

READING PRACTICE

Conservationist advises against reintroducing tapirs to Sabah



KOTA KINABALU: A proposal to reintroduce the tapir to Sabah should be weighed carefully as the state's focus should be on conserving its endangered species including the Sumatran rhino, orang utan, elephants and tambadau. Conservationist Datuk Wilfred Lingham said the state had limited resources and habitat for its own wildlife.

"We have a situation where endemic species such as the rhinos are disappearing and the elephants are under threat," said Lingham, the former state Tourism, Culture and Environment Ministry permanent secretary.

"The focus should be on conserving what we have instead of being distracted by reintroducing an extinct species," he added.

Lingham said there was also a limited amount of pristine areas for Sabah's existing wildlife, adding that only 4,000ha were core virgin jungles in the 122,539ha Tabin wildlife reserve.

He said the introduction of new animals to Sabah had resulted in them becoming the dominating species, citing as an example the tilapia, which was supposed to be bred in ponds but had displaced local fish species in rivers and lakes. The African catfish and bullfrogs were also displacing local creatures, he added.

Earlier this month, Akademi Sains Malaysias Tan Sri Salleh Mohd Nor said plans were underway to reintroduce the tapir to Sabah with three to four of the mammals to be translocated to the state from the peninsula as early as next year. He said there was evidence showing that the endangered creatures had once roamed the forests of Sabah but have gone extinct there.

Sabah Wildlife Department director Augustine Tuuga in response said there had been no formal agreement by the state government on the matter.

He, however, acknowledged there had been discussions among peninsula and Sabah Wildlife officials, scientists and conservationists about the proposed translocation but no decision had been made.

PRACTICE 1

Choose the correct main ideas for the article you have read.

MAIN IDEAS OF THE ARTICLE

Reintroducing tapir in Sabah should be considered thoroughly by the government.
The Chief Minister of Sabah agrees to reintroduce tapir in Sabah.
Sabah can make profit by reintroducing new species in the state.
Reintroducing new animals in Sabah had resulted them to become dominating species in the state.
The African catfish and bullfrogs are no longer available in Sabah.
The government should put more focus on conserving local animals that are under a threat.
There was evidence that tapir used to roam in the forest of Sabah but they are gone now.
The Sabah Wildlife Department director stated that there was no formal agreement done to reintroduce tapir yet.

PRACTICE 2

Match the questions in A to their right answers in B.

A
1. How was the status of resources and habitat for wildlife in Sabah?
2. What are the two foreign species of animals that were introduced in Sabah?
3. How big is the core virgin jungles in Tabin wildlife reserve?

B
It is only 4 000 hectares.
Sabah had limited resources and habitat for its own wildlife.
They are the African catfish and bullfrog.