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THE PRICKLY MAMMAL



Despite of some people's belief, the porcupines shoot their quills at their predator. In reality, porcupines do not shoot their quills. Porcupines are mammals. Like us, the quills are actually modified hairs made out of keratin, the same material found in our hair and fingernails. They shed their needle-like quills just like how we shed our hair. New quills will grow to replace the ones they lose. Despite the fact that the quills do detach easily when touched, they are good defensive weapons. Puncture wounds caused by the porcupines can be serious, sometimes may result fatal to their predators.

There are four sub-species of porcupines in Malaysia: the Brush-tailed (*Artherurus macrourus*), the Long-tailed (*Trichys fasciulate*), the Thick-spined (*Thecurus crassipinis*) and the Malayan (*Hystrix brachyura*). This month's issue of Kancil Gazette focuses on the Malayan Porcupine.

The Malayan Porcupine, or commonly known as the 'Landak Raya' by the locals, can be found in Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia.

The name 'porcupine' derived from the Latin name, 'quill pig'. Yet the porcupines are from the Rodent family, not related to pigs! In fact, the Malayan porcupine is the largest of the Malaysian species, which can weigh up to 8 kg. At the Zoo, this species can be found at the Mammal Kingdom and Children's World.



Porcupines are burrowers and live in a family group. As a nocturnal (active at night) animal, an acute sense of smell is important for the porcupines to hunt for food in the rainforest. The diet of these animals consists of a variety of vegetation and fallen fruits. They will also gnaw on animal bones for natural source of salt.

Based on the International Union Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list, the numbers of Malayan Porcupines are declining. The biggest threats to them are the destruction of their habitat and being hunted where their meat is considered as a delicacy.

KEEPER PROFILE



Mohd Yusrizan or more affectionately known as Yus by his colleagues joined the Zoo in 5 May 2007. He came from Terengganu to work as a keeper because of his great interested in animals.

Yus particularly enjoys working at the Mammal Kingdom because he gets to take care of the variety of animals in the section.

Four Sub-species of Porcupines

Hystrix brachyura



Trichys fasciulate

Thecurus crassipinis



Artherurus macrourus

Enrichment Activity with the Porcupines



On 28 July 2010, Zoo Negara collaborated with Way Out Experience (WOX) and BizzyKidzKL to do an enrichment programme for the porcupines at the Mammal Kingdom. 10 children, aged 6 to 10, and their parents stuffed cube carrots, bread, long beans and bananas into the small hollow tree logs. They hung the tree logs around the exhibits to make those prickly mammals work for their food.



Tiger Cubs on Display



8 April 2010 marked an unforgettable day for Zoo Negara. In conjunction with the Year of the Tiger, our very Malayan Tiger, Zannah (7), gave birth to three healthy cubs. The cubs and mother made their first public appearance on 9 August 2010. Catch these bundles of joy playing in their spacious exhibit.



Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri

maaf zahir & batin

from : Zoo Negara Education Department



" Nature is trying very hard to make us succeed, but nature does not depend on us. We are not the only experiment."

R Buckminster Fuller

WHAT'S NEXT?



Cikgu Kancil at School

The Education Department marked yet another milestone this year by taking the initiative to reach out to the schools around the state of Selangor. Special talks on endangered Malaysian animals were given to the students about the importance our wildlife. Animal appearances and exhibition on animal artifact displays were also part of items to stimulate their interests and attract students towards environment.



Participating schools:

1. SK Seri Tasik, Cheras
2. Sekolah Agama Menengah, Hulu Langat
3. Tanarata International School, Klang
4. SK Subang Bestari, Shah Alam
5. SK Putrajaya Presint 9 (1), Putrajaya
6. SK Putrajaya Presint 11 (1), Putrajaya
7. SK St Gabriel, Kuala Lumpur



Creepy Crawlies Mini Exhibition



2010 is the year of Biodiversity. For this month's mini exhibition, the Zoo focuses on insects to raise public awareness towards these Creepy Crawlies.