

Headline **Don't let natural wonder go to waste**  
Date **13 Aug 2009**  
MediaTitle **The Star**  
Section **Metro**  
Journalist **N/A**  
Frequency **Daily**  
ADValue **2,124**

Language **English**  
Page No **13**  
Article Size **117 cm<sup>2</sup>**  
Color **Black/white**  
PRValue **6,372**



# Don't let natural wonder go to waste

YOUR report, "A desolate sanctuary" (*StarMetro*, Aug 5) leaves us all nature lovers in a quandary between supporting such a massive tourism project or leaving it as a conservation and research centre.

I was among the many who made a beeline to Dengkil, when the Paya Indah Wetlands opened in 2001.

The Paya Indah Wetlands when first conceived was truly a brilliant idea, thanks to our former forward-looking prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohammad. The RM160mil park has since failed to draw visitors even after several relaunches, the last one being under the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan).

What a waste if this natural wonder that is home to migratory birds, lotus and water lilies, not to mention the three hippopotamus presented by the Botswana government, and crocodiles are left in a desolate state.

The wetlands sanctuary does not have to be a white elephant if measures to turn it into a tourism park are really looked into seriously. It can draw the crowds if sections of the wetlands such as the accommodation, food and beverage, and recrea-

tional activities are privatised and left to the people in the hospitality business.

The other part of the wetlands intended for conservation and research is best left in the care of Perhilitan. And this includes the flora and fauna.

The Paya Indah wetlands can be as good as our Forest Research institute of Malaysia (FRIM) if Perhilitan and other relevant bodies make it a centre for their conservation and research on wetlands.

Perhilitan alone just can't manage the 3,300ha facility.

Preserve and conserve this "gem of a beauty" that is so close to KLIA and LCCT.

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