

P E R A K TOURISM NEWS



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ROYAL BELUM

Older Than The Amazon

FOREWORD

Dato' Hamidah Osman

State Executive Councillor for Tourism

It is unfortunate that 13 years into the new millennium, cleanliness is still an issue that continues to haunt us and thus is a cause for concern. It is not enough to just keep our homes or the streets clean, but we have to make a conscious decision to also save and protect the environment as a whole, before further damage is done. In fact, it is the collective effort of everyone to ensure that we do not destroy Mother Nature. I am disappointed that quite a number of our tourist attractions have already been marred due to littering caused by careless visitors. Littering is an act that not only disrupts civil society, but if plastic bags were washed into the sea, turtles could mistake these bags as jellyfish, their main source of food. Trash is a hazard, whether on land or sea. Coral reefs, which have taken thousands of years to form, are threatened, or even destroyed altogether by pollution or human activity. Many people do not realise that a seemingly harmless touch could kill the corals. Worse is when a boat anchors on the reef ecosystem instead of using a mooring buoy. On the home front, a simple reduction in, or better still, elimination on the use of chemicals, pesticides and fertilisers, would promote a healthier ocean environment.

This is what we can change, so why not start from now? As *Royal Belum State Park* is featured in this volume of the *Perak Tourism Newsletter*, let this serve as a good reminder to all tourists and tour operators, to be responsible in preserving natural treasures in Perak for the benefit of our future generations. A well-kept, clean and beautiful Park is what they want to inherit from us. While research on the rich flora and fauna is highly encouraged, we have to follow the guidelines, as stipulated by the authorities, when we visit the forest. Let us just take photographs and leave only our footprints behind.





THE ENCHANTING BEAUTY OF ROYAL BELUM

Royal Belum State Park in northern Perak, estimated at 130 million years old, is much older than that of the Amazon and the Congo. Gazetted as a State Park on May 3, 2007, it covers an area measuring 117,500 hectares encompassing over 90 per cent of the Belum Forest Reserve. It is now known as "Royal Belum" after being bestowed the royal title by HRH Sultan of Perak, Sultan Azlan Shah in July, 2003.

It is said that the name "Belum" originated from the noise emitted from stick grasshoppers (*belalang ranting*) that sounds like "Belummm, Belummm..."

So, what is there to do or see in Royal Belum?

According to Dato' Hj Abdul Karim bin Osman, General Manager of Perak State Park Corporation, the agency that oversees the Park, visitors MUST check out the Rafflesia, the largest flower on Earth. While this flower is found in tropical rainforests throughout Southeast Asia, the Rafflesia is an iconic symbol for Royal Belum.

A "normal" Rafflesia flower has five petals but recently, a flower with ten petals, measuring 40 cm in diameter was discovered at Sungai Gadong. It was definitely the first of its kind in the world.

Another attraction for visitors is the Sungai Rouk Waterfall, which is not any ordinary waterfall. This is where various species of local freshwater fish are bred specifically to promote aqua-tourism. Popular species are Kelah, Tengas and Temonggeh.

While on the subject of waterfalls, Royal Belum has quite a few to offer. The most unique is the Sungai Kooi Waterfall, with a height of 50 metres. The water does not cascade but showers down!

Those who prefer to check out the wild animals in Royal Belum are recommended to visit the salt lick. There are 12 areas where wild animals would come by to obtain their salt nutrients. The famous licks are Sira Papan, Sira Damar Siput and Sira Rambau, to name a few.

On the other hand, those who prefer a simpler life are invited to experience the Sungai Kejar or Sungai Tiang Tourism camps. These camps are located some 30 minutes by boat from Pulau Banding. Facilities provided, besides the camping sites, are community sheds, bathrooms, toilets, kitchens and barbeque equipment.

Those who opt for Sungai Kejar Tourism Camp should also visit the Kejar Hilir Village, a village of the Orang Asli Jahai. This isolated tribe originated from the Austroasia group, similar to Orang Asli Temiar found in central Peninsular Malaysia.



