Over 4,000 shrimps released into Petagas River to improve stocks

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PUTATAN: Over 4,000 shrimps were released into the Petagas River here as part of the effort to improve the fishery stocks in the state.

The project, which is the first of its kind by Universiti Malaysia Sabah through its Borneo Marine Research Institute (BMRI), will eventually release other types of marine species such as fish.

According to UMS vice chancellor Professor Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Kamaruzaman Ampon, the project aims to restock the rivers with high-valued fisheries in the state which would also benefit the locals in the area.

"The district was chosen following studies by UMS aquaculture scientists that the location is suitable for the project. We also received feedback from the Putatan 1Malaysia Community prior to pursuing the project to release the shrimps today (yesterday).

"UMS will continue to utilise scientific findings by our academicians so that they would benefit the community, as well as for sustainable development," he said, adding that they would share the knowledge with the people on the correct marine releasing strategy to ensure its high survival rate.

He added that the shrimps released into the river were produced at the BMRI's prawn research hatchery.

"These shrimps were quarantined and have been verified healthy. We hope they would be able to adapt themselves to their new surroundings," he said during the launch of the first phase of the Lobster Ranching Project at the Muhibbah Hall in Petagas here.

Deputy Chief Minister cum Agriculture and Food Industry Minister Datuk Seri Panglima Yahya Hussin launched the event yesterday.

He added that species selected are under the broad genetic fathered from local types and non-exotic.

"This species has gone through the salt water phase before going to the freshwater. We picked this species because its food intake is low in the food chain and does not interact negatively towards the aquatic environment or affect the equilibrium of ecosystem," Kamruzaman explained.

Touching on the hatchery, he said it had just started operation and was implemented under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

"This is indeed a good start and it is our hope that we will be able to produce sustainable aquaculture programme by utilising the correct scientific method, which would benefit the people," he said.

He further said that UMS was ready to accept feedback and suggestions from the local communities to ensure the success of the project, and added that the programme was also implemented to alleviate the pressure on the depleting aquatic resources.

"The environmental and climate change do not help, and the fishermen are the ones directly affected. This project is not just about raising marine resources but also to educate the community to understand the importance of a balanced ecosystem. This is also aimed at controlling the level of pollution in rