

Tuesday, 18 November 2014, 6:18 PM

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## Restoring Sabah's wildlife habitats ( /node/50976 )

BY LAILI ISMAIL ( /TAXONOMY/TERM/2240 ) - 9 NOVEMBER 2014 @ 8:10 AM

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THE survival of some 11,000 orang utans and 2,000 Bornean pygmy elephants relies on the existence and the quality of Sabah's lowland forests.

Orang utans are protected and listed as endangered, while elephants, endemic to North Borneo, have been declared protected.

However, because of fragmented habitats, at least 300 elephants and 800 orang utans are under threat in Sungai Kinabatangan.


For years, the oil palm industry has been blamed for the decline of the wildlife population, as well as riverbank erosion in the area.

However, an oil palm plantation operator, the world's third largest, through its partnership with the Sabah Wildlife Department and Borneo Conservation Trust, will implement a five-year programme to support the protection and enhancement of forested areas in lower Kinabatangan, and to secure an important ecological corridor.

Felda Global Ventures (FGV) Sdn Bhd, through its subsidiary Pontian United Plantations, recently conducted a demarcation exercise involving voluntarily excising some 20ha of plantable and productive land for the reinstatement of a riparian reserve.


The reserve is part of the recently re-established Kinabatangan Mega Biodiversity and Wildlife Corridor.

FGV head of plantation East Malaysia Denys Munang said as part of its joint-venture land management programme with the Sabah Wildlife Department and Borneo Conservation Trust, oil palm trees along the new wildlife riparian corridor



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### Pakistan reduces NZ to 295-6 at lunch ( /node/54007 )

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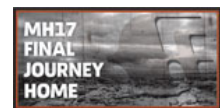
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were removed to allow sunlight to penetrate the tree canopy.

"This move also enhances the growth rate of native trees.

"This 20ha piece of land will be part of the existing 280ha of forest reserve presently managed as a wildlife corridor," Denys said at a tree-planting exercise at Orico estate in Kinabatangan.

FGV also welcomed Nestle Malaysia and Sime Darby Foundation's support under the RiLeaf Project, which would see the reforestation of 2,400ha of land along the river.

As of September, 222,212 trees had been planted along the river.

Borneo Conservation Trust executive secretary Raymond Alfred said more than 85 per cent of Sabah's flagship species resided within the corridor and it was feared that without strategic intervention and conservation plans, the population might be further fragmented and isolated.

"This, in turn, may encourage inbreeding and cause genetic drift, as well as fuel human-wildlife conflict," said Alfred.

Sabah Wildlife Department director Datuk Dr Laurentius Ambu said Sabah should take a leadership role by supporting the re-establishment and restoration of key wildlife corridors.

"To save the endangered species from further threats, the Sabah Wildlife Department and Borneo Conservation Trust, with the support of FGV, are implementing conservation efforts recommended in the Species Action Plan, which was developed in 2010."

The plan called for securing existing forest patches or land in lower Kinabatangan, connecting and restoring all key migratory routes for Borneo elephants to reduce conflict incidents, and finding alternative approaches to support the livelihoods of local communities to avoid illegal conversion of forests into oil palm plantations.

Laurentius said the corridor would serve to connect key habitats for orang utans, elephants and other wildlife species in Kinabatangan.

"The critical missing link will allow these flagship species to migrate between key habitats."

"We hope that our steps in enhancing the wildlife corridor and increase the size of elephants and orang utan habitats in the Kinabatangan Mega Biodiversity Corridor could be duplicated by other palm oil plantation companies throughout the nation."

FGV is also developing 7ha of a riparian buffer zone along the riverbank to serve as a mini eco-tourism destination.

The area, known as Pangkalan, would be designated as a

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## Slide for fun (/node/53821)

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Nation

## Another relief centre open in K. Terengganu (/node/54005)

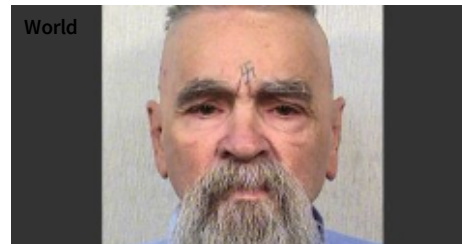
KUALA TERENGGANU: Kuala Terengganu has added another relief centre which opened for flood victims at noon today.

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## US mass murderer Manson, 80, to

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recreational centre for visitors.

Pangkalan, which is equipped with basic facilities, such as toilets and open resting huts, is not far from the main eco-tourism centres.

Two rainforest lodges, Sukau and Bilit, are a 15-minute boat-ride away, and the area is frequented by tourists and wildlife researchers.

"In the past, we have participated in tree-planting efforts with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the state government.

"The fruits of our labour are now evident in the trees that have grown beautifully in Pangkalan," said Denys.

"The local people (numbering four to five families) living along the riverside will be relocated to avoid human-wildlife conflict.

"They are also supportive of the idea as it would bring income to them," he said, adding that they would be provided with homestay facilities to help them offset part of their loss of livelihood.

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## marry in prison (/node/54015)

LOS ANGELES: American mass murderer Charles Manson, 80, has been granted permission to wed a 26-year-old woman who has been visiting him in prison.

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Business

## KL shares higher at midafternoon (/node/53989)

KUALA LUMPUR: At 3pm today, there were 352 gainers, 329 losers and 319 counters traded unchanged on the Bursa Malaysia.

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## Demand for higher quality statistics: Zeti (/node/53987)

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