



MALAYSIAN CONSERVATION ALLIANCE FOR TIGERS

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PRESS RELEASE

Pahang Committed to Protect Tiger Corridor at Sg Yu

4 December 2019, Kuala Lumpur: On behalf of the tiger conservation NGOs, MYCAT applauds the Pahang State Government for its decision to gazette a 128-ha forest as a Permanent Forest Reserve and to close the old Federal Route 8 to curb illegal activities in the Sungai Yu Ecological Corridor (EC). This decision comes in strong support of the efforts of MYCAT, PERHILITAN and Pahang Forestry Department in the corridor since 2010 and is a demonstration of the state government and the Chief Minister's commitment to protect the Malayan Tiger as encapsulated under the Central Forest Spine Master Plan and the National Tiger Conservation Action Plan.

The Sg Yu EC is the most significant forested area still connecting Malaysia's two largest tiger landscapes, namely the Titiwangsa Main Range and Greater Taman Negara. Tigers and other wildlife are extremely vulnerable along this corridor because much of the forest is not protected. Despite its strategic importance with a RM60 million Eco-viaducts constructed in the form of an elevated highway to enable wildlife crossings, the corridor is not spared from deforestation and illegal extraction. The sections north and south of the Sg Yu EC have already been converted to rubber and palm oil plantations. The river system in this area is additionally an important water catchment for the people living downstream, yet due to lack of enforcement, Sg Yu has been bombed for fish and mined for gold illegally.

Since the completion of the Central Spine Road highway in 2014, MYCAT has reported to the authorities numerous signs of illegal activities taking place in the forest along the old road, including land clearing, poaching, mining and encroachment into the national park and forest reserves. MYCAT research vehicles and equipment have also been vandalized in the same area. Hence we have long been advocating for legal protection and wildlife-friendly land-use in Sg Yu EC.

The main issue concerning the efficacy and viability of the Sg Yu EC is that as forest protection and restoration work takes place in one area, land is continually being alienated for agriculture in adjacent areas. This incongruence in actions undermines the efforts and millions of dollars of investment made over the past decade by the Federal Government, MYCAT, the Pahang Forestry Department, PERHILITAN and other government agencies towards conserving the Sg Yu EC for the Malayan Tiger.

To that end, MYCAT strongly urges the Pahang State Government and the Chief Minister to form an integrated management body comprised of government departments and MYCAT at EXCO or under the Pahang Economic Planning Unit.

The success of the RM60 million Eco-viaduct project hinges on the government's immediate action following through their announcement. We look forward to working closely with the Pahang State Government to turn Sg Yu EC into a conservation center of excellence and build towards saving our Malayan Tiger.

END



Caption: Unprotected forest along the old road in the Sg Yu Ecological Corridor is under a constant threat. The forest near the eco-viaduct was cleared as recent as March this year, illegally on the west and legally on the east side of the road (shown here).

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