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Marine police to boost measures against wildlife smugglers

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JOHOR BARU: The marine police will spearhead more steps in safeguarding Malaysian waters from smuggling activities, including animal trafficking.

Bukit Aman Marine Operations Force commander Senior Asst Comm Mohd Yusoff Mamat said the marine police had been roped into the integrated operation dubbed Ops Bersepadu Khazanah.

The operation is focused on rescuing animals from being smuggled in or out of the country.

"Marine police have managed to prevent six attempts to smuggle exotic animals out of the country and arrested seven people within the first 11 months of this year.

"We have also rescued 2,407 exotic animals worth RM633,800."

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We believe that more inspection and surveillance can deter any smuggling attempt.

SAC Mohd Yusoff Mamat

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The integrated operation between the police, Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) and other agencies to weed out wildlife smugglers was launched by Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Abdul Hamid Bador on Sept 3.

SAC Mohd Yusoff said the force would also take a more aggressive approach to get more arrests and confiscation such as by adding more personnel to its intelligence unit.

"These changes and approaches will affect all states immediately because we believe that more inspection and surveillance can deter any smuggling attempt.

"We will also enhance ties with our counterparts from Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines in terms of intelligence sharing," he said after witnessing the handing over ceremony of the Southern Region Two commander position from Supt Noor Azman Jamal to Asst Comm Abd Rahman Mohamad at the Marine Police Tampoi Headquarters here yesterday.

Malaysia, he said, suffered losses of RM5bil every year due to cigarette smuggling and RM6bil due to illegal fishing by foreign fishermen.

The marine police, he added, would also be getting two new vessels worth RM200mil by next year for training and operations, as well as for transporting personnel and equipment to Sabah and Sarawak.