

WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

Safeguarding our wildlife species from extinction ...

While development works are pushing back the former frontiers of the country's wildlife, indiscriminate logging activities and pollution are further destroying much of their natural habitat, the director of Perak's Wildlife and National Parks department, Encik Hapiz Abdul Manap, said.

Sometimes, instead of withdrawing deeper into the jungles, the animals come out only to meet with their own annihilation. The terrapin farm in Bota Kanan and the sambar deer farm in Sungkai are just two efforts in wildlife conservation in Perak to safeguard some of Malaysia's diminishing species.

The terrapin farm in Bota Kanan, about 45km from Ipoh, was a pioneer project in Peninsular Malaysia's west coast. Started in 1968, it was official a decade later by the Sultan of Perak. Two other terrapin farms in the country are in Sungai Betani, Kedah, and Kuala Berang, Trengganu, which were begun about six years ago.

In Sungei Perak, the six-kilometre Bota Kanan stretch is a favourite habitat of the terrapine, scientifically known as the *Batangor beska*. More than 1,000 year-old terrapins from the farm have been let into the river. If they are released shortly after hatching, creatures like rats, eagles, iguanas and fish gobble them up. The breeding season between November and March sees about 3,400 eggs collected each year. Apart from the Wildlife Department's four-acre project, there are seven other licensed terrapin egg collectors stationed along the Bota Kanan river banks. Each terrapin lays between 20 and 30 eggs each season, with 25 a common average.

The eggs are said to have 60 per cent protein and other nutritional values. At the farm, the selected eggs are placed in hatcheries for 75 days. The mortality rate is fairly high, with only 60 per cent of the eggs hatching. The ponds are now teeming with 7,000 three-month old and 3,400 15-month old terrapins. They are fed mainly with weeds, kangkong, bananas and ikan kembong. Fifty young terrapins can devour 15 kilos of kangkong and six kilos of ripe bananas a day.

The farm's oldest living terrapins, 60 of them, have now reached 12 years of age. Though terrapins in their natural habitat start breeding about seven years after birth, these have not yet begun to do so. "We

are keeping them here for observation as well as to determine their life-span. Legend has it that the longest living terrapin survived a century," said Encik Tajuddin, deputy director of Perak Department of Wildlife and National Parks.

There are 22 sambar deer in the 10-acre farm which forms part of the 8,068 acre Sungkai Game reserve. The 11 pioneer deer were brought in from the zoos in Taiping, Malacca and Johore and the Kuala Kangsar palace. The first three offspring in 1979 died — two from "cold", the other from a snake bite. Apart from grass and leaves, the deer are given a kind of salt called "Rockies vitamins".

New Straits Times, 5.6.1982

Extinct Rhino Spotted Again?

The three-horned rhino, widely thought to have become extinct, is said to be roaming the jungles of West Kalimantan.

The existence of the animal came to light when a villager applied for a licence to hunt rhinos, said a local leader, Achmad Satip. The beasts' horns are believed to have medicinal value. The 50-year-old villager, Jubak, said that he had spotted a herd of 20 three-horned rhinos in a remote village in West Kalimantan. "The rhinos are much larger than water buffaloes ... And as far as I can recall, the animals have three horns. The third one is precisely on the nose," Jubak is reported to have said. The villager had his application rejected by the West Kalimantan Governor.

New Straits Times, 17 June 1982

Monkeys — First Victims of WWII

Hundreds of Malaysian monkeys are imported and used by the United States army in military experiments on the effects of nuclear radiation, chemical Warfare agents and biological Warfare agents. The US-based International Primate League is making these claims. In doing so, it is urging the Government to ban the export of monkeys and grant them total protection with immediate effect.

The Director-general of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Encik Mohamed Khan Momin Khan said a 1975 survey showed there were 318,000 long-tailed macaques (*keras*) and 45,000 short-tailed macaques (*berok*) in the country then. He said the Government allows export of these monkeys "for the furtherance of bona fide scientific research and development beneficial to humanity carried out by institutions supported with public funds as evidenced

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