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Adopt A Sea Turtle At Sarawak's Turtle Island

KUCHING, Oct 2 (Bernama) -- "Adopt A Sea Turtle" is a wildlife conservation programme in Sarawak that gives locals and foreigners a chance to experience turtle conservation activities at the turtle island of Pulau Talang-Talang Besar near here.

According to the latest issue of "Perkasa", the Sarawak Timber Industry Corporation's bi-monthly newsletter, participants will be able take part in conservation activities including tagging and measuring the turtles, patrolling the beach, transferring the eggs to hatchery, releasing the hatchlings, recording data as well as assisting in other research and educational activities.

"As one of the state's extensive efforts in wildlife protection, the turtle adoption programme is also a way of incorporating and involving locals and foreigners to value and celebrate what Sarawak has done thus far in sea turtle conservation," it said.

Launched by the then State Urban Development and Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Wong Soon Kah on April 30 this year, the four-day three-night programme is being conducted from May to September yearly at the island, which is part of the Talang-Satang National Park.

So far, eight species have been found at the national park, where 99 percent of nesting sea turtles recorded in Sarawak are of the Green Turtle species.

Following the listing of all sea turtles under the totally-protected species list in the Wildlife Protection Ordinance, 1993 (Amended 2003), a proposal was made to the state government to gazette sea grass beds and coral reefs at the Kuala Lawas area, which had been identified as feeding ground for green and hawksbill turtle as totally protected area.

Perkasa said other conservation efforts included the Reef Ball project, which was found to be successful in reducing the number of sea turtle mortality rate and ensuring its nesting areas are further protected besides benefiting the local fishermen by contributing significant increase in their catches.

However another 5,000 reef balls are still needed to protect the sea turtles' critical habitat, their swimming areas, nesting beaches and feeding ground and migration pathway along the 1,000-kilometre coastline of Sarawak.

"This is where other conservation orientated organisations and the private sector can play their role and show support," it said.

Legislations pertaining to sea turtles in Sarawak are also in place and have been regularly revised to suit the current needs in managing sea turtle reseach and conservation.

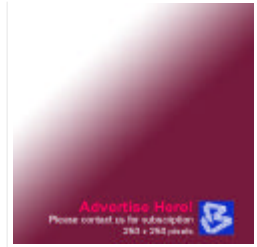
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