

BIG LEAP FOR BORNEON FROG AT LAMBIR HILLS 'FROGGING' EVENT

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Braken (squatting ninth right) with participants and winners of the 5th International Bornean Frog Race at Lambir Hills National Park on Saturday night.

MIRI: The 5th International Bornean Frog Race held on Saturday night at Lambir Hills National Park, one of the world's most complex and diverse forest eco-systems, was one big leap for survival of the species.

It attracted a total of 103 'frogging' enthusiasts from 12 countries, namely Malaysia, India, New Zealand, Sweden, USA, China, Germany, Pakistan, Japan, France, Holland and Curacao.

"The number of participants for the race had to be pegged down to 100 due to the sensitivity of the frogs and their habitats to mass presence of humans at any one time walking around with flash light and clicking away their cameras for a good two hours of the night," said the organizers in a statement yesterday.

It was organized by the Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) in collaboration with the Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation and the Faculty of Creative and Applied Arts of University Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas).

Present to officiate at the closing ceremony was SFC's deputy general manager, Oswald Braken Tisen.

Listed on the tourism calendar of events of the Ministry of Tourism Sarawak and Tourism Malaysia, the Bornean International Frog Race is organised in conjunction with 'Save the Frogs Day' on the last weekend of April every year, with the aim of drawing attention to the world's declining amphibian population and the need for its conservation.

"The race this year, the 5th edition, is held at Lambir Hills National Park in Miri, in recognition of the increasing following of 'frogging' in Miri," adding that activities conducted during the day

included talks, workshops, exhibitions and culminating with the 'Frog Race', in which participants compete to win prizes totalling RM5,000 in various categories.

They were the 'Most Number of Amphibian Species Photographed', 'Rarest Amphibian Photographed', "Best Photo Taken with: DSLR Camera, Compact Camera and Mobile Phone. Other categories included 'Special Awards', 'Most Enthusiastic Participant' and 'Conservationist Award'.

Dr Robin Moore, author of *In Search of Lost Frogs*, named one of *The Guardian's* best nature books of 2014, and also Kueh Boon Hee, researcher and lecturer at Universiti Malaysia Sabah were also invited to speak at the one-day programme.

With a total area of 6,952 hectares, Lambir Hills National Park is among the world's most complex and diverse forest eco-systems, housing over 50 species of amphibians and over 240 species of birds, including all eight hornbill species found in Sarawak.