

ABSTRACT

Kuching Wetlands National Park (KWNP) is acknowledged by its significant role to protect the wildlife and aquatic ecosystem. KWNP serves as a tourism site and at the same time a place for local communities who live nearby the park to carry out their economic activities. This study was done to assess the socioeconomic activities of the local people residing near to the park. Interviews were conducted with 490 local people which were sampled through stratified random sampling. Results showed that forest and river resources of KWNP were widely utilized by the communities whom majority are farmers and fishermen. The perception on environmental quality of rivers of KWNP was studied as well among the local people with different age, educational background, occupation, and also income. It is found that the local respondents are still lack of awareness and knowledge concerning the park as conservation site for flora and fauna of wetlands. The excessive utilization of natural resources within and near to the park area should be reduced in the future by sustainable management to avoid flora and fauna extinction in the future. The involvement of local people in ecotourism industry at the park is also recommended in order to improve their livelihoods while in the same time reducing the rate of utilization of natural resources at the park area.

Keywords: Kuching Wetlands National Park, socioeconomic activities, local communities' perception, flora and fauna conservation, sustainable management of natural resources

Aktiviti Sosioekonomi di Taman Negara Tanah Lembap Kuching

ABSTRAK

Taman Negara Tanah Lembap Kuching diiktiraf sebagai penyumbang kepada beberapa fungsi utama seperti melindungi ekosistem hidupan liar dan akuatik. Ia juga berfungsi sebagai lokasi pelancongan dan kegiatan ekonomi bagi penduduk setempat. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menilai aktiviti sosioekonomi di kalangan penduduk setempat yang tinggal berhampiran dengan taman negara. Temuduga telah dibuat ke atas 490 penduduk sekitar taman melalui pensampelan rawak berstrata. Hasil kajian mendapati sumber hutan dan sungai di sekitar taman negara masih dieksploitasi secara berleluasa oleh penduduk yang kebanyakannya bekerja sebagai pekebun dan nelayan. Persepsi terhadap kualiti persekitaran sungai taman negara turut dinilai di kalangan penduduk setempat yang berbeza dari segi umur, tahap pendidikan, jenis pekerjaan serta pendapatan. Kebanyakan penduduk kurang sedar bahawa taman negara ini berfungsi sebagai lokasi pemuliharaan flora dan fauna hutan paya bakau. Penggunaan sumber hutan dan sungai secara berleluasa di sekitar taman perlu dikurangkan melalui pengurusan sumber secara lestari bagi mengelakkan flora dan fauna taman negara pupus pada masa akan datang. Penduduk setempat turut digalakkan melibatkan diri dalam industri ekopelancongan di taman negara bagi meningkatkan status ekonomi manakala pada masa yang sama boleh mengurangkan kadar eksploitasi sumber asli di kawasan taman negara ini.

Kata kunci: *Taman Negara Tanah Lembap Kuching, kegiatan sosioekonomi, persepsi penduduk setempat, pemuliharaan flora dan fauna, pengurusan sumber asli secara lestari*