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C o n t e n t s

3 - 9.....Turtle Management and Conservation Programme

10 - 15Youth, a valuable asset future leaders

Note on front & back cover photos

Front cover - Turtle

Back cover - Youth

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Turtle Management and Conservation Programme

Beyond the shorelines of Brunei Waters, a treasure trove is well-hidden, home to one of the oldest creatures known to mankind, the turtles. As turtles are highly migratory animals, it is relatively difficult to keep track of their whereabouts, thus having the opportunity to stumble upon their presence alone the beach is surely an exciting moment.

Turtles are regarded as one of the oldest creatures, the oldest fossils of turtles were found in Germany which dates back to 215 million years ago during the Triassic period¹. According to About.com, turtle evolution is an easy story to follow: the basic turtle body plan arose very early in the history of life (during the late Triassic period), and has persisted pretty much unchanged down to the present day, with the usual variations in size, habitat and ornamentation. As with most other types of animals, though, the turtle evolutionary tree includes its share of missing links (some identified, some not), false starts, and short-lived episodes of gigantism².

From more than 30 species, only seven species exist today. Seen as an endangered species, efforts can be seen to manage and conserve to ensure its survival.

In Brunei Darussalam, the most commonly seen type of turtles in Brunei Waters are the Olive Ridley Turtle; Hawksbill Turtle; and Green Turtle where their usual landing and nesting sites are along the Brunei shorelines comprising of Pelompong; Muara; Meragang; Jerudong; Penanjong; Pantai Seri Kenangan; Danau; Sungai Liang; Anduki; Seria Terminal; and Panaga.

¹ Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science

² <http://dinosaurs.about.com/od/otherprehistoriclife/a/Prehistoric-Turtles-The-Story-Of-Turtle-Evolution.htm>

Conservation Programme

As part of its ongoing effort in ensuring that the turtle population in Brunei Darussalam will not decrease and assist in an increase with its numbers, a conservation programme has been introduced. The Turtle Management and Conservation Programme, through the Department of Fisheries was officially launched on April 11, 2000 with its main objective is to manage the maintenance of biodiversity; and to increase the total turtle population.


Through this conservation programme, it has shown a remarkable progress where under its eggs hatchings programme, turtle eggs which have been laid on the various beaches are carefully monitored during the incubation period. From 2001 to 2008, the department has successfully released 4936 turtle hatchlings to the sea.

After the successful eggs hatching project, once the turtles have reached a certain maturity period, it will then be released to sea. Through the hatching release programme, several schools and volunteer groups will be invited to participate in the release which indirectly will expose those partaking the project to be more aware of the conservation programme and about the natural environment in general.

Besides these projects, awareness programmes are carried out aimed towards promoting awareness among the community on the importance of maintaining and ensuring the survival of turtles.



Marine Biodiversity Centre based in Meragang, Muara



The department welcomes volunteers to assist in the conservation programme. However, they need to be physically fit as they are required to walk a considerable distance during turtle nesting season to patrol the beach. While those under the age of 18, parental consent is required to become a member. As volunteers, they will be assisting staff of the department to monitor the beach at night for turtle nesting.

More effort can be seen such as the launching of 'Year of the Turtle' in 2006 in Brunei Darussalam where ten adult turtles and 40 hatchlings were released to the sea.

While a Marine Biodiversity Centre has been established based at Meragang where it becomes the centre for hatching and growing quarter, laboratory and research lab where it is hoped that it would become a showcase for marine life attracting visitors to the country.





