



KERATAN AKHBAR

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'Assessment impact report needed to protect habitats'

PETALING JAYA: Any future development involving forest and wildlife habitats will require a Wildlife Assessment Impact Report under a proposal by Perhilitan.

This requirement is included under Perhilitan's proposed amendments to the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 (Act 716), which will involve amendments to 78 existing sections and the addition of 10 new sections.

It said the existing legislation for this came under the Environmental Quality (Prescribed Activities) (Environmental Impact Assessment) 2015, which is under the purview of the Department of Environment (DOE).

"But when development is taking place in a wildlife habitat, DOE cannot take any action as its jurisdiction only deals with air and water pollution, as well as scheduled waste.

"Perhilitan has taken the initiative to come up with a new section, which will see the need for a report to be submitted on a development project's impact on wildlife," it said.

The report, it added, must include mitigating measures such as the construction of viaducts, surveillance of wildlife corridors, enforcement, wildlife enrichment and the translocation of wildlife from the project site.

It said development projects like logging, plantation, settlement and dam construction would see forests being razed, the loss of

Inventory of Animals from Perhilitan

Species	Estimated Population (before 2010)	Estimated Population (2018)
Tiger	500	250 - 340
Tapir	1,100 - 1,500	700 - 800
Sun bear	700 - 800	300 - 500
Gaur (Seladang)	270 - 330	150 - 200
Kijang	2,600 - 3,000	2,000 - 2,500
Sambar deer	700 - 1,000	342 - 427
Elephant	1,220 - 1,680	1012 - 1102

which would negatively impact wildlife population, especially mammals.

"The construction of highways and trail has led to the isolation of habitats, with the jungle complex being divided by a network of roads.

"This means the habitats are no longer viable for wildlife to forage and breed, while the smaller area is not suitable for herd animals

The department is also asking to be given the power to intercept communications as a way of increasing its enforcement, intelligence gathering and investigations, particularly against organised crime and syndicates.

Other proposals include specific provisions for repeat offenders, false declaration and making it a crime to promote and sell protected wildlife online and via other interactive mediums.

Perhilitan said currently, many of those who promoted wildlife online were middlemen who did not have the animals in their premises or control.

"We can't control such activities as there is no provision against this," it said, adding that it had received 420 complaints of such online advertisements between 2016 and 2018 and detected 100 sellers.

It also suggested a fine of RM20,000 to RM1ml for encroaching and poaching in wildlife reserves and protected areas.

Presently, the fine is only up to RM10,000 or a year's jail or both.

"This high amount is suggested as illegals encroaching into these areas to poach and take agarwood is becoming worrying," it said, adding that 197 illegals were nabbed between 2002 and 2018, including 68 Vietnamese, 59 Thais, 59 Cambodians and 11 Indonesians.

like elephants," it said, adding that this had resulted in more human-wildlife conflict and the animals ending up as roadkill.

Welfare Department records showed that between 2010 and 2015, there were 70 deaths and 614 injuries from wildlife attacks, while Perhilitan estimated some RM21.3ml in damages alone between 2013 and 2017.