

Team conducts research on Pulau Sampadi waters

on 17 July 2012.



EXPEDITION LAUNCHED: Ali (front third right) and Shabdin (front fourth left) with some members of the expedition.

KUCHING: A team of 60 researchers from Sarawak Forestry (SFC), Unimas and Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (SBC) are taking part in the first-ever Pulau Sampadi Marine Life Expedition from yesterday until July 20 in an effort to further develop and explore marine biodiversity resources of the state. In disclosing this, SFC managing director and chief executive officer Ali Yusop said Pulau Sampadi was found to have high marine conservation value after an initial discovery in 2009 of seagrass bed there – the feeding ground for young green turtles, scientifically known as *Chelonia Mydas*.

“The marine biodiversity in the water bodies of Pulau Sampadi needs to be further explored. This expedition will be able to gather information regarding the area where turtles grow up, hence provide better ideas on how to manage and protect them.

“The output of this expedition will form the basis of strategic recommendation to the state government on the gazettement of this area as a marine protected area. It will also mitigate critical issues relating to wildlife management, especially sea turtles,” he said. He was speaking at the official launch of the expedition at Matang Wildlife Centre yesterday. Ali hoped the expedition would serve to provide a venue for capacity-building on marine research, conservation and management. “I urge all researchers involved in this expedition to make full use of this opportunity for knowledge and skills exchange for the betterment of marine conservation work in the state,” he said.

The state government has gazetted around 210,000 hectares of water bodies as totally protected areas to protect and conserve endangered marine species such as sea turtles, marine mammals, seahorses and marine ecosystem. Meanwhile, Unimas’ Faculty of Resource Science and Technology professor Dr Shabdin Mohd Long believes that Sampadi is host to diverse marine life as it is blessed with a multitude of habitats from estuaries, mangroves, seagrass beds to coral reefs.

“Healthy and diverse habitats are important for many reasons including providing safe foraging and breeding grounds for commercial fish species, endangered turtles and endangered dolphins. “However, there is little published research data on the precious marine life that these habitats host and they are always under constant pressure from natural or anthropogenic sources,” he said.

On the expedition, Shabdin said it was crucial in providing vital information for future knowledge-based decisions and resource management.

“Continuous sustainable development, especially in the coastal region is a constant challenge.

“This expedition will cover the various habitats, namely seagrass beds, seaweeds and coral reefs with 13 specific research projects,” he said.

Also present at the launch were SBC chief executive officer Dr Rita Manurung, SFC senior manager Oswald Braken Tisen and other SFC officers.

Source : [theborneopost](#)