collin George Nicholas from Center for Orang Asli Concerns – community and civil society-led responses; and Dr. Elizabeth Philip from Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) – forests and climate change.

MNS Selangor Branch Chair Pasupathy Jayaraj said she found the course to be a continuing learning experience, “because there are so much more details that MNS members, especially, should know.”

The teaching begins

Pasupathy also branded the course “an upgrading experience and eye opening”. “Sometimes, we have our own way of doing things. As a teacher, I have learnt many more activities and ways of imparting knowledge,” and this, she said, could come in handy for the Branch, which is facing a variety of forest issues.

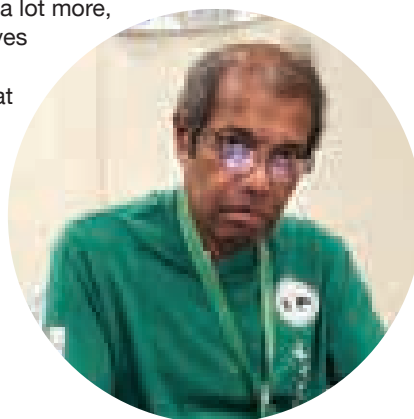
“We can be equipped to do a lot more, effectively. We have to be eyes and ears for society, so not only do we show our faces at meetings, but we should be able to give stakeholders more information on how to go about voicing their concerns, as part and parcel of saving the environment,” she said. “People should feel equipped to go forward and do it bravely.”

MNS Langkawi Branch Chair Borhan Hamid was also enthused about bringing the lessons home, not only for MNS members but also the local fishing and coastal communities, and even tourists visiting the idyllic island. He plans to use what he has learnt to open the minds of the people about appreciating and saving nature, “and I hope to be able to work with other NGOs and government agencies, for example, related to the environment.”

FRIM’s Mohammad Shahfiz Azman said MNS had done a tremendous job bringing in the right people to sharpen the participants’ communication skills, so that the messages could be shared, both among the entities themselves and with other stakeholders. Meanwhile, Muhammad Sha’ani Abdullah, from Sustainable Development Network



Firdaus Nisha Muhammad Faizal said the course helped identify communities that could participate in programmes run by Ecocentric Transitions



Muhammad Sha’ani Abdullah said the mechanism of forest governance was made clear, and this could greatly benefit community action players



Melvin Ku Kin Kin hopes the government will see things from the civil society perspective



Malaysia, which works with the Orang Asli, said the course made clear the mechanism of forest governance, and this could greatly benefit players in the sphere of community action, especially in protecting their rights and habitats.

Moving forward, the participants hope to see changes in dialogue about the environment. MNS Selangor's Subathra called for government recognition and accreditation for NGOs as the watchdogs for forest and communities, while Tropical Rainforest Conservation and Research Centre's Dr. Nur Hazwani Abdul Bahar would like to see more cooperation between NGOs and the government on initiatives such as the Central Forest Spine.

Ahmad Najmi Nik Hassan of Pulau Banding Foundation hoped the participants would use this momentum to get the message out, straight to the ministries. And MTCC's Ku wishes for more engagement, "to slowly influence the government to see things from the civil society perspective." 🐼

What they talked about

- Introduction to Forest Governance Concepts
- Definitions and Drivers of Poor Forest Governance
- The Malaysia Context
- Multi Stakeholder Processes for Improving Forest Governance
- Trade Based Responses to Poor Forest Governance
- Tackling Corruption in the Forest Sector
- Community and Civil Society-Led Responses
- Gender & Forest Governance
- Multi Stakeholder Processes for Improving Forest Governance
- Forests and Climate Change
- Communication and Advocacy for Improving Forest Governance
- Becoming a Trainer
- Managing Group Dynamics
- Course Design

Top, left and right: Can I have some money, please? It's role playing to build skills and confidence for green advocacy

Above, right: Work together, eat together, take a selfie together

Above, left: The second week of training took participants, and CIDT trainers Sarah Thomas and Téodyl Nkuintchua, into the forests of Belum-Temengor

The National Improving Forest Governance Course was part of capacity-building for MY forest National Stakeholder Committee members, under the project Strengthening Non-State Actor Involvement in Forest Governance, which is funded by the European Union, run by BirdLife International and managed locally by the Malaysian Nature Society



Belum-Temengor's hornbills get friends and a special day

TEXT AND IMAGES BY MNS CONSERVATION DIVISION

THEY ONCE hunted hornbills as a matter of course. A quick survey also discovered that some members of the Orang Asli (indigenous) community had kept hornbills as pets. Now, they are learning about conservation of these birds and will hopefully lead the way as their protectors through the Sahabat Enggang (Friends of the Hornbill) community action group.

