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KANCIL GAZETTE



ZOO NEGARA
Malaysian Zoological Society

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Keeper Info

**Name: Mat Iza Ariffin
DOB: 18/6/1958**



Mat Iza has been a keeper at Zoo Negara for almost 23 years. Begin his career as general worker in Zoo, he realized that handling animals need passion and persistence. Thus, with willpower he has, he determines to be an animal keeper and was placed at bird house early of his career in Zoo Negara.

Now, Mat Iza is blissfully positioned at Deer section together with wonderful deer. Do drop by to see our magnificent deer at Zoo Negara.



The Largest Herbivore Population At Zoo



Malayan Sambar Deer (*Cervus unicolor equines*) can be found in all states of Peninsular Malaysia except Pulau Pinang. Here in Zoo Negara, they shared their home with two other species of deers which are the Hog Deer, *Axis porcinus* and also Axis Deer, *Axis axis*.



Inside their large exhibit, we can easily differentiate the Sambar deer apart from the other two species by their colour. The Sambar deers are dark brown in colour, which makes it the darkest among the three species.



Both male and female sambar deer have a neck mane of thicker fur, though it is much prominent in rutting males. Unlike other deers, the sambar deer spends most of the day resting, and is active at night. Like most male deers, the male sambar deer also has antlers which develop only in spring.

The antlers grow directly from the skull and are initially covered by finely haired skin called velvet. The male sambar deer 3-point antlers can grow up to 1.2 m long. Sambar deers are solitary except for a female with a fawn, and perhaps with a yearling too.



Sambar deers eat a variety of vegetation, in which in Zoo Negara we feed them with mostly leaves. Once in a while we also try to make their living environment a bit challenging by doing enrichment programs. In terms of the deers, we use four bamboo shoots. The bamboo shoots are filled with peanut butter, cinnamon, kaya, or pallet. We test their smelling skills by using cinnamon.

Unfortunately, our sambar deer **IUCN Status** was upgraded from Least Concern to Vulnerable. We really have to do something about this! This is all caused by illegal hunting. We certainly wouldn't want it to extinct.



"I ask people why they have deer heads on their walls. They always say because it's such a beautiful animal. There you go. I think my mother is attractive, but I have photographs of her."

Ellen DeGeneres, American stand-up comedian, television host and actress.