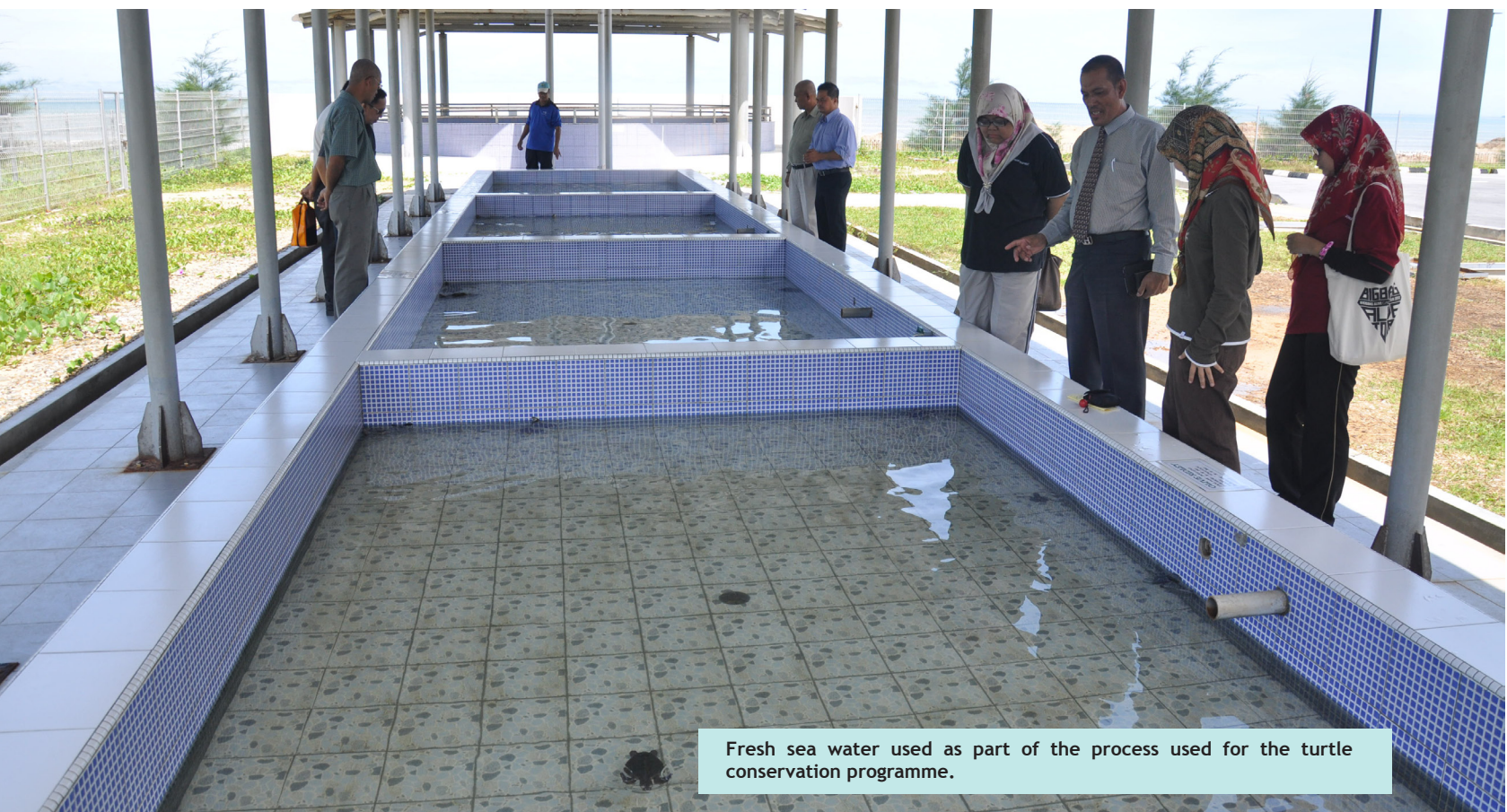
Interesting facts about turtles:

1. Takes 20 to 50 years to reach full maturity.
2. Only one from 1000 to 5000 egg hatchings will successfully live to its maturity period.
3. Will release the eggs to the sea if it fails to find a suitable nesting area or disturbed.



A better future

With a considerable amount of efforts placed towards the management and conservation of these turtles, it is hoped that the conservation programme will continue to be successful. Although it might seem a small scale when compared to other nations, but the programme has shown positive indicators through its success rates from its eggs hatchings and hatching release programmes, contributing no less towards the overall global efforts in the conservation of these turtles.



Fresh sea water used as part of the process used for the turtle conservation programme.

Protection of endangered species

Endangered species in Brunei Darussalam which includes turtles are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act (Revised 1984). It prohibits any person from hunting, killing or capturing any protected animals.

Brunei Darussalam is a member of the Convention On International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) since August 2, 1990.

LINDUNGI PENYU KITANI

Kawasan pesisiran pantai Negara Brunei Darussalam merupakan sebahagian laluan penyu laut semasa musim pengijrahan. Di dunia ini terdapat tujuh jenis penyu, tetapi hanya tiga jenis penyu boleh dilihat di perairan negara ini, iaitu penyu kangkam, penyu hijau dan penyu sisik.

