

World Wetlands Day 2015

The Malaysian Nature Society Wetlands Programme: Flyway Campaign-KSNP for Ramsar



1 February

7 February



Organised by the Malaysian Nature Society and the
Majlis Daerah Kuala Selangor (Kuala Selangor District Council)

1 & 7 February 2015

Kuala Selangor District, Selangor Darul Ehsan, MALAYSIA



RICOH
imagine. change.

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Cover page: The participants (*photos by: Ng Wai Pak & Sze Ming Hui*)

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Recommended citations:

Ng, W.P. and Wong, C.H., 2015. *World Wetlands Day 2015*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Malaysian Nature Society.

World Wetlands Day 2015 @ Kuala Selangor District

Introduction

The World Wetlands Day commemorates the Ramsar Convention which was signed in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran. The Ramsar Convention places wise use of and conservation of wetlands at its core.



This year, the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) will followed up on the WWD2013 launched of the *Flyway Campaign and KSNP for Ramsar* and the WWD 2014 *KSNP for Ramsar Forum* with the local governments. This year celebration will be an *outreach programme* from the KSNP wetland education center, in preparation of local 'wetlands' schools-communities and MNS members for the Ramsar nomination process to the State of Selangor.

The WWD 2015 was celebrated twice. The first with the MNS members and some government wildlife officers on the 1st February during the final session of '*An Introduction to Coastal Waterbirds & Wetlands Training Workshop*' in Kuala Selangor Nature Park. The second celebration was the Wetlands Discovery Day in Kuala Selangor District for teachers, students and local wetlands communities on the 7th February.

Following this year's WWD theme '*Wetlands for our future – Join us!*' MNS members learnt to identify and count waterbirds along the coast; schoolchildren or youths explored the Kuala Selangor District's seven different types of wetlands while the wetlands local communities explained the benefits of the different wetlands to them. The youths photo-documented the activities during the wetlands exploration. The youths will then perform a pledge activity from April to September. The results will be presented during the Festival of Wings in October, an annual event to celebrate the migratory birds.

Malaysia has taken a positive step forward to conserve the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) which is the North Central Selangor Coast IBA. By joining the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) Malaysia commits itself to conserve wetland habitats and sites of high importance for migratory waterbirds. However, environmental degradation still continues along the North Central Selangor Coast IBA. KSNP is located centrally along this coastal IBA. This is why MNS is pushing for Ramsar Site status for KSNP with the hope that the global recognition would catalyse the protection of the coastal IBA, thereby increasing its conservation chances.



The WWD 2015 was co-organised by MNS and the Kuala Selangor District Council (MDKS) and was supported by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Selangor State Government, GEF SGP Malaysia, and RICOH.

Objective

The objective for the WWD 2015 celebration is the continual outreach to the communities and youths in preparation for the Kuala Selangor Nature Park's nomination for a Ramsar site.

Participation

1 February: A total of 62 MNS members & staffs, wildlife officers, instructors attended the training workshop and graduation-WWD celebration.

7 February: A total of 111 invited students and teachers; MNS staffs and members; MDKS, communities, media and St John Ambulance for the Wetlands Discovery Day.

The total number of participants for the two day event:

Organisation	Registered participants
Majlis Daerah Kuala Selangor (MDKS)	6
Malaysian Nature Society	67
Wildlife Department	6
Schoolchildren and teachers	111
Communities	30
Media	6
St John Ambulance	6
Total	232



Students and teachers at the Kuala Selangor Nature Park © Sze Ming Hui

Activities

1 February: An Introduction to Coastal Waterbirds & Wetlands Training Workshop

Since November 2014, five sessions of training workshops were carried out in the Kuala Selangor Nature Park. All together 93 participants has gone through the 5 sessions. The practical sessions were conducted at the mudflats of Sekinchan and Sungai Janggut, Kapar; and the *Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz* Power Plant's ash ponds in Kapar. The ash ponds has one of the highest concentrations of migratory waterbirds in the west coast, used for feeding and resting. Special permission and security clearances were required together safety briefings were required in this restricted and high security installation. This place is most suitable for practical sessions.

