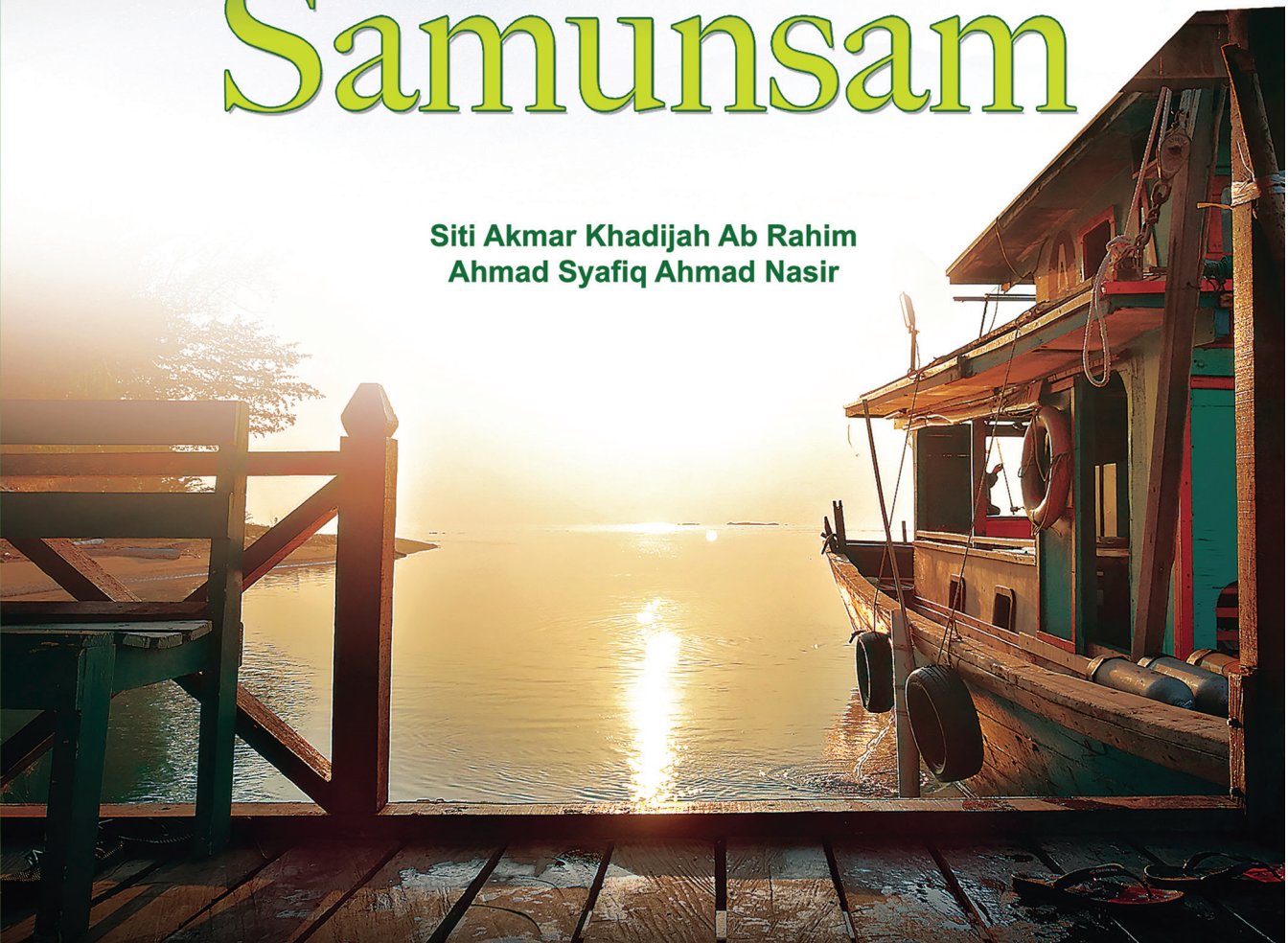


Proceeding of
Aquatic Science Colloquium 2019 (AQUAColl 2019)
Experience Sharing in Aquatic Science Research V

Tanjung Datu — National Park — to Samunsam

Siti Akmar Khadijah Ab Rahim
Ahmad Syafiq Ahmad Nasir



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Preface

The articles published in this proceeding are the research outcome of a joint scientific expedition in 2018 between the Programme of Aquatic Resource Science and Management, Faculty of Resource Science and Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and Sarawak Forestry Corporation Sdn Bhd (SFCSB) entitled Tanjung Datu National Park – Samunsam Wildlife Sanctuary Marine and Coastal Resources Expedition: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Utilization’. The expedition was the second research collaboration between UNIMAS and SFCSB after the first ‘Pulau Sampadi Marine Life Expedition’ in 2012. The objectives of this expedition are: (1) to collect information and establish baseline data on the aquatic environments and its available resources from Tanjung Datu National Park to Samunsam Wildlife Sanctuary areas; (2) to contribute to the development of Sarawak Marine and Coastal Conservation Master Plan and also (3) to identify and recommend potential sustainable economic activities for the local communities.

