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Eco-tourism potential

TEMENGOR Forest Reserve is a production forest, which means logging activities are carried out actively in the area. But these activities are slowly destroying the biological treasures of the area.

The need to protect this reserve is vital as it's home to thousands of animals and plants, some of which are endemic to the area. Enter the Pulau Banding Rainforest Research Centre. It's promoting eco-tourism through the sustainable development of the area.

Its chief executive officer Daniel Baskaran said: "We're hoping that the state government will protect the area and promote eco-tourism as an alternative means of income. If the forest is gone, it would spell trouble for the flora and fauna." We have to convince the state government that Temengor Forest Reserve is a place for large animals to roam and breed, without having to face danger from humans. Heavy logging activities will eventually destroy the area.

"There are so many aspects that we need to study about this area such as the forestry and ecosystem so we can continue to protect it."

The centre has embarked on joint research activities with local universities and institutions such as Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, MNS, World Wide Fund, Fishery Department and Forest Research Institute Malaysia. It has also formed a joint research with University of Kyoto, Japan.

Among the areas of studies that need financial support and collaboration are the biophysical description of the Belum-Temengor tropical rainforest, systematic inventory of the flora and fauna found in the area, socio-economic and cultural environment of the indigenous people in Belum Temengor, carbon offset and carbon credit potential of the forest, its aquatic environment of rivers and lakes, and plants with medicinal potential.