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## Bora's Seladang conservation project among RM22.59m funding recipients

BUKIT MERTAJAM: The National Conservation Trust Fund (NCTF) under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) has funded a total of 117 conservation projects involving an allocation of RM22.59 million.

Its Minister, Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad said that of the total, 72 projects are in the implementation phase with a funding commitment of RM6.59 million, while 35 projects have been completed with an allocation of RM14.2 million.

"One of the completed projects is the Conservation of Seladang in the Royal Belum State Park (RBSP) - Temenggor Forest Reserve Complex, implemented by the non-governmental organisation Borneo Rhino Alliance (Bora) in collaboration with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan) and brought to the Second National Biodiversity Council.

"The meeting recognises the Seladang as an endangered species of national importance, and a Seladang Conservation Management Plan will be developed to stabilise its population," he said in his closing speech at the Biology Exploration Workshop (Avian) with the Seberang Perai Community.

His speech was read out by Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) director-general Datuk Dr Ismail Parlan.

Also present was Nature Sustainable Ecosystem Society (NEST) chairman Sulaiman Salikan.

The workshop was conducted through a collaboration between Think City, as the fund provider through the Seberang Perai Town Grant with NEST, as the implementing body, and the Seberang Perai City Council, which provides support in terms of sustainable urban planning.

Elaborating, Nik Nazmi said data from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Perhilitan found that a bird species that went extinct around the 1960s was the green peafowl (*pavo muticus*) while the species currently facing the threat of extinction include the Malayan crested argus and the mountain peacock-pheasant.

He added that the causes of extinction include loss of habitat due to logging and development, illegal trade in exotic birds as well as illegal hunting and keeping of wild birds as pets.

"Malaysia has 814 bird species and, of that total, 697 are found in the Peninsula while 55 species are endemic, with 48 of them found in Borneo (Sabah and Sarawak).

"Birds play an important role in maintaining environmental balance, including serving as indicators of ecosystem health, with the number and type of birds in an area reflecting whether that area is healthy or polluted," he said. -Bernama