



KERATAN AKHBAR

AKHBAR	:	THE STAR		
TARIKH	:	26/9/2019	MUKA SURAT	: 3
JABATAN	:	PERHILITAN		
KLASIFIKASI	:	PERHATIAN		

Sun bear rescued after seven years of living in misery



In safe hands: The sun bear on its way to a sanctuary for rehabilitation.

By STEPHEN THEN
stephenhen@thestar.com.my

MIRI: A sun bear that was locked up in a house in Kuching has been rescued from seven years of living under miserable conditions.

An enforcement team from the Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) conducted the operation at about 4pm yesterday.

"Our enforcement team went to the house in Demak Laut with an order to rescue and take custody of the sun bear after the owner refused to surrender it. We are taking the sun bear to the Matang Wildlife Sanctuary for rehabilitation."

"The public uproar over the plight of the bear was overwhelming," said the corporation's CEO Zolkiphi Mohamad Aton.

He added that the licence issued by the Sarawak Forestry Department to the owner to keep protected species was also revoked.

"This is a stern warning. Wildlife should be left in their natural habitat," he said.

Malaysian Nature Society national council member Musa Musbah thanked the SFC for swiftly intervening and rescuing the sun bear.

However, he questioned the department's policy of continuing to issue licences to possess wildlife in Sarawak.

"The SFC as an enforcement body is doing a good job.

"However, the fact that the department continues to issue licences for wildlife is something that must be stopped.

"By continuing to issue licences it is sending a wrong message to the hunters and trappers that it is okay to capture these wild animals for sale."

"This is going to fuel the wildlife trade. The wildlife trade in Sarawak is already at a serious level," said Musa, who is also MNS Miri branch chairman.

On Wednesday, *The Star* had quoted Musa as saying that he received an SOS from a member of the public on the plight of the sun bear.

He added that the sun bear was locked up in a small enclosure in a house.

"Apparently, the owner had a licence to keep the sun bear, which is a totally protected species and cannot be captured," he said, adding that the animal was said to be in great distress.

World Wide Fund for Nature Malaysia Sarawak conservation department head Dr Jason Hon said wildlife must be kept in the wild and not as pets.

"Sun bears must have large space to roam as they can be active day and night. A small enclosure will cause great distress to these animals," he said, and urged the authorities to upgrade the regulations of the long-outdated Sarawak Wildlife Ordinance.