KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	NEW STRAITS TIMES			
TARIKH	:	08/12/2021 (RABU)	MUKA SURAT	:	15
JABATAN	:	PERHILITAN			

PROPOSED WILDLIFE CRIME BUREAU

NST 8.12.2021_15

SOLUTION TO POACHING, WILDLIFE TRADE



The proposed Wildlife Crime Bureau will give our wildlife a fighting chance to survive. FILE PIC

THE Wildlife Conservation Society Malaysia Programme (WCS Malaysia) congratulates the Royal Malaysia Police, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan), the Customs Department and other enforcement agencies for arresting 127 individuals, making RM31.86 million worth of seizures and destroying almost 300 animal traps under Op Bersepadu Khazanah this year.

This was revealed by Perhilitan director-general Datuk Abdul Kadir Abu Hashim ("OBK proves successful in addressing wildlife offences" - NST, Nov 30).

At the same event, Deputy Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Mazlan Lazim announced that police would set up a Wildlife Crime Bureau to investigate crimes related to wildlife ("Police to set up Wildlife Crime Bureau, to begin operations soon" - NST, Nov 30).

Mazlan said they had requested for 50 personnel for the unit, under the Bukit Aman Internal Security and Public Order Department. This unit is expected to assist Perhilitan in investigating syndicates involved in wildlife smuggling and trade.

WCS Malaysia highly commends the plan to set up a Wildlife Crime Bureau under the purview of the police. It is an initiative that has been advocated for some years now, and well received and supported during the tenure of then IGP Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Bador.

This has continued to gain traction under the leadership of the new IGP, Tan Sri Acryl Sani Abdullah Sani.

Wildlife Crime Bureaus have been set up to good effect in the United Kingdom, Thailand, Nepal and India, which are serious about combating wildlife trafficking.

It is envisioned that Malaysia's Wildlife Crime Bureau will enhance intelligence gathering and coordinate investigations among multiple agencies, leading to arrests of poachers who plunder our natural heritage.

It can be anticipated that crime syndicates in and outside of Malaysia would be more hesitant to operate as effective use of instruments like the Anti-Money Laundering Act (2001) could lead to the arrest of ring leaders, hitting them where it matters the most — their pockets.

It is crucial that the proposed Wildlife Crime Bureau continue to gather intelligence on illegal wildlife trade network chains.

WCS Malaysia congratulates the Energy and Natural Resources Ministry, Home Ministry, the police and Perhilitan for mooting the idea to set up the Wildlife Crime Bureau. We hope that the Finance Ministry, Public Service Department and other agencies would facilitate the formation of this Wildlife Crime Bureau.

Should this plan materialise, a new dawn of hope can be expected for our dwindling wildlife populations, particularly the big cat species such as our Malayan tigers.

With the Wildlife Crime Bureau operational soon, coupled with joint operations under Op Bersepadu Khazanah, Malaysia will be sending a serious message that we will stand tall in defending our national treasures and will not tolerate poaching and illegal wildlife trade. It is heartening to know that as a nation, we are trying to give our wildlife a fighting chance to survive.

However, sustained funds for existing initiatives such as Op Bersepadu Khazanah and new ones such as the Wildlife Crime Bureau need to be provided in tandem with political support so that the aspiration to save our wildlife does not remain as glimpses of hope, but can be truly realised in the near future.

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