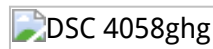


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17 DEC DON'T WAIT TO FIND ORANG-UTANS ONLY IN BOOKS - EXPERT



PENANG, 17 December 2015 - "Let us avoid from being blamed by future generations if the orang-utan could only be found solely in books and visual recordings then."

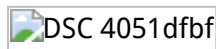
That was the remark from the CEO of Borneo Orang-utan Survival (BOS) Foundation, Dr. Ir. Jamartin Sihite when commenting on the sentiment of the communities, particularly in Asia which is regarded as being unappreciative of the uniqueness of the orang-utan which only exist in two South-East Asian countries, Malaysia and Indonesia.

He said that, data gathered in 2004 indicated that close to 60,000 orang-utans still exist in the wild and the number has been going down at 15 to 20 percent every year.

"From that total number, many live in their habitat in Kalimantan, with 15 to 20 percent being in Malaysia and approximately 5,500 more in Sumatra.

"If there is no change in the current situation and if the burning and destruction of the rainforest continues, the possibility of future generations seeing the orang-utan will only be in books or videos," he explained.

He added that, the destruction of the forest, more specifically the fire which occurred in Kalimantan a few months earlier had brought a major impact on the habitat of the orang-utan.



"There were among the orang-utans which were lost and wandered instead to nearby villages and the primates were in very bad conditions."

"We have succeeded in mobilising an emergency rescue mission to save the 39 orang-utans affected by the forest fires," he said.

Realising this fact, he was thrilled to be able to work together with Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) through the Malaysian Primatological Society (MPS) and the Asean Local Knowledge Network (ALKN), which launched the Post Haze Orang-utan Survival Assistance Fund 2015 here recently.

The fund was launched by the academician and Local Knowledge Group Manager, Professor Dr. Badaruddin Mohamed. Also present was the Coordinator of ALKN, Dr. Norizan Esa.

The President of MPS who is also a well-known academician from the School of Biological Sciences USM, Professor Dr. Mashhor Mansor said, it was a calling for him to give support in ensuring the sustainability of the ecosystem and the lives of the orang-utan are preserved.

"It is now time for us to continue contributing in whatever means possible to ensure that a national treasure would remain in existence for the benefit of future generations.

"The orang-utan conservation efforts are steps to ensure that the species would continue living safely from harm and the destruction of nature due to man's actions," he said.

In addition, the fund was launched to assist in securing funds and efforts in rescuing the orang-utans around the areas of Kalimantan and Sumatra, since the primates have been identified as being among the endangered species in the world.

Records of BOSF showed that the foundation has spent around USD6 million a year for the conservation of orang-utans including the expenses spent on 700 orang-utans which are cared for at the BOSF conservation centre and also those in the wild.

BOSF also conducted awareness and education campaigns to villagers living near the forest where the species could be found to remind them on avoiding activities which might disrupt or endanger the habitat of the said primates.

Jamartin also presented a special talk entitled 'Living with Haze & Fire' which among others related on how the haze and forest fires have deeply affected the orang-utans and their habitat.

Translation: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin

Text: Marziana Mohamed Alias

Photos: Mohd Fairus Md Isa



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Pusat Media dan Perhubungan Awam / Media and Public Relations Centre

Level 1, Building E42, Chancellory II, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 USM, Pulau Pinang Malaysia

Tel : +604-653 3888 | Fax : +604-658 9666 | Email : pro@usm.my (<mailto:pro@usm.my>)

Laman Web Rasmi / Official Website : [Universiti Sains Malaysia \(http://www.usm.my\)](http://www.usm.my)

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