

Ramsar visit to new Malaysian Ramsar sites, July 2003

31 July 2003

Malaysia



Rate of coastal erosion at Tanjung Piai in Johor

Tanjung Piai in Pontian, the southernmost point of mainland Asia, was recently designated a Ramsar Site in Johor State, Malaysia, along with other mangrove sites, Pulau Kukup and Sungai Pulai in the same states.

During his visit last week to Malaysia to these three newly designated sites, Ramsar's Dr Guangchun Lei was concerned about rate of erosion and damage wrought by wave action brought on by increased shipping traffic due to the function of a new international sea port nearby. He encouraged the Ramsar Convention Administration Authority in Malaysia to register the site in the Montreux Record, and promised that the Ramsar Convention Bureau then would seek international experts help local authorities to mitigate erosion processes.

On the positive side, the impressive Johor nature conservation programme and active education and communication programme should be noted. The site has been designated as a State Nature Park since 2000. Being at the very foremost southern tip of the Asian continent, the park attracts a lot of visitors who enjoy the ecotourism opportunities: birdwatching, boat rides to the mangroves, 400-m observatory jetty, and guided walks.

The State Government has also put in place good administrative instruments to ensure effective conflict management for the protection of mangrove and natural forests. At a meeting with State Executive Councillor Datuk Dr Chua Soi Lek, who heads the tourism and environment portfolio, the extension of Tanjung Piai conservation area north to include the mangrove coastline of Pontian, Batu Pahat, and Parit Jawa was discussed. This 100km stretch on west Johor is an important migratory route for more than 22 species of birds.

Accompanying Dr Lei was Johor National Parks Corporation director Mohamed Basir Mohamed Sali.





Since the operation of the new port near the Ramsar site in April 2003, increased waves have washed away more than 40 metres of mangrove coast line at Tanjung Piai.



(left) Ships from the port passing near the site; (right) Pulau Kukup mangrove island, another Ramsar Site



Dr Mohamed Basir Mohamed Sali and Dr Lei at the 400m observatory jetty



The monument of the landmark, the most southern tip of Asia
(photo courtesy Malaysian National News Agency, <http://www.bernama.com.my/>)

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