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Survey findings to aid Danum Valley 2020 Plan

Emin Madi

KOTA KINABALU: Information obtained from a recent Resource and Wildlife Survey participated by 132 researchers will be crucial for the mid-term review of the Danum Valley Strategic Management Plan 2010-2020. The Strategic Management Plan provides the framework of activities to be implemented over ten years, as well as addressing all issues identified by stakeholders.

The 12-day organised by Yayasan Sabah and Sabah Wildlife Department hoped to acquire latest information on the wildlife diversity and richness in the DVCA Danum Valley Conservation Area as well as to determine the presence of rare, threatened and endangered species.

During the entire operation, participants were divided into 11 groups in 11 locations within and at the perimeter of DVCA, each covering more than 3.5km radius.

The survey team also assessed potential threats such as encroachment and poaching activities and tourism potentials within the assigned location.

Researchers from Sabah Forestry Department, Sabah Wildlife Department, Yayasan Sabah, Sabah Parks, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), University College Sabah Foundation (UCSF), UKM, UiTM, WWF Malaysia, Sabah Biodiversity Centre, University Terengganu Malaysia (UMT), Sabah Environmental Trust (SEAT), Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment (Malaysia), Johor Parks, Uni. Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, SEARRP, Institute for Development Studies Sabah (IDS) and Kyoto University, Japan, also took part in the survey which started on August 15.

The manager of Danum Valley Field Centre, Jikos Gidiman, as well his colleagues, Dr Hamzah Tangki and Jadda

Suhaimi from Imbak Canyon Studies Centre and Maliau Basin Studies Centre, respectively, were also involved.

Dr Yap Sau Wai, Acting Group Manager Conservation and Environmental Division of Yayasan Sabah, was extremely pleased with the outcome of the survey. She said, through this operation we were able to obtain updated information on wildlife diversity, especially for those rare, endangered and vulnerable species, since the last DVCA Resource and Wildlife was done in 2005.

“The survey also enabled us to identify parts of DVCA that are vulnerable to human threats, and this will facilitate our surveillance and monitoring activities”.

“On the whole, the Wildlife and Resources survey was a huge success as it enabled researchers to explore parts of DVCA which has never been explored before, including Mt Nicola (917m) and Mt Tribulation (867m). Mt Danum (1093m) is the highest mountain in DVCA”.

“The survey enhanced our collaboration with our partners with the active support from all relevant government departments, agencies and institutions involved,” she said.

Activities done during the survey include camera trapping, mist netting and line transect (to illustrate a particular linear pattern along which communities of plant or animals’ activities change).

Overall, the survey’s finding on wildlife showed significant presence of “flagship species” such as Orang Utan, Proboscis Monkey, Clouded leopard and Borneo Pygmy elephants.

Camera traps also showed images of Bulwer’s Pheasants and Flat headed cat which are the rare and endemic species.

For the past 31 years, Danum Valley has

attracted world class research projects. More than 330 Post-Doctoral, Doctorate and Master’s theses have been successfully completed, about half by Malaysians and Southeast Asians and other half by Britons/Europeans.

According to Yayasan Sabah records, since 1984, a multinational core of scientists have been involved in research at Danum Valley Field Centre, and over 200 collaborative research projects have been completed.

Preparation for research at Danum Valley began in 1982 when the Danum Valley Management Committee (DVMC) was established as an inter-departmental committee of the State Government to develop an international collaborative research programme at the then proposed Danum Valley Field Centre (DVFC).

DVFC opened in 1986 as a facility dedicated to research and environmental education, while activities at the centre and within the conservation area are overseen and guided by the Danum Valley Management Committee (DVMC).

DVMC comprises many relevant State and Federal government agencies, institutions, academia, and NGOs.

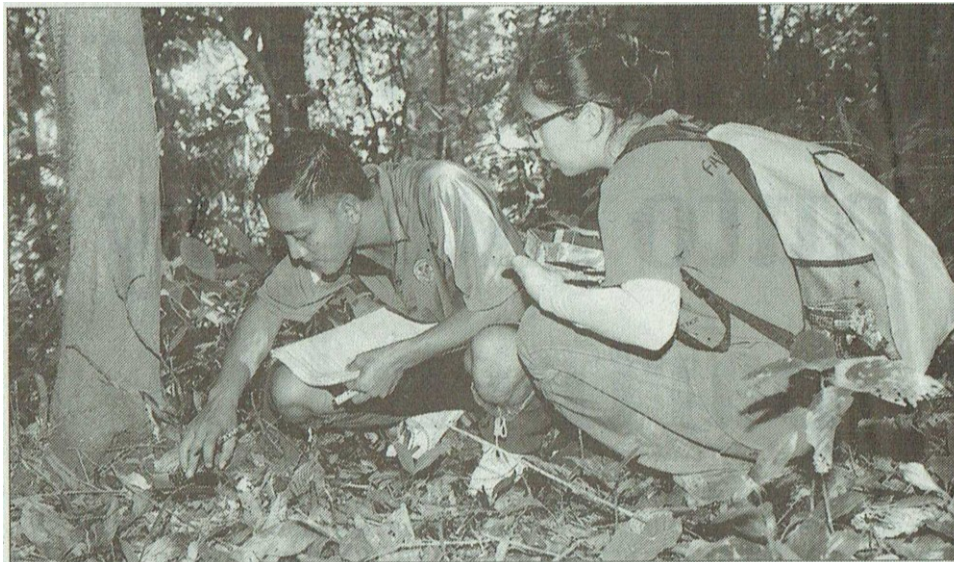
The Southeast Asia Rainforest Research and Training Programme (SEARRP), between The Royal Society, United Kingdom and the DVMC has generated over 432 graduate studies by local and foreign students, and generated over 450 refereed publications.

This makes Danum Valley one of the three leading rainforest research centres in the world besides La Selva in Costa Rica and Barro Colorado Island (BCI) in Panama.

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Camp 2 Group Photo – photo by David Francis.



Taking GPS reading for Camera Trap Location – photo by Dr Rahimatsah Amat.