This is the push behind the Hornbill Festival, mooted in 2018 by the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) as a community capacity-building effort among the Orang Asli, who once lived in the hills and valleys of the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex (BTFC). Held on 16th September, which was also Malaysia Day, the inaugural Hornbill Festival 2018 was localised in Pos Air Banun, an Orang Asli regroupment settlement within BTFC, about an hour from Gerik, Perak State's most north-easterly town.

The main topic was the 10 species of hornbills found in this landscape and the richness of biodiversity in BTFC, which at some 459,000ha is one of the remaining large contiguous forest landscapes in northern Peninsular Malaysia. It is also one of the last bastions of the country's megafauna – think elephants, tigers and tapirs – and home to three species of the Rafflesia flower.

MNS Executive Director I. S. Shanmugaraj says the Hornbill Festival is an extension of the Society's conservation efforts in Belum-Temengor, which started in 1990 and has included participation in and organising scientific expeditions, leading to the

discovery of the 10 hornbill species. These include the helmeted hornbill now critically threatened due to poaching, the great hornbill and the migratory plain-pouched hornbill, the latter two not found on Borneo. MNS has also run its Hornbill Conservation Project since 2004, under which a six-man team of MNS Orang Asli Hornbill Guardians of Belum-Temengor assists with year-round field research.

A voice for the forest

"We have been working with the Orang Asli in this landscape over the years, and now thanks to MY forest, we are able to take it further by capacity-building the 'people of the land' to have a stronger voice in forest governance," Shanmugaraj says.

The uniqueness of this hornbill congregation is why MNS chose these birds as the umbrella species for its conservation efforts in Belum-Temengor. There are 32 hornbill species in Asia, and only Indonesia and Thailand have more species (13) within their borders, but not in one place. Only in the "Hornbill Triangle", which includes Belum-Temengor and Ulu Muda Forest Reserve, can all 10 species be found in one area.

"BTFC is globally recognised as the Hornbill Centre of the World, and this is a great selling point to attract people to experience the beauty and uniqueness of Belum-Temengor, and perhaps promote discourse on its protection," Shanmugaraj says.

MNS's conservation efforts in BTFC directly led to the creation of the Royal Belum State Park in 2007, and won the Society the



Above:
The inaugural Hornbill Festival saw the setting up of the Sahabat Enggang community action group

Opposite page:
Fun for kids and informative displays for adults on the 10 species of hornbills that can be found in the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex



inaugural Merdeka Award (Environment) in 2008. However, the protection enjoyed by Royal Belum is limited to the northern part of BTFC, while the southern Temengor forest is unprotected and faces logging and development pressures.

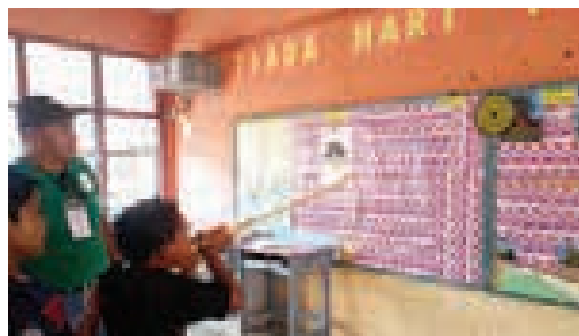
Tigers, tapirs and the people

“Our long-term goal is to see full protected status for all of Belum-Temengor, for its forests, hornbills, elephants, tigers, tapirs, and the people of the land. It might take longer than this generation, but that’s the investment we are making in Malaysia’s forest stakeholders, such as the Orang Asli, by offering them training to be the voice for the voiceless,” Shanmugaraj says.

The inaugural Hornbill Festival was attended by the Orang Asli from Pos Air Banun as well as representatives from villages dotted along Temengor dam’s water’s edge, representatives from the department managing Orang Asli concerns, and teaching personnel from the school hosting the events.

Activities included fun educational play for children and for the adults, a hornbill survey and the setting up of the Sahabat Enggang community action group (CAG) and working committee. Boosted by support from MNS’s existing CAGs, such as Sahabat Hutan Bakau (mangrove CAG from Kuala Gula) and Sahabat Raja Rimba (Friends of the Malayan Tiger from Merapoh’s tiger corridor), there were also cooking lessons focusing on tourist-friendly dishes including fried noodles, simple vegetable dishes, *sambal belacan* (chili paste dip) and curry puffs.





On the Society's ambitions for Hornbill Festivals of the future, Shanmugaraj says despite the first celebration being small and localised, MNS aims to make this a signature event for Belum-Temengor, and draw the world's attention to this precious landscape.

