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# Tree in risky waters

The oldest and biggest *bakau minyak* mangrove tree in Malaysia is at risk of being washed away, due to the rapid soil erosion in its natural habitat at Sungai Jempol in Pulau Kukup in Pontian, Johor. >3

## Soil erosion posing threat

### Biggest mangrove tree at risk of being washed away

By ZAZALI MUSA  
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**PONTIAN:** The country's oldest *bakau minyak* tree or known as *rhizora mucronata* scientifically, is at the risk of being washed away due to the rapid soil erosion taking place at its natural habitat.

A survey conducted by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia last month found that the century old tree, towering almost 30m high, was also the biggest mangrove tree in the country.

The tree, located at the estuary of Sungai Jempol at the Pulau Kukup National Park is 58cm in diameter compared to a similar species in Larut Matang, Perak which is 55.5cm in diameter.

"The tree is currently standing just 10 metres away from the waterline and it could fall into the sea in few months time if no immediate action is taken to protect it," said Johor National Park Corporation director Suhairi Hashim.

He was speaking to reporters at the launch of the World's Wetlands Day 2012 at the Pulau Kukup National Park by the deputy minister in the Prime Minister's

Department Datuk Ahmad Maslan.

At the event, the minister also launched two books *Aura Alam* and *A Pictorial View of Its Beauty - Pulau Kukup and the Johor National Park Corporation Conservation Fund*.

Suhairi said presently, about six metres of the shore line where the tree stood, was eroding monthly and based

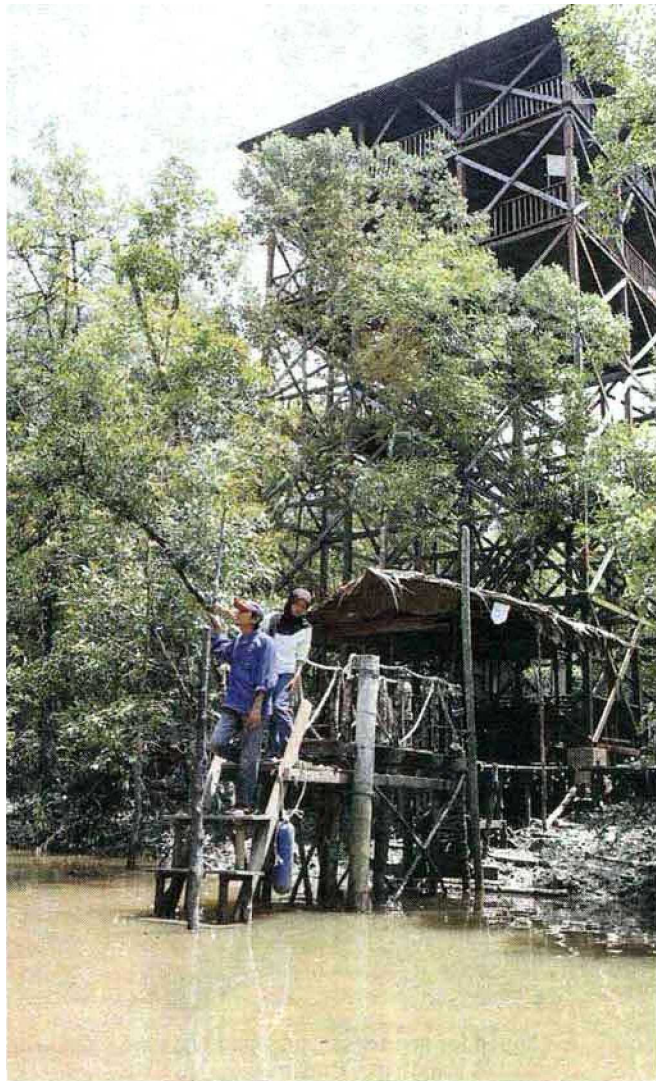
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on the rate, in three months time, it would encroach into the tree's base.

"We need about RM300,000 to build a retaining wall or a raised concrete platform surrounding the area to prevent further erosion," he said.

Similarly, Suhairi said the National Park had planted more than 10,000 mangrove trees at the Tanjung Piai National Park and Pulau Kukup since November last year as part of the long term objective to conserve mangrove areas in Johor.

Meanwhile, Ahmad hoped the Government-linked Bursa Malaysia listed companies would come forward to contribute to the conservation fund which received initial contribution of RM100,000 from Malakoff Bhd and RM10,000 from the Johor National Park Corporation.



**Watch tower:** The six-storey observation tower at Pulau Kukup National Park in Johor, where mangrove trees grow at the estuary of Sungai Jempol.