



KERATAN AKHBAR

SURAT KHABAR	: NEW STRAITS TIMES		
TARIKH	: 31/3/2021	MUKA SURAT	: 7
JABATAN	: PERHILITAN / JPSM		
KLASIFIKASI	: <b>PERHATIAN</b>		

# OUR FORESTS OUR WILDLIFE HABITAT

Our Malaysian tropical rainforest is blessed with year round sunshine and regular rainfall to nourish plant growth. Our diverse ecosystems provide the natural habitats for a wide variety of wildlife species. For that reason, Malaysia is a biodiversity hotspot and a megadiverse country.

Our forest is home to 307 known species of mammals, 785 species of birds, 242 species of amphibians and 567 species of reptiles, as well as 2,068 species of freshwater and marine fishes. Each species plays a key role in the health and balance of the ecosystem. At the top of the food chain, the tigers as apex predators regulate the population of prey, maintaining the balance between herbivores and the vegetation on which they feed. Orang-utans as gardeners



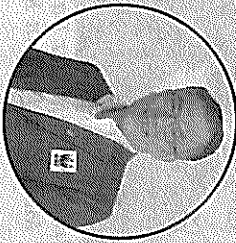
Gundaling, a male orang-utan seen at Bukit Pilon Forest Reserve.

of the forest help seed dispersal, as are elephants as they create pathways through the forest for smaller animals to use.

This rich biodiversity constitutes an extraordinary natural capital that maintains our environment and the life-support systems that give us food, water and economic benefits.

Over the last five decades, our forests have shrunk due to conversion for economic development. Compounded with poaching of tigers and other wildlife to feed the illegal wildlife trade, our tiger numbers have dropped to an alarming low. If forest fragmentation and poaching issues are not effectively addressed, our tigers could go extinct. Orang-utans also face striking forest habitats in plantation areas. Bornean elephants have less space to roam due to forest fragmentation and installation of electric-fences by plantation owners, causing increased incidences of human-elephant conflict.

At the first Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, our government committed to keep at least 50 percent of our land mass under forest cover. This commitment is embedded in the new National Forestry



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Policy. Our protected areas conserve wildlife and provide ecosystem services including recreation forests. Our production forests sustain the extraction of timber which also functions as an important habitat for biodiversity. The Central Forest Spine Master Plan in Peninsular Malaysia and the Heart of Borneo initiative in Sabah and Sarawak provide the framework for major forested areas to be connected. Conserving natural habitats is a priority for the tigers, orang-utans and Bornean elephants and a whole range of species, whose presence is the very backbone of our ecosystem.

In support of these initiatives, WWF-Malaysia works with government authorities and the private sector to (a) Protect forests and important wildlife habitats and ecosystems, (b) Produce commodities such as timber and palm oil in compliance with the principles of sustainability, and (c) Restore degraded habitats and setting land aside to establish wildlife corridors.

Building on this rich heritage of biodiversity, we urge Corporate Malaysia to support these conservation initiatives by committing to principles of sustainability and ensuring compliance with certification standards across the entire value chain. For Malaysia to remain a haven for biodiversity, concerted efforts must be made to reverse the loss of nature and restore our wildlife population before we reach the point of no return.

The Malaysian tiger, an apex predator, regulate the population of prey animals, maintaining the balance between herbivores and the vegetation on which they feed.



Bornean elephants are the among the "gardens" of the forests, dispersing seeds and creating pathways for smaller animals to use.

