

WORLD WETLANDS DAY

2 February 2010

Kuala Selangor Nature Park (KSNP)

CARING FOR WETLANDS

An answer to climate change

SAYANGI TANAH LEMBAP
Penyelesaian kepada perubahan iklim



Malaysian Nature Society (MNS), Kuala Selangor Nature Park (KSNP), Kuala Selangor District Council (MDKS) and Selangor State Government in collaboration with HSBC Bank Malaysia Berhad, supported by Birdlife International and Darwin Initiative jointly organised the World Wetlands Day 2010 Celebration.

The theme for World Wetlands Day (WWD) this year is ***Caring of Wetlands: An Answer to Climate Change***, which draws focus about wetland species and ecosystems under continuing threat from unsustainable human practices, the likely impact of climate change on wetlands ecosystems, and more importantly, the role of wetlands in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Celebrating WWD in KSNP is an illustration of how apt this year's theme is as KSNP's main concern is to highlight the importance of wetlands as the key in creating a sustainable ecosystem.

This event engages local residents and environmentally aware adults in exploring ecosystems in developing a different and more positive attitude, value and behavior toward the environment than the traditional, more structured classroom approach. Furthermore, programs that involve residents in attempts to solve actual environmental problems engineer a social commitment that would have a lasting effect.

Having managed KSNP since 1987 and being the national NGO Focal Point for Ramsar CEPA, and undertaking various wetlands related initiatives nationwide; MNS has a particular interest and commitment to wetland conservation. WWD celebrations in Kuala Selangor is targeted very much at the local communities, and state-wide stakeholders (including governments and other partners), that in some way or other manage or derive a benefit from the wetlands in Kuala Selangor. This program brings together key players from the government, corporate agencies and civil societies with the aim of strengthening the collective voice of the conservation and preservation of the wetlands in Malaysia, specifically drawing focus in the Kuala Selangor area.

The WWD celebration this year comes with the combination of three aspects which are wetlands, biodiversity and climate change. This year's WWD celebration would be a platform connecting wetlands with its diversified ecosystems and current environmental threat especially global warming. Programs and activities held in this celebration would be a practical method in providing knowledge to the participants on the significance of wetlands towards developing a sustainable ecosystem.

In conjunction with this event, the *Mangroves of Kuala Selangor Book* was launched, with support from HSBC Malaysia, BirdLife International, Darwin Initiative and the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund (KNCF). This guidebook is a useful, comprehensive description of the mangroves of KSNP; its environment, benefits and ecosystem. The guidebook also provides an introduction to the Nature Park itself including the various flora and fauna found there. This book would be of interest to those who wish to study or know more about this unique habitat.

Additionally, participants were given hands-on experience on mangrove conservation and had the opportunity to explore the importance of the KSNP ecosystem and its surrounding environment. To cap-off the event, participants headed to the Fireflies Park in Kampung Kuantan, home of the synchronous firefly species *Pteroptyx tener*, for a truly unique wetlands experience. This activity aimed at showcasing the importance of the theme and to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands towards species sustainability leading to effective conservation with the support from the local communities.

The World Wetlands 2010 was officiated by **Y.B. Dr.Dzulkefly Ahmad , Kuala Selangor Member of Parliament**. The closing was closed by **Yang Berusaha Mr. Azahari Bin Sairin**, representing President of Kuala Selangor District Council.