One of the ten species of Hornbills



The Jahais of Kampung Kejar Hilir

A trip to Royal Belum is not complete without watching the birds, especially the hornbills. Ten species of the bird are found here. In fact, bird-watching is a popular activity, although it takes a lot of luck to spot specific species of the birds.

Royal Belum is indeed an experience of a lifetime. Explore all that it has to offer personally. Be blown away by the thousands of species of flora and fauna that make the forest their habitat. Today's guide is a good starting point.

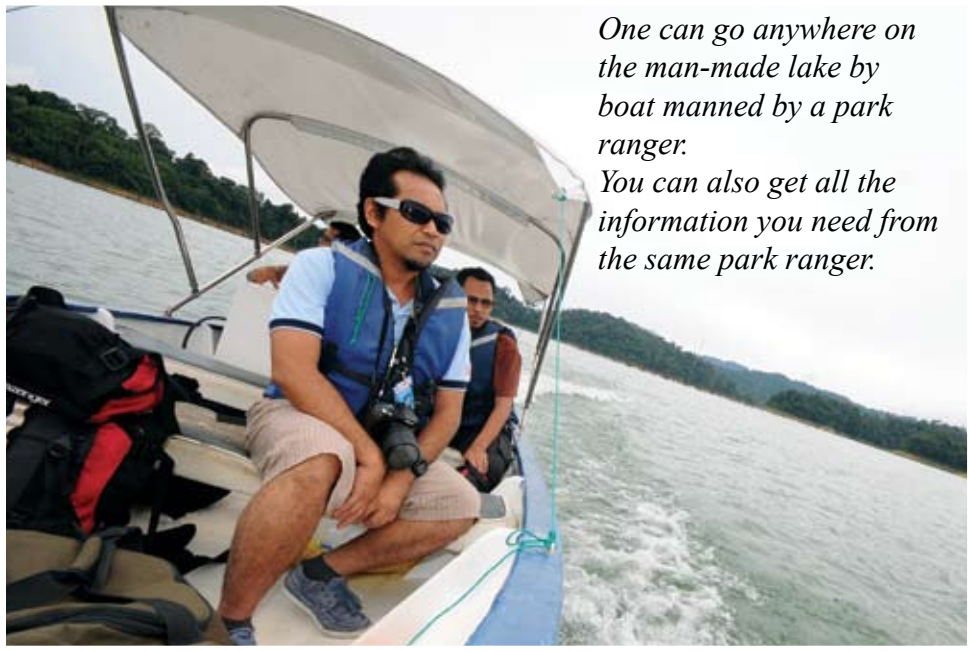
Incidentally, a permit is required to enter the State Park. This can be easily handled by tour operators registered with the Perak State Park Corporation. For more information, contact them at **05-791 4543** or **05-791 7858** during office hours.