The fifth and final session was held on the 1 February 2015. A total of 62 MNS members and wildlife department officers attended the last session. The MNS president, Mr Henry Goh gave a closing speech during the certificate giving ceremony in celebration of the World Wetlands Day with the MNS members.

The main objective of the training workshop is to train more waterbird counters for the Annual Waterbird Census which is usually conducted in January (a worldwide activity). At the same time to raise the awareness on the wetlands conservation issues.



Lecture session on coastal waterbirds training for members © Ng Wai Pak



Practical sessions at the mudflats of Sungai Janggut, Kapar © Ng Wai Pak



Closing session by MNS President Henry Goh © Ng Wai Pak

7 February: Wetlands Discovery Day in Kuala Selangor District

This year's WWD was not a public event, but for specific targeted groups which are the participating schools and communities from the Kuala Selangor and Sabak Bernam districts. Ten schools participated with a total number of 111 students and teachers, from six primary and four secondary schools, explored the seven different types of wetlands in the Kuala Selangor District.

The participants were welcomed by the MNS vice president Mr Harbans Singh. The opening speech were delivered and the event was officially launched by our co-organiser, the Chief Council or the YDP of MDKS, Puan Hajah Noraini Bt. Roslan, at the multi-purpose hall cum a wetlands resource center (under the GEF SGP project) in Kuala Selangor Nature Park.

After the launch, the YDP presented the '*Pledge Voucher*' of RM500 in value to each participating school, following this years' theme. The voucher is to encourage the participating schools propose a wetlands awareness activity by the participating schoolchildren. Once the proposal is received from the school before 31 March, the voucher will be exchange for a cheque. Once the schools carried out their activities within 6 months, the schools will be given a booth for exhibiting their project pledge and present during the Festival of Wings in October. Prizes will be available for the best three projects.



YDP of MDKS, Puan Hajah Rosnani presenting a *Pledge Voucher* to a school teacher. Second on the right is the MNS vice president, Harbans Singh with Balu Perumal, Head of Conservation.

© Sze Ming Hui

A basic photography workshop was conducted by Mr Lim Shy Tean and Cikgu Hashimi to the schoolchildren. Each schools were given a digital camera each to document the day's activities and encouraged them to send to the WWD photo contest organised by Ramsar secretariat.



Lim Shy Tean, MNS photo group member, sharing his knowledge to the students during the photography workshop © Sze Ming Hui



Sze Ming Hui, MNS staff, explained how to use the loaned camera to the schoolchildren
© Sonny Wong

The seven wetlands that the students explored were the:-

1. Kuala Selangor Nature Park's coastal mangroves and brackish lake system;
2. Raja Musa peat swamp forest; the freshwater canals and paddy fields of Kampong Ampangan, Sungai Sireh;
3. Mudflats with its cockles beds and estuarine mangroves of Kampong Sasaran, Sungai Buloh; and
4. Riverine forest with congregating firefly colonies of Kampong Kuantan, Sungai Selangor.

Here the local communities from each of the wetlands area (Kg Ampangan, Kg Sasaran and Kg Kuantan) were host to the students and explained the importance of wetlands in relation to their daily life. The students had hands on activities during the event.

It was the first and by far the most complete wetlands outdoor classroom for the schoolchildren.



Lake system at Kuala Selangor Nature Park © Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kuala Selangor

After the photography workshop, the students were taken around Kuala Selangor Nature Park led by MNS staffs and members and learnt about the mangroves and the lake ecosystems. Here the students learnt about the importance of the mangroves for preventing erosion, fisheries nursery and water cleansing mechanism. The lake had muddy islands for waterbirds to feed and roost during high tides. They learnt about the preparation of the mangrove nurseries.