Penyu laut dilindungi di bawah Apendiks 1 Konvensyen bagi Perdagangan Antarabangsa Spesies Flora dan Fauna yang Terancam (CITES), dan Negara Brunei Darussalam telah menjadi ahli konvensyen ini pada tahun 1990. Sejak tahun 1970-an, seluruh dunia telah menghadapi penurunan populasi penyu yang sangat drastik dan beberapa spesies penyu ini akan pupus dalam beberapa tahun jika tekanan yang dihadapi oleh penyu-penyu ini berterusan.

Beberapa faktor telah dikenal pasti penyebab pada penurunan populasi penyu ini, seperti penglibatan manusia dalam penyalahgunaan penyu-penyu ini termasuk telur-telurnya, penangkapan daripada alat rawai, pukat, kehilangan kawasan pembiakan dan kawasan pemakanan disebabkan pencemaran lautan.

Beg plastik boleh membunuh penyu

Tahukah anda beg plastik boleh membunuh penyu kerana seringkali penyu tersilap menganggap plastik itu makanannya. Ini kerana plastik menyerupai ubur-ubur yang merupakan makanan utamanya. Sebaki saja termakan plastik tersebut, usus perut penyu boleh tersumbat lalu membunuh mereka secara perlahan.

PROTECT OUR TURTLES

The coastal waters of Brunei Darussalam are known to be in the migration paths of marine turtles during their migration period. Out of the seven species found in the world, only three are found in the waters of Brunei Darussalam. These are the Olive Ridley Turtle, Green Turtle and Hawksbill Turtle.

Sea turtles are protected under Appendix I of the Convention for International Trade of Endangered Species of wild flora and fauna (CITES), and Brunei Darussalam is the signatory of this Convention since 1990. The world has been facing the decline of turtle population since 1970s and several species are expected to be extinct within a few years.

Several factors have been identified as possible causes to the decline of the world's turtle population such as the involvement of humans in the unsustainable exploitation of turtles as well as their eggs, being accidental capture in long-line fishing, entanglement in fishing nets and loss of nesting and feeding sites due to ocean pollution.

Plastic bags can kill turtles

Do you know that plastic bags can kill turtles as they are often mistaken for food, due to the similar looks to jellyfish, which is the main diet for sea turtles. Once ingested, the plastic bag blocks the turtle's intestines and kills them slowly.

Youth, a valuable asset, future leaders

Brunei Darussalam with a total population of 399,800 people (estimate first half of 2012) comprised of 206,700 males and 193,100 females. From these statistics, majority of its population comprised of youth. In this context, Brunei youth are defined as those aged between 15 to 40 years old.

The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam acknowledges the importance of developing its youth to their full potential as they are a valuable asset for the future, who will become future leaders.

National Youth Policy

A national youth policy was formulated in 2004 with its main objective is to produce an excellent Brunei youth.

This is carried out by:

- Instilling and strengthening values and beliefs in Brunei's Constitution and the national philosophy of Malay Islamic Monarchy.
- Nurturing a sense of belonging, patriotism.
- Encourage youth's involvement in the development of secure and continuous economy.

Brunei Vision 2035

Through the Brunei Vision 2035, it wishes to see Brunei Darussalam recognised everywhere for:

- i. The accomplishments of its well-educated and highly skilled people.
- ii. The quality of life.
- iii. The dynamic, sustainable economy.

Youth's development is one of the issues highlighted in the vision where through its strategies, such as through the education strategy, it will prepare the youth for employment and achievement in a world that is increasingly competitive and knowledge-based.



Education

Delivering an efficient education system for the overall positive growth of the population is vital. Thus the Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has continuously allocated a huge amount of budget through the annual fiscal budget as well as the series of National Development Plan.

Over the years, more schools, from primary to secondary, from technical to higher learning institutions were established and it is envisioned that more of these learning institutions will be established to accommodate the growing number of population and for a further outreach in not only the urban but also the rural areas. This is to ensure that education can be reached equally amongst its people.

To meet the social and economic challenges of the 21st Century and equip students with 21st Century skills, the National Education System for the 21st Century (SPN21) was introduced with a full implementation at primary level in 2011.

In 2012 itself, Brunei Darussalam marked another milestone in its field of education with the establishment of its first polytechnic known as 'Politeknik Brunei'. His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam consented for the establishment of the polytechnic in a *titah* (royal speech) at the 18th Teacher's Day celebration on October 18, 2008.

The concern on youth education is further enhanced with the introduction of three scholarships under Human Resource Fund, implemented by stages. The matter was announced by His Majesty in a *titah* in conjunction with His Majesty's 65th birthday anniversary on July 5, 2011.