The enchanting Sg Kooi Waterfall



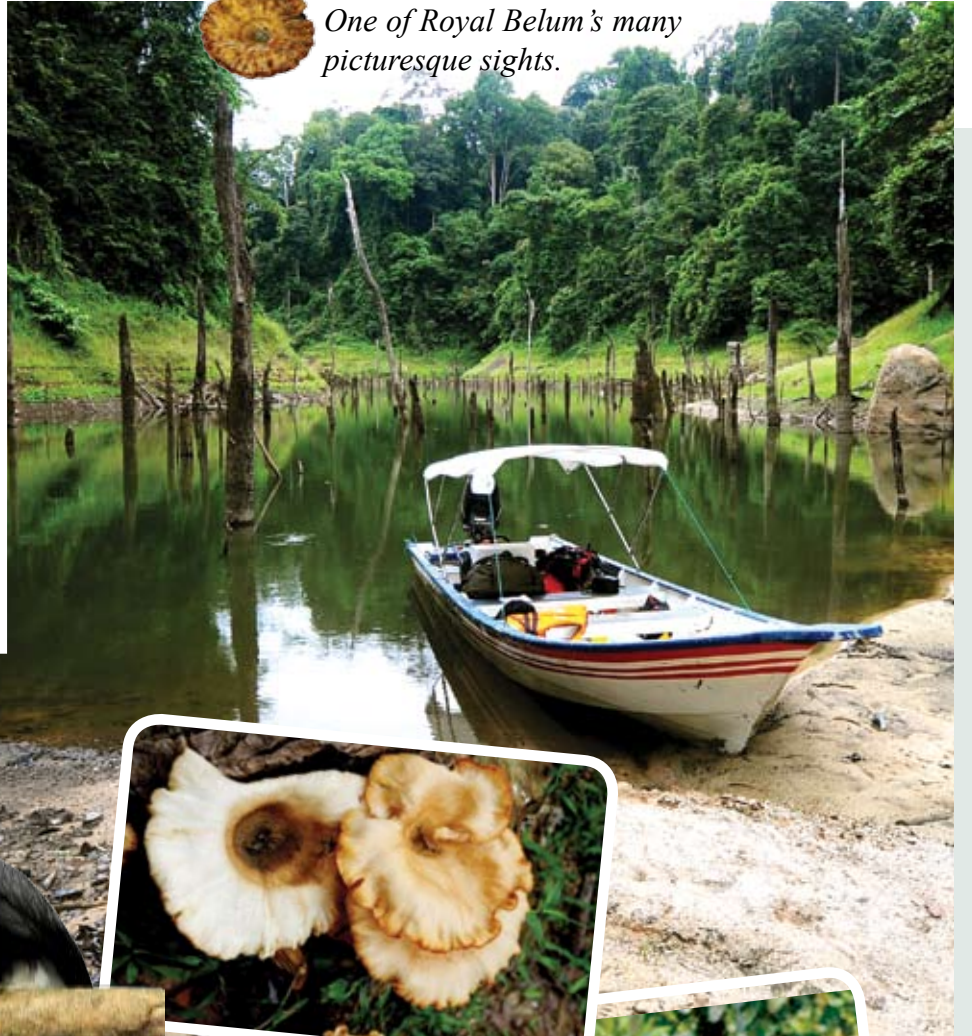
Fish frenzy in Sungei Rouk



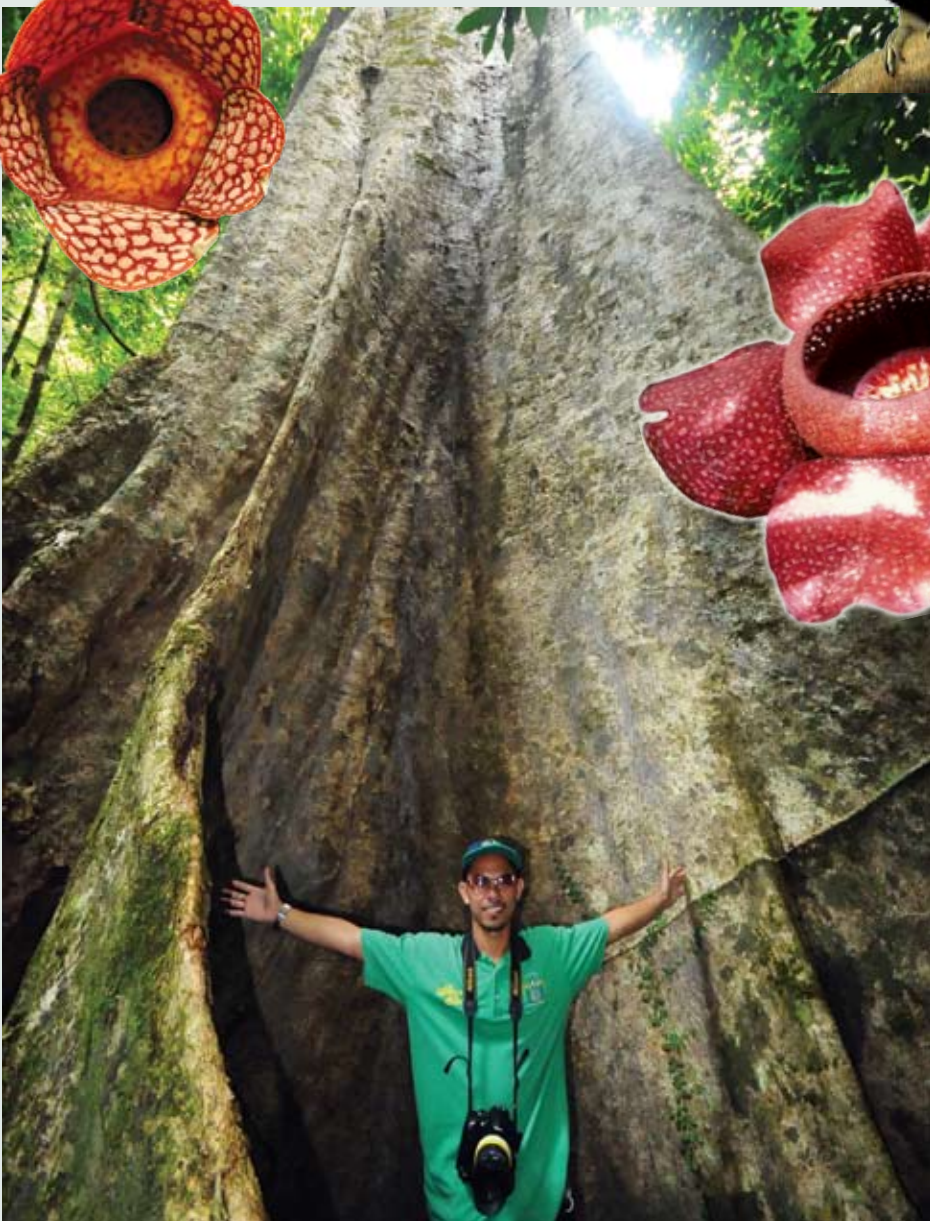
One can go anywhere on the man-made lake by boat manned by a park ranger. You can also get all the