



KERATAN AKHBAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	THE STAR			
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Plantation workers and loggers catching and selling wildlife

MIRI: Workers in some plantations and logging areas are trapping wildlife and selling them to traders and pet shops.

Wildlife such as rare songbirds, hornbills, monkeys and even sun bears are being captured and sold by certain traders and pet shops in the cities and towns, sources said.

"One can order wildlife from certain traders and pet shops and hire plantation workers to trap them.

"The buyers then simply apply to the State Forest Department for a permit. This sort of wildlife abuse is rampant in Sarawak as the department is too relaxed in giving out permits," said an environmental observer.

There are two separate and independent agencies in Sarawak dealing with wildlife issues – the State Forest Department, which issues permits, and the Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC), which enforces laws against wildlife exploitation.

The Star learnt that the State Forest Department does not consult SFC before issuing permits on wildlife capturing.

The environmental observer said the State Forest Department must stop issuing permits to keep protected animals in Sarawak if wildlife abuse is to be stopped.

"Otherwise, anybody can just trap and capture wildlife, and then go to the department and apply a permit," he lamented.

Meanwhile, SFC enforcement officers in Miri recently rescued a monkey, which a resident had captured and kept in a house, following a public tip-off.

The owner had illegally set traps to capture the protected animal.

SFC enforcement officers found the monkey locked up in a small rusty cage. It was later sent to a wildlife sanctuary for eventual release into the wild.

Members of the public who have information on wildlife abuse can call the SFC hotlines in Kuching (019-885 9996 and 016-856 5564), Sibul (019-819 0140 and 019-889 4474), Bintulu (019-822 3449 and 019-833 2737) and Miri (019-822 4566 and 019-829 0994).