"The hope is that next year, we can bring outsiders here for the Hornbill Festival to celebrate together and at the same time, work with the community to publicise the beauty and uniqueness of Belum-Temengor," he says, adding the festival could also provide opportunities for the Orang Asli community to be involved in income-generating ecotourism opportunities, such as nature guiding and F&B services.

Sensitised to beauty

He says raising public awareness about Belum-Temengor's hornbills is a major part of sensitising Malaysians to the richness of the country's natural heritage. "Hornbills reflect the health of the environment, preferring old-growth forest and nesting in the largest and tallest of the forest trees. You seldom find these conditions in many other places, and the fact that we have 10 species of hornbills tells a lot about the forest and natural environment in BTFC."

On threats faced by our hornbills, Shanmugaraj says the main issues are logging and land clearing for agriculture, while much of the existing land is flooded due to the Temengor dam. "The natural



environment is squeezed and diminished, and the hornbills have no place to nest." This is detrimental to the forest landscape as a whole, because hornbills, also called farmers of the forest, can "plant" some 14,600 trees in its lifetime.

On the issue of poaching, especially regarding the highly targeted (and now critically endangered) helmeted hornbill, Shanmugaraj says the problem in Malaysia is not as bad as in Indonesia. "But, the problem may come here, because the helmeted hornbill, which is poached for its casque, can be found in BTFC," he says, thus the importance of sharing data from MNS's research with the Orang Asli.

"Capacity-building the people of the land as protectors of the hornbills, and the eyes and ears of the authorities, will help in ensuring Belum-Temengor and its biodiversity is conserved for generations to come." 🦜

Top:
The ladies took part in the cooking workshop, which concentrated on tourist-friendly fare like fried noodles and curry puffs

Middle, left:
MY forest staff member Fadhirul Amin showing the workings of a drone, to great interest

Middle, right:
Children having a go at the blowpipe

Above:
A hornbill survey being carried out among the villagers of Air Banun, to create awareness about the 10 species of hornbill, and rich biodiversity, that can be found in the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex



The hornbill fly-past

THE MNS Hornbill Volunteer Programme returned to Belum-Temengor Forest Complex in 2018 to count the migratory plain-pouched hornbill. The programme ran over two months in August and September, with four-day sessions attended by Malaysian Nature Society members, bird-lovers and members of the public eager to assist in the Society's conservation efforts in this green paradise.

Among the volunteers were two members of MNS Kuching Branch, Jason Teo Jia Hong and Batrisyia Teepol, who reported that their tasks included learning how to conduct a point count, in order to assist the counting process that takes place each morning and evening. The volunteers also interacted with the Orang Asli (indigenous) people who hosted their stay at Kg. Chuweh, one of the lakeside settlements in Temengor, on the southern part of the forest complex.

With activities that included engaging the children in play and learning, storytelling, taking part in traditional cooking (in bamboo over an open fire) and learning about the delicate skill of making and executing a blow pipe kill, the volunteers enjoyed their experience with the Orang Asli community and immersion in their culture.

Teo reported that during his session on August, a total of 13.5 hours were dedicated to the count, with 284 plain-pouched hornbills spotted. He also reported that during his session, four other hornbill species were sighted, namely the black hornbill, oriental-pied hornbill, great hornbill and wreathed hornbill, while during Batrisyia's session, the oriental pied and black hornbills were spotted, alongside the white-crowned hornbill.

Teo remarked that the overall plain-pouched hornbill population may be higher than what was observed, as the birds may "potentially be flying behind clouds, trees and mountains". 🦜



Hornbills found in Belum-Temengor, Hornbill Centre of the World

- Rhinoceros hornbill (*Buceros rhinoceros*)
- Helmeted hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*)
- Oriental pied hornbill (*Anthraceroceros albirostris*)
- Black hornbill (*Anthraceroceros malayanus*)
- White-crowned hornbill (*Berenicornis comatus*)
- Bushy-crested hornbill (*Anorrhinus galeritus*)
- Wreathed hornbill (*Rhyticeros undulatus*)
- Wrinkled hornbill (*Rhyticeros corrugatus*)
- Great hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*)*
- Plain-pouched hornbill (*Rhyticeros subruficollis*)* #

* not found on Borneo # migratory species

	7am-9am	5pm-7.30pm
Day 1	–	54
Day 2	3	117
Day 3	0	35
Day 4	75	–

Table 1: Plain-pouched hornbill sighting on 28th to 31st August 2018

Black hornbill (Credit: Jason Teo Jia Hong)

The MNS Hornbill Volunteer Programme is part of the Hornbill Conservation Project, Malaysian Nature Society's ongoing efforts to raise awareness about the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex, which is one of the target areas under MY forest



Exploring to save Ulu Muda

ISSUES SURROUNDING the Ulu Muda Forest Reserve in Kedah are long-standing, with logging bringing about a loss of biodiversity, pollution and water supply woes among states relying on this water catchment.

