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WORLD WETLANDS DAY

'TIME TO LOOK FOR NEW RAMSAR SITES'

'Cooperation of all parties will ensure wetlands ecosystem remains healthy'

SAMANTHA KUAN
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Ministry has called on state governments to nominate wetland regions that have potential to be new Ramsar sites.

Its minister, Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, said the cooperation of all parties would ensure the wetlands ecosystem remained healthy.

"This is the time to strengthen efforts, promote local community involvement and mobilise solutions towards protecting and maintaining soil ecosystems," he said in a statement released on World Wetlands Day yesterday.

A Ramsar site is a wetland designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, also known as the Convention on Wetlands, an inter-governmental environmental treaty established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971.

Malaysia has ratified the Ramsar Convention since 1994 and, therefore, is legally obliged to con-

serve and use its wetlands wisely. Feb 2 has been announced as World Wetlands Day in commemoration of the date of the Ramsar Convention.

Nik Nazmi said that the purpose of the World Wetlands Day celebration was to increase public awareness about the importance of wetlands, which need to be maintained and restored.

"With the theme 'It's time for wetland restoration', I want to stress how important it is on the preservation and usage measures of wetlands steadily for the welfare of life.

"The preservation is important to ensure food security, mitigation and climate stability as well as functioning as a breakwater by reducing flood impacts, trapped garbage and a habitat for flora and fauna, including endangered species.

"I urge all Ramsar site managements in this country to reinforce the Ramsar management footprint each day with the objectives of the Ramsar Convention."

A variety of activities have been designed to improve local community awareness, which include the Public Awareness Programme of Tasek Bera, Tanjung Piai Mangrove Run and Tree Planting Programme in Kuching Wetlands National Park.

The seven areas of wetlands in Malaysia that have been signed as Ramsar sites are Tasek Bera, Pahang; Tanjung Piai, Kukup Island and Sungai Pulai, Johor; Kuching Wetlands National Park, Sarawak; and Lower Kinabatangan-Segama Wetlands and Kota Kinabalu Wetlands, Sabah.



Tasek Bera in Pahang is one of the seven Ramsar sites in Malaysia. FILE PIC

DISEDIAKAN OLEH

1-PN NOR SURIANI BINTI MOHD ZIN (S44), BPM
2-UNIT PERPUSTAKAAN, BPM