Objective of the programme

- To instill awareness on an important conservation and preservation of the wetland in Kuala Selangor to the local authorities and the local residents
- To provide an opportunity to experience and in creating ownership amongst the participants towards improved conservation of the Kuala Selangor coast

Presentations

Caring for Wetlands

Kanitha Krishnasamy, Senior Conservation Officer, Policy

This presentation included:

- Introduction to MNS and wetland conservation
- The Ramsar Convention and Malaysia, Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)
- Introduction to Important Bird Areas, Ramsar Convention and Wetlands of international Importance (Ramsar Sites)
- Climate change and wetlands – values and importance, benefits, and recommendations
- Important wetlands in Malaysia for climate change considerations – threats and options for rectification

Wetlands - Degradation of Our Priceless Treasure

R. Nagarajan, KSNP Manager

Presentation included:

- Highlights on wetlands issues in the Kuala Selangor coast (incl video clip).
- The need to find solutions to develop more effective and creative management strategy for the coast
- Focus by appropriate authorities on the conservation of coastal ecosystems

Mangrove Tour & Mangrove Planting

Mangroves act as natural flood retention "sponge" to hold heavy rainfall, thus reducing the occurrence and severity of flooding. They help to recycle nutrients and remove toxins and sediments. Mangroves also play the role of holding sediment along riverbanks to prevent erosion, and help to reduce pollution to the coral reefs and marine life. In addition, mangroves provide breeding and nursery grounds for birds, young marine fish, seashells, prawns, mud lobster, crabs, and other wildlife.

During the Mangrove Tour, the facilitators shared their experience and knowledge with all participants. They were introduced to the mangrove flora and fauna, which many of the participants know but never really thought about its significance, including its values for human well-being.

Mangrove planting is one of the important activities at KSNP aimed at conserving the various species of mangroves and restoring the deteriorated area to its former glory, retaining the original characteristics of the mangrove forest.

Mangrove River Cruise and Bird Watching

Participants went to a field trip to *Perkampungan Nelayan Sungai Buloh Sasaran, Jeram*. There, they were enlightened by the fishermen about the importance of mangrove forest, especially for their livelihoods. Participants further enjoyed observing birds, including the threatened Lesser Adjutant Stork *Leptoptilos javanicus* while boating at Sungai Buloh Sasaran. The participants also observed for environmental concerns along the coast, and discussed best options for remedial actions.

The table below is the registration details of participants. Name list of participants is as enclosed with this report.

No	Category	No. of Participants
1	Dignitaries	6
2	Exhibitors of WWD 2010 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lembaga Urus Air Selangor (LuAS) 2. Paya Indah Wetlands 3. Kuala Selangor District Council 4. Tourism Selangor 5. MNS 6. KSNP 	30
3	Registered participants	106
4	Volunteers & Facilitators	28
5	Special invites	35
6	Kuala Selangor District Council Members	25
7	MNS Members	15
8	Media (NSTP, Sinar Harian, Berita harian, Chinese Press & Nanyang Siang Pau)	10
9	Jabatan Pertahanan Awam Members	7
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS		262

Conclusion

The program as a whole was well received by its target audience. Local communities and participants welcomed such an event that allowed them the opportunities to be involved in a national effort, whilst at the same time promoting the importance of wetlands for their wellbeing.

The level of information disseminated and received by the participants was varied but an overall observation indicated that there was a strong understanding that they had an important role to play in protecting our priceless wetlands. The participants understood that effort taken to protect and conserve this ecosystem is incomplete without public participation and especially local stakeholder participation and commitment, where their views are especially a crucial part of decision-making, and the results and impacts thereafter.

Acknowledgement

Our heartfelt gratitude to those who have made the World Wetlands Day 2010 programme possible:

Y.B. CIK. ELIZABETH WONG KEAT PING,
Selangor State Executive Councillor (EXCO),
Chairperson of Standing Committee of Tourism, Consumer Affairs and
Environment

Y.B Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad
Kuala Selangor Member of Parliament

HSBC Bank Malaysia Berhad

Kuala Selangor Assembly Man
Kuala Selangor District Office
Kuala Selangor District Council
Tourism Selangor Sdn. Bhd
Birdlife International
Darwin Initiative
Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund
Ministry of Environment Japan
Kuala Selangor Government Departments

Local Universities:
University Malaya
Polytechnic Sultan Idris Shah
University Industrial Selangor

Facilitators, Exhibitors
&
Participants WWD 2010