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## Continued Orangutan conservation crucial: Jafry

Daily Express (KK), Malaysia



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**Mardinah Jikur**

SANDAKAN: Sabahans are very fortunate that the state is blessed with a wealth and diversity of wildlife species and the Orangutan are among iconic animals that needs to be conserved.

State Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Jafry Ariffin said according to the Orangutan Action Plan 2020-2029, the population of Orangutans in Sabah was estimated to be approximately 11,000.

The status of Orangutans on the IUCN Red List is that of Critically Endangered.

"If the plans in the action plan are not implemented, the number of Orangutans in their habitat will continue to decrease and be threatened with extinction," he clarified.

"One of the actions contained in the Orangutan Action Plan 2020-2029 is to carry out conservation education and public awareness programmes for all stakeholders in Sabah.

Among the measures that need to be implemented is increasing public awareness about the protection and threats to Orangutans outlined in the action plan," he added.

Among them is ensuring that all farm owners, managers and workers as well as developers are aware of current legislation and Orangutan protection.

In addition, this action plan aimed to establish guidelines for sustainable Orangutan tourism.

It also organised awareness campaigns about Orangutans and their habitats throughout Sabah such as field trips to farms, villages and schools, celebrating World Orangutan Day or Orangutan Caring Week as a state-level event, the development of an information centre for Orangutans and the dissemination of information on social media.

He added that this action plan also created a permanent syllabus on conservation education (including Orangutans) in the national education curriculum in schools throughout Malaysia.

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He said this when speaking to inaugurate the Closing Ceremony of "Orangutan Caring Week 2022" at the Sepilok Orangutan Conservation Centre, Batu Lintang, on Thursday.

The text of his speech was delivered by the Director of the Sabah Wildlife Department, Augustine Tuuga.

Also present were Sandakan Member of Parliament Vivian Wong Shir Yee, Tanjong Pagar Assemblyman Datuk Frankie Poon, Elopura Assemblyman Calvin Chong, Ket Kint, Gum-Gum Assemblyman Arunarsin Taib, Sandakan Municipal Council Secretary Irman Tajuddin Edy, Director of Orangutan UK Appeal Sdn Bhd William Tai, representatives of non-governmental organisations and government agencies, school and pre-school children.

The Orangutan Caring Week programme was celebrated around the world in November every year.

This year, the Wildlife Department (JHL) in collaboration with conservation partners such as Orangutan UK Appeal, Borneo Honey Bear Conservation Center Sandakan, Rainforest Discovery Centre, Sabah Forestry Department and Sandakan Municipal Council jointly implemented the Orangutan Caring Week Programme.

The objective of this programme is to support Orangutan conservation and accord awareness to Sabahans about the importance of protecting Orangutans.

This awareness programme started in the beginning of October 2022 with teachers and farm workers in conjunction with the Environmental Education Race or EE Race programme organised by the Forestry Department.

The programme continued with four ac-



Among the Orangutans at the centre given food during the morning session and public visits.

activities to five schools around the Sandakan district.

An online competition to make reels for school students was also held.

Meanwhile, on November 12 to 18, an awareness programme was organised for visitors or tourists, tour guides, travel agencies, palm oil plantation operators and school students at the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre.

"With awareness programmes like this, it is hoped that the indicators set in the Orangutan Action Plan 2020-2029 can be realised," he said.

In the same development, Jafry said various efforts and new approaches were highlighted to improve the conservation of wildlife in Sabah.

This included integrated enforcement activities through Operation Bersepadu Khazanah led by the Royal Malaysian Police together with other enforcement agencies to combat crime against wildlife.

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"However, efforts to protect and preserve wildlife in Sabah need support from all walks of life," he said.

"A significant change in the attitude of Sabahans in the protection of wildlife needs to be achieved.

"Therefore, continuous efforts should be implemented more actively to give awareness to the community, especially among the younger generation.

"I believe, with the involvement of all Sabahans in the awareness programme by the State Government together with conservation partners, Sabahans love wildlife and are aware of the importance of wildlife conservation," he added.

Next, he said Sabahans could practice the 5R campaign that was outlined by the Sabah Wildlife Department.

"At the same time, the younger generation will continue the legacy of defending it from threats by maintaining wildlife habitat and wildlife diversity in the state," he said.

Meanwhile, Jafry said JHL also implemented a programme together with Danau Girang Field Centre through the sponsorship of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation by highlighting the importance of STEM or Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, in wildlife conservation to school students.

"This programme not only increases students' interest in studying STEM and even sees the use of STEM in the field of wildlife research and management but also shows the importance of wildlife being well managed," he said.

"Through this programme it is hoped that students will be involved in wildlife research and management in the future."



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KEMENTERIAN TENAGA, SAINS, TEKNOLOGI,  
ALAM SEKITAR DAN PERUBAHAN IKLIM

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### SUMMARIES

SANDAKAN: Sabalians are very fortunate that the state is blessed with a wealth and diversity of wildlife species and the Orangutan are among iconic animals that needs to be conserved. State Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Jafry Ariffin said according to the Orangutan Action Plan 2020-2029, the population of Orangutans in Sabah was estimated to be approximately 11,000.