KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

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RM31m wildlife, items seized

127 individuals including poachers held following series of joint operations by Perhilitan

GEORGE TOWN: Authorities have arrested 127 individuals, including poachers, and seized items including wildlife worth RM31.86 million through 11 series of joint Khazanah Intergrated Operation (KIO) carried out nationwide this year.

Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) Director-General Datuk Abdul Kadir Abu Hashim said 69 investigation papers were opened and 293 animal traps destroyed this year.

"The highest seizure of RM31.86 million was recorded this year compared to the last two years, with RM4.25 million. The success was due to integrated collaboration with police, Customs Department, Forestry Department, Immigration Department and several non-governmental organisations," Bernama reported.

"Throughout this year, 56 abandoned tents were found at forest reserves and national parks, 19 trees were cut and 2,352 elements of hunting and encroachment have been successfully recorded," Abdul Kadir told reporters after the KIO meeting yesterday. Also present was Deputy Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Mazlan Lazim.

The KIO, which was conducted in several phases since September 2019, was to combat encroachment, illegal logging, theft of national forest products and wildlife hunting, as well as other offences under the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010.

Abdul Kadir said since 2019, 39 series of patrols have been carried out, with 181 investigation papers opened involving 350 arrests.

He added that 1,425 wildlife traps were destroyed and 28 licensed and homemade firearms were seized from poachers.

"Based on KIO, we found that our country is being used as a transit for wildlife smugglers, especially for pangolins brought in from Indonesia before they were smuggled via air and sea to other countries such as Vietnam and China. Last year, we seized two tonnes of pangolins," he said.

Meanwhile, Mazlan said police will set up a new unit known as the Wildlife Crime Bureau, based in Bukit Aman, to help investigate crimes involving wildlife smuggling syndicates.

"The unit, comprising 50 personnel, will use its expertise to assist Perhilitan to cripple syndicates that have wildlife smuggling networks, including freezing their bank accounts under the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act."