First, an improvement on an on-going Training and Employment Scheme and offering financial incentives to local youth who have been trained and they continue to work in the private sector.



Second is the Capacity Building and Human Resource In The Private Sector Scheme enables local youth who work in the private sector to further study locally or abroad with the objective to upgrade their qualifications and skills.

Third is the Local Scholarship For Technical and Vocational Education at Private Learning Institution which is for qualified students with 'O' or 'A' Level who do not receive opportunities to study in public technical or vocational institutions.

As an addition to the above schemes, His Majesty also consented for a change in the education allowance for civil servants, particularly for their children who are studying at local private institution accredited by the government, undergoing tertiary courses such as certificate, pre-diploma, diploma, higher diploma and bachelors degree.

Education allowance for courses at tertiary level have also been extended for children of Permanent Residents working in the private sector and is an active member of the Employee Trust Fund. This commenced on January 1, 2012.

More offer on education scholarship schemes have been introduced by the public and private agencies for youth in general. With the many schemes, it is hoped that it will assist in producing highly-skilled and knowledgeable persons in this country.





Compulsory Education Order 2007

In support of the nation’s economic growth and stability, the Ministry of Education has taken proactive measures in reviewing and refining its education policies and practices hence ensuring continual development and improvement consistent with its mission and vision.

One of the measures taken in furthering its mission and vision is the introduction of compulsory education in Brunei Darussalam which supports the 12-year education policy encased in the present National Education System. Towards this development, a new legislation cited as ‘Compulsory Education Order 2007’ received the royal assent from His Majesty on November 24, 2007. The long title of the Order is ‘An Order to provide for compulsory education and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto’.

The main objective of the order is to ensure that all children between the ages of six years and below 15 years who satisfy such condition for receiving primary and lower secondary education are formally registered and receiving appropriate education in schools.

Upon its commencement on November 24, 2007, all children of compulsory school are, except those granted exemption as stated under this order, being born on or after January 1, 2002 who are citizens of Brunei Darussalam and residing in Brunei Darussalam are required by law to be registered in and attending school as pupils. Failure to do so amounts to contravention of the ‘Compulsory Education Order 2007’ and renders each parent of such child liable to legal action.

Compulsory Religious Education Order 2012

Meanwhile on the 22nd Teacher’s Day celebration on September 24, 2012, His Majesty announced the enforcement of ‘Compulsory Religious Education Order 2012’ that would take into effect beginning January 1, 2013. This is to ensure that all Muslim children would receive religious education and know the basic of Islamic religious education.

National Youth Day

To appreciate youth’s contribution to the country, August 1 has been acknowledged as National Youth Day where awards are given for outstanding youth contributing to the nation’s socio and economic growth.



National Service Programme

To produce excellent youths, a National Service Programme or Program Khidmat Bakti Negara (PKBN) was introduced with its first pilot programme implemented in December 2011.

The PKBN was also introduced to enhance youth's sense of patriotism and sustainability; strengthening the understanding and produce pious youth; instill unity; create positive characteristics and possess the spirit of volunteerism; produce a responsible, resolute, active and confident youth.

This programme is for youths aged between 16 to 18 years old where the contents of this programme comprised of various disciplines. This programme requires its participants to stay in the camp for three months.

Department of Youth and Sports

Youth affairs in Brunei Darussalam is under the purview of Department of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. Through this department, a number of programmes have been introduced to assist in the development and movement of the local youth.

Youth Programme

Through the Department of Youth and Sports, there are a variety of programmes designed for youth's development. Some of the programmes include:

- i. Program Patriotik (Patriotic Programme)
- ii. Program Kepimpinan (Leadership Programme)
- iii. Program KAMAS
- iv. Program Outreach (Outreach Programme)
- v. Program Keagamaan (Religious Programme)
- vi. Program Pembangunan Diri (Capacity-Building Programme)
- vii. Program Perkembangan dan Pergerakan Persatuan Belia (Youth Association Development and Movement Programme)
- viii. Program Cara Hidup Sihat (Health Lifestyle Programme)
- ix. Assistance and Services

Besides these programmes, there are also Several programmes at the regional and international level coordinated through the department.





Youth

is undoubtedly a valuable asset for the future of this country. Continuous efforts by the government and the private sector to assist in their development and progress portrayed their importance to ensure that the future of this country will be led by excellent youth contributing to the overall positive socio and economy well-being of this nation-state.