information you need from the same park ranger.

Sights That Will Remain

In Your Memory Forever



One of Royal Belum's many picturesque sights.



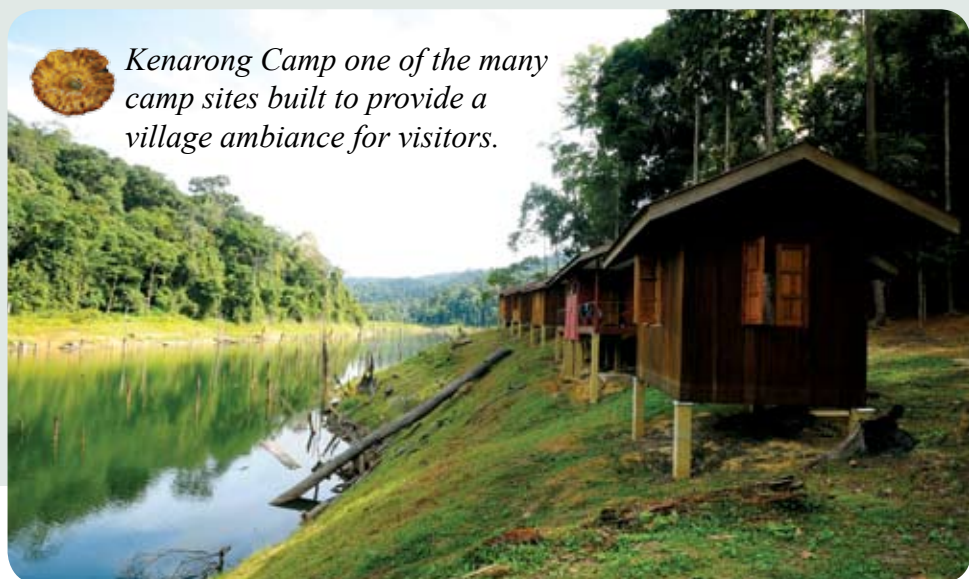
The buttress of a tree believed to be over a century old.