En Shahrul, environmental education officer from Kuala Selangor Nature Park
© Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan Hai Ping



Mangrove saplings nursery at KSNP © Sekolah Kebangsaan Dato' Manan

After tea, the students were taken by bus to Kampung Ampangan, about 40 minutes away along the coastal road. This is the high yielding rice fields of Sekincan and the largest peat swamps in Peninsular Malaysia. They had their lunch before the briefing from the villagers.



Briefing by the villagers at Kampung Ampangan, rice fields and peat swamp area © Sonny Wong

Here they had a chance to visit the peat swamp. They were taken across the main canal by boat and walked along the bund along the peat swamp. Unfortunately, due to safety reasons, the students did not get to go into the peat swamp forest due to adult chest high water level received from the monsoon rains which had not receded yet.



Main canal at the Raja Musa peat swamp forest © SK Kuala Selangor



Ng Wai Pak, wetlands programme senior officer explaining the peat swamp © Sze Ming Hui

During the drought season, the water will recede and they were told the dangers of fire in the peat swamp. The difference of mangrove and peat swamp plants and water taste were explained. Peat swamps played a role in water retention and slow release into the freshwater canals that watered the paddy fields. This is one of the most productive rice fields in Malaysia due to the abundance of peat water.

The students were taken by a tractor tram to the rice fields and learnt about the rice cultivation. An empty plot was prepared for them to plant some paddy seedlings.



Tractor-tram © SK Kuala Selangor



Paddy field © Sekolah Kebangsaan Jeram



Sungai Sireh villager showing about the wetlands providing water and how to plant paddy
© SM Sains Kuala Selangor



Having a fun time planting padi saplings © SK Hai Ping



Water tank from the freshwater canal © Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Sireh

About an hour away, they arrived for the evening tea, the weather was cooler and a boat ride out to the mudflats at Kampong Sasaran, Sungai Buloh. A briefing was done by the Fishermen Cooperative head.



Pakcik Kaha gave a safety briefing, explained the mudflats and cockles dependency.
© Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Jeram

The students explored the estuarine mangroves, watched the big and small waterbirds in resting and flying in flocks.



Waterbirds over Sungai Buloh © Sekolah Kebangsaan Kuala Selangor

The short boat ride was close to shore at the mudflats, and cockle collection was demonstrated by the fishermen. The cockles were related to the importance of mudflats and fisheries and also to the waterbirds.



Boat ride from the Sungai Buloh mangrove estuary to the mudflats
© Sekolah Kebangsaan Bukit Belimbing



Evening boat ride at the mudflats looking for cockles © SK Bandar Baru Kuala Selangor



Ms Pasupathy, MNS volunteer with the schoolkids © Ng Wai Pak



Scooping the cockle © Sekolah Kebangsaan Bandar Baru Kuala Selangor

The cockles collected were cleansed with water in a machine, the cockles will go through different grade sieve and rubbish sieve where it will be packed for the market. For today, the students and teachers were given cockles to take back home.



Cleaning the cockles © Sekolah Menengah Sains Kuala Selangor

The students went back to KSNP for dinner and had a rest and prayers before the last event of the day, firefly watching. Night fall, the students visited the riparian mangrove forest at the brackish waters of Sungai Selangor. Here is the famous Kampong Kuantan synchronous fireflies flashing on trees along the riverside. They learnt about the importance of mangrove reserves along the river.



Briefing at the Kg. Kuantan firefly center by Ashokumar, KSNP programme officer

© Ng Wai Pak

Overall, the schoolkids learnt about the different types of wetlands in Kuala Selangor District, the interrelationship between wetlands and the livelihood of the communities, the ecosystems services of wetlands, animals depending on wetlands, our water, fisheries and peat swamps are not wasteland. After experiencing this, they will have a better understanding about the wetlands and managed it well in the future. This will also give them an idea for a 'pledge' project and share their experience and awareness with others.

“Students were given camera to record the wonder of nature in the wetlands they visited.
Classroom without walls, for the students and teachers.”

Ng Wai Pak

Reference

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Websites:

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Kuala Selangor Nature Park Facebook
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