

UMS, Dept to embark research on wildlife

KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) will embark on a joint cooperation with the State Wildlife Department on research activities relating to the biodiversity and ecological process in the tropical forest eco-system.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) to this effect will be jointly signed by UMS Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Abu Hassan Othman and Sabah Wildlife Director Mahedi Andau, at the Tabin Wildlife Reserve in Lahad Datu, on Thursday.

Under the agreement, both sides will exchange expertise, training and related facilities on various aspects of research activities for common benefits on a short and long term basis.

Thursday's MOU signing also marked the official launching of the Tabin Inventory and Scientific Expedition 1998 which is in progress since February.

On their part, the Wildlife Department allows the jungle stations and centres under its jurisdiction to be utilised by

UMS for research studies, including Sepilok, Tabin, Kinabatangan and Kulamba, pertaining to land and marine eco-system.

The department will also undertake to provide practical training to UMS students on industrial training.

In exchange, UMS would provide the results of various research activities that could be utilised by the department for its management and conservation efforts or strategies.

The university will also provide the necessary training to help upgrade the knowledge, prestige, capabilities and skills of the Wildlife Department personnel.

Presently, one of the department's personnel is pursuing a degree course at UMS.

Meanwhile, the Tabin Inventory and Scientific Expedition 1998 involves documentation of the various species of flora and fauna over a total area of 120,000 hectares of the wildlife reserve.

The Wildlife Department is providing personnel to carry

out studies on plant life while the Sabah Foundation will have a paramedic team on standby.

Eleven Japanese scientists from the Hyogo Museum of Nature and Human Activities have joined their Malaysian counterparts in the expedition to collect and identify the various plants and animal species, a cooperation accorded in a memorandum signed with UMS last year.

Another four scientists from Denmark are also involved through the various projects prepared by DANCED.

UMS students participating in the expedition will carry out various research works, including studies on insects, herbal plants and tropical forests.

The exhibition is being carried out under two phases, the first from Feb 12 to 24, and the second currently in progress from Mar 4 to 18.

The studies include lowland and highland plants, ground insects, parasites, river water ecology, birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, amphibians and butterflies.