This expedition’s findings were presented during the Aquatic Science Colloquium 2019 (AQUAColl 2019) which is the fifth series of a biennial academic event that acts as a scientific platform for researchers to update, exchange and sharing of research information and findings explicitly obtained from the scientific expedition.

This AQUAColl 2019 proceeding comprises 18 research papers which reflect the aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity, physical oceanography, the status of marine pollution and socio-economic activities occurring inside or surrounding the Tanjung Datu National Park – Samunsam Wildlife Sanctuary. It is hoped that these scientific data may provide important baseline information and be beneficial towards future fisheries, oceanographic surveys and ecotourism activities in these areas.

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UNIMAS

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Ms. Cindy Peter (UNIMAS)
Mr. Oswald Braken Tisen (SFC)

Last but not least, we thank everyone for their hard work and dedication, and we look forward to future continuous collaboration. Well done and thank you to SFC and UNIMAS!

Local Communities' Involvement in Ecotourism around Tanjung Datu National Park: Potentials and Challenges

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the potentials and challenges of local communities' involvement in ecotourism around Tanjung Datu National Park (TDNP). Using three separate interviews, this qualitative study involved three major entities participated in ecotourism activities around TDNP. Interviews were conducted among the local communities (17 participants) and business owners (7 participants) from two villages located at the vicinity of TDNP namely Kg. Telok Serabang

and Kg. Telok Melano, as well as both local and international tourists (19 participants) who visited TDNP. The preliminary findings indicate that ecotourism around TDNP has indirectly contributed to livelihoods of local communities. There are potentials and challenges in terms of communities' involvement for the tourism-based economy to sustain itself.


Keywords: national park, communities, sustainability, ecotourism, tourists

Introduction

The establishment of national parks has not only been perceived as natural reserves for conservation, but past studies have shown that these national parks can also contribute positively to the growth of local economy through ecotourism (Gandariasbeitia, 2010; Nana and Tchamadeu, 2014; Mika *et al.*, 2015). Bjork (2000) defines ecotourism as the activities that enable tourists to travel to an area of interest to appreciate, study, and adore nature and culture without exploiting resources but promoting the sustainable development from the synergy between the authorities, tourism industry, tourists and local people. However, little is known about the contribution of Tanjung Datu National Park (TDNP), among the smallest national park in Sarawak which has rich coastal marine resources to the livelihoods of local communities. Thus far, not much research had been carried out by looking at the different perspectives using interviews to explore the involvement of the local communities in ecotourism around TDNP. The central aims of the present study were to identify the potentials and challenges of ecotourism for TDNP whilst gaining understanding on how ecotourism activities can fit together through supportive interaction between the national park and the local communities and make positive impacts on the local economy.

Tanjung Datu National Park Profile

TDNP has been gazetted in 1994 and described as a hidden tourism jewel or “Heaven of Borneo”. With the size of below 14sq km, this national park in Sarawak is teeming with various species of flora and fauna especially *Rafflesia*, *putat*, palms, figs, sea turtles, hornbills and primates. This less accessible national park is a gift from nature with diverse natural resources such as beaches, pristine blue waters, reef corals, mixed dipterocarp forest, hills, caves, waterfalls, and rivers. Its seclusion is one of the attractions that brings about many tourists to TDNP especially from overseas. In addition, this national park is located at



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This proceeding contains an overview of inventory works performed at Tanjung Datu National Park to Samunsam Sanctuary in the year 2018 to 2019, encompassing the organisms of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Simultaneously, the status of local ecotourism, fisheries and pollution were also reported. This wide coverage of findings is very useful to complement the current and future development of the Tanjung Datu – Santubong Marine and Coastal Conservation Master Plan. With the construction of the Pan Borneo coastal highway, the impacts on marine environment and socio-economic are very important to be monitored. Thus, this book can be used as the main reference for future research in that area by scientists, policymakers and stakeholders, especially the relevant state and federal agencies in Sarawak. Environmental consultancy companies can also use the baseline data for Environmental Impact Assessment purposes.



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