

More Studies Need to be Done on Likas Bay Water Quality: UMS Expert

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Impaired water quality is a global issue. It is in fact a growing problem especially when there is proof of limited resources for drinking, domestic use as well as harming the ecosystems.

According to Associate Professor Dr. Teruaki Yoshida the Head of the Unit for Harmful Algal Bloom Studies (UHABS), Borneo Marine Research Institute, Universiti Malaysia Sabah; the data findings from the water samples collected over a plankton survey at Likas Bay show high dominance of a

single phytoplankton species - *Protoperidinium*.

“Water impairment often affects marine biodiversity. Eutrophication of the water exerts pressure on phytoplankton populations allowing the intensive growth of certain harmful-toxin producing species or nuisance blooms that may create problems in the ecosystem and public health.”

“When there is a single phytoplankton species dominating in an area, it may indicate deterioration in the water quality,” he revealed the findings during the presentation of the Plankton Survey for the Sustaining Kota Kinabalu’s Marine Heritage project - a joint marine conservation project between Universiti Malaysia Sabah and Sutera Harbour Resort, here on Friday.

Dr. Teruaki further stated that it is imperative for people not to increase the release of nutrients in the water.

“Excessive nutrient input into the sea is known to trigger phytoplankton blooms. The sources of nutrients are usually derived from coastal human activities and from agricultural and industrial wastes,” he said.

When asked the level of water quality in Likas Bay, Dr. Teruaki said more studies need to be done.

“To evaluate the present water condition in Likas Bay, it is essential to monitor the changes in environmental variables and indicator species over a certain period before any concrete judgement can be made,” he said.

He also said that the water quality will further deteriorate if there are no improvements of wastewater treatment systems.

“The responsibility by the government to improve our wastewater treatment system is important.

“The discharge of inadequately treated wastewater may cause adverse impacts such as water pollutions, spread of waterborne diseases, decrease in tourism potential; just to name a few,” he said.

Likas Bay has become a popular recreational beach after a vast area of Tanjung Aru Beach has been temporarily closed for a planned development.