KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	NST			
TARIKH	:	28/10/2021 (KHAMIS)	MUKA SURAT	:	9
JABATAN	:	PERHILITAN			

GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT

NST 28 Okt 2021_9

'Increased fines, jail terms in Conservation Act amendments will better protect wildlife'

KUALA LUMPUR: The amendments to the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010, which received a unanimous vote in the Dewan Rakyat on Tuesday, will better protect wildlife in the country.

Wildlife experts said the amendments showed that the government was committed to addressing wildlife issues, from poaching to illegal trade, including on the Internet.

Society of Certified Risk Professionals advisory council member Datuk Dr Dionysius Sharma described the raising of fines and jail terms as the first step in addressing crimes against wildlife.

"We must not let our guard down, despite the increase in fines and jail term.

"We must keep improving and increasing our enforcement, including joint enforcement with various agencies. Poachers are out there and we need strict enforcement."



Datuk Dr Dionysius Sharma

Dionysius, a former chief executive officer of WWF-Malaysia, said: "Poachers have their intelligence network to beat the system, so enforcement agencies must beef up theirs too."

He said at the international level, enforcement agencies should work with the International Police (Interpol).

"We must collaborate by providing information and not shy away out of fear of giving Malaysia a bad name."

He said there was a need to educate the judiciary on wildlife crimes. "We can invite and collaborate with the public to become informants to stop the exploitation of natural treasures."

The amendments would ensure that poachers and illegal wildlife traders faced higher penalties and longer jail terms.

The amendment covered the scope of protection on wildlife that was not in line with the current situation and technology, as there was no provision on penalty for those advertising the sale of wildlife online.

It increases the maximum fine from RM500,000 to RM1 million, with the maximum jail term increased from 10 to 15 years.

Bringing Back Our Rare Animals executive director Dr John Payne said the amendments would lead to a more effective crackdown on the sale of wildlife on social media.

"This is great news because catching poachers in the forest has always been a big challenge, while the ability to intervene in the digital part of the trade has been difficult over the past decade."

He said while there was a need to curb wildlife trade, it was also timely for the government to introduce fresh policies that helped recover severely depleted wildlife populations.

Citing Sumatran rhino as an example, Payne said there were not enough rhinos in any one place and most females were infertile.

"We need to address population size, reproduction rate, reproductive pathology, and genetics if we do not want to see more species go extinct."

Payne said the last clusters of rare species must be allocated enough space and food to breed and recover.