KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

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SABAH WILDLIFE DEPT CAUTION

Public urged not to feed, disturb otter spotted at park

KOTA KINABALU: The Sabah Wildlife Department has advised the public from getting close to an otter, which was spotted at the Tun Fuad Stephens Park in Bukit Padang here.

Its director, Augustine Tuuga, said this in response to a viral video showing the lone carnivorous mammal being docile to a group of joggers at the park.

The department, in a statement, said the animal that was recorded in the video was a smooth coated otter, which is a protected wildlife under Schedule 2, Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997.

"Population of otters in Sabah is unknown but the threats for the species are the decreasing of habitat and food source, as well as poaching.

"They are normally found in riverine areas or lakes.

"They are important as indicator of a healthy riverine habitat," said Augustine,

He added that the public must not offer food, pat or disturb the otter to prevent any disease transmission and also to maintain the animal's wellbeing.

Due to its territorial behaviour, he said, otters had sharp canine teeth and may attack humans.

Otters normally eat aquatic animals such as fish, crab and frog which are found in the lake in the park there.

In the viral video, the otter was recorded getting close to a jogger, who was giving it some water.

The jogger is heard saying: "We're are lucky to have met you, you bring good luck to us ... we're going to strike a lottery. But beware of his sharp teeth."

A woman joins in the conversation and tells the joggers that she has seen the otter on several occasions in the park and that it always follows joggers and likes to be patted. **By Paul Mu**



A screenshot from a viral video shows a jogger feeding an otter with drinking water at the Tun Fuad Stephens Park in Bukit Padang, Kota Kinabalu.

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