A tapir enjoying a mouth-wash at a salt lick



A model Orang Asli village at Sg Tiang



Kenarong Camp one of the many camp sites built to provide a village ambience for visitors.



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TOURISM ROUND-UP

PANGKOR-LUMUT A TOURIST HAVEN

The Pangkor-Lumut Sea Festival, held from February 28 to March 3, attracted some 10,000 people. With entertainment provided by rocker Ramli Sarip and Salem Iklim, it was an event not to be missed. Menteri Besar Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir, who officiated the festival at Lumut's Dataran Putra, also launched the state-level Visit Malaysia Year 2014. He proudly announced that the Manjung Municipal Council clinched fifth place in the national ranking for Best Local Authority. Zambry is confident Perak's Visit Malaysia Year 2014 will be successful with strong commitment from the three major tourism agencies; Tourism Perak, Tourism Malaysia (Perak) and the Ministry of Tourism (Perak). Out of the 6.5 million tourists who came to Perak last year, almost half of them visited Pangkor and Lumut. This is testimony to their popularity as a tourist haven. Pangkor and Lumut, according to Dato' Hamidah Osman, Executive Councillor for Tourism, will enhance Malaysia's aim of attracting 36 million tourists to its shores by 2020.



HAMIDAH GOES CRUISING

Dato' Hamidah Osman, Executive Councillor for Tourism and staff of Perak Tourism Sdn Bhd set sail on a yacht. This 'cruising' launch gimmick was in conjunction with Pangkor-Lumut Sea Festival 2013 held recently.

LAT'S CARTOONS ON IPOH'S WALLS



During the launch of the *Ipoh International Waiter's Race* recently, Dato' Mohammed Nor Khalid, better known as Lat, agreed in principle to allow his cartoon characters to be painted on walls of buildings in Ipoh. Lat who was present at the launch had designed the logo for the Ipoh race scheduled for May 25 in conjunction with Ipoh's 25th Anniversary. Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim suggested buildings near the Ipoh Padang for a start but would leave it to Lat to make the final decision. The cartoons would enhance Ipoh's image as a tourist destination just like Brussels. He pledged RM20,000 to the Perak Tourism Association to kick-start the project.

LOBSTER FISHING FIESTA

Fishing enthusiasts, especially those who fish for lobsters (*udang galah*), will be delighted to know that the *International Lobster Fishing Fiesta* in Teluk Intan is back for the second consecutive year. To be held on Sunday, March 17, from 8am to 1pm, cash prizes amounting to RM21,650 will be up for grabs. Besides the lobster-fishing competition, other activities planned include a carnival where four local food products will be promoted. They are the succulent Selabak pineapples, young coconuts, mee rebus and lobsters. A cooking competition with local ingredients will be held with the main fares featured. The fishing spot will be a stone's throw away from Jeti Perikanan Teluk Intan, along a 1-km stretch on both sides of the Perak River banks. Teluk Intan is famous for its lobsters, which are available all year round. Some 400 participants are expected to descend on the town for the competition. For details on the competition, go to www.facebook.com/JoranBH.



TOURISM CALENDAR

April 2013

- 1. April 3-5 – Kembara Cuti-Cuti Malaysia** by Gaya Travel / Tourism Perak.
- 2. April 6-7 – GP Fishing Competition** - Teluk Senangin, Lumut By Tourism Perak / Berita Harian / Majlis Perbandaran Manjung. Harian. Tel No: **605-208 3600**. Fax No: **605-241 0671**. Website: www.peraktourism.com.my.
- 3. April 19-21 – Penang MATTA Fair 2013** – Penag. Contact: Perak Tourism at **605-208 3600**. Website: www.peraktourism.com.my.