There have been plenty of calls to action, including in 2017, when the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) and nine other NGOs urged that the whole Greater Ulu Muda Forest Complex covering 162,000ha be given permanent protection as a state park, similar to the Royal Belum State Park in northern Perak.

In October 2018, the state government announced that it would stop logging activities in the reserve as well as parts of other permanent forest and water catchment areas, which has been received well. The MNS Kedah Branch, however, is planning to take this a step further by exploring the area's biodiversity, and in this way push towards greater protection of Ulu Muda.

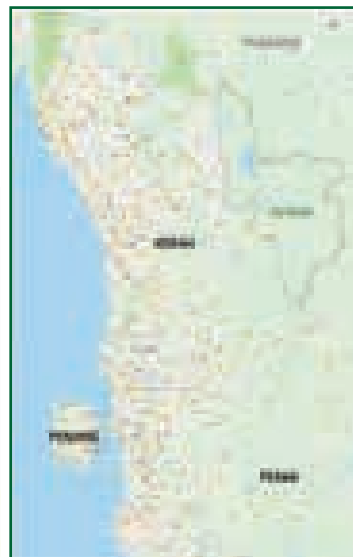
MNS Kedah Chairman Lt. Col. (Rtd) Husamudin Yaacob highlights that the forest reserve feeds the Muda, Pedu and Ahning dams that together provide water in Perlis, Kedah and Penang, including for double cropping in the Muda Irrigation Scheme, which produces 45% of Malaysia's total annual national rice requirement.

He says Ulu Muda is the last of the large forest reserves in the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia with unexplored biodiversity, which is why MNS has initiated a large-scale and long-term scientific expedition to ascertain the flora and fauna of this precious green space. The initiative was kicked off with a public forum and workshop on 29th January 2018 with the participation of government agencies, NGOs and members of the public.

With the initiative supported by agencies involved in the management of Ulu Muda, Husamudin says the next step is getting approval from the Kedah government, and buy-in from other sources and partners, based on MNS's track record with similar scientific expeditions in Endau-Rompin (1980s) and Belum-Temengor (1990s).

He said a thorough, full-scale exploration, with experts and researchers from local universities and other research organisations for a period of two to three years, "will enable us to determine the potential value in ecotourism, sport fishing and conserving Ulu Muda as a national natural heritage park for Kedah.

"This is an important mission for determining the biodiversity of Ulu Muda and the best solutions for this area and Kedah, now and in the future." 🐼



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Asia-Pacific Forest Governance

BETWEEN ROOTS & CANOPY

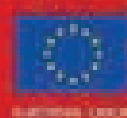
Growing local involvement in forest governance & monitoring

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The tropical forests of Asia and the Western Pacific are special. Their lush landscapes are home to an astounding wealth and variety of life, many of it found nowhere else. They are essential refuges for species on the brink of extinction; amazing animals like the Golden-mantled Tree Kangaroo of Papua New Guinea, and the Helmeted Hornbill of Malaysia.

In fact, there are over 154 million hectares of globally important Biodiversity hotspots throughout Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. Many of them are recognised as Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) – sites vital for the world's diversity of life to continue – by BirdLife International and other leading conservation groups.

But these forests don't just benefit wildlife. They benefit all of us, across the entire globe. From the strong roots that hold the soil, to the fresh leaves in the canopy that create oxygen, they are essential in providing what we need to survive. By storing carbon, they combat climate change. They clean the air we breathe and the water we drink. They provide medicines, tourism and livelihoods. And they are also people's homes.

However, these forests are in trouble. Human populations are growing rapidly. Farmland is expanding and clearing vast swathes of forest. And illegal logging is a huge threat.

The Asia-Pacific Forest Governance Programme is empowering local people to manage and protect their own forest.

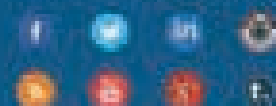
We know that there is no substitute for local knowledge. Local people know the lie of the land and can see the health of the ecosystem first-hand. So it stands to reason that they should play an important role in monitoring and making decisions about the forest in which they live.

Sadly, the power of local communities and indigenous people is often constrained by lack of technical knowledge, experience and political influence. The Forest Governance Project plans to change that, bridging the gap between local people and the decisions made about their forest homes.



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