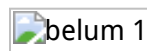


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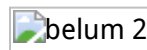
EXPLORING BIODIVERSITY WHILE ASSISTING THE ORANG ASLI COMMUNITY



PENANG, February 2016 – A research team together with final-year students from the School of Biological Sciences (PPSK) Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) recently went on a 5-day expedition to explore the biodiversity at the Royal Belum Forest Reserve in Gerik, Perak.

The expedition into the heart of the Royal Belum Forest was made more meaningful by incorporating a community service programme together with the Orang Asli community at the Aman Damai village, which can only be reached by boats to the specified locations.

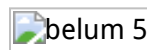
Dean of PPSK, Professor Dr. Amirul Al-Ashraf Balakrishnan Abdullah said that, the expedition was not merely focusing on scientific work and exploring the biodiversity, but was added with a programme to meet the Orang Asli villagers of Aman Damai and distributing provisions such as rice and other food supplies.



"This is the first time PPSK conducted such a programme, combining a field expedition and a community outreach activity, which he hoped will give a greater impact," he explained.

The Aman Damai village is situated on an island in the Royal Belum Forest and at certain times, the village would be flooded whenever the water level in the river rises.

Overall, the villagers consisting of close to 20 people and also the village head conveyed their appreciation and happiness for the assistance offered by USM to reduce the hardships faced in their daily lives.



The expedition comprised of 23 staff and 25 students, carried out 10 projects on sampling and research throughout the 5 days of expedition which among others involved research projects on land and water ecosystems.

The expedition was also assisted by the Perak National Park (Taman Negara Perak) authorities.

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