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## New Act to provide greater protection for wildlife

**PETALING JAYA:** The proposal to repeal the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 and replace it with a new act for greater protection of wildlife will be presented to the Cabinet for approval today.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Douglas Uggah Embas said once it was approved, the Wildlife Conservation Bill would be tabled in Parliament.

"The proposed act has taken feedback and recommendations from relevant parties in the Government and non-governmental organisa-

tions, into consideration," he said in a statement after the launch of the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) research gallery in Kepong yesterday.

He said under the Bill, the penalties provided for crimes have been increased by between 10 to 30 times besides mandatory jail sentences for serious offences.

The new act, he said would also provide better enforcement on wildlife derivatives to prevent them from being used for traditional medicine.

"Under the existing Act, protection is limited to mammalians, reptiles, birds and insects while the new act will also provide protection to amphibians (frogs), arachnids (spiders) and gastropods (snails).

"It will also provide wider powers on new activities such as circuses and exhibition of wildlife," he said.

He added that the new act would also cover the issue of invasive alien species which contribute to the extinction of local wildlife. The existing act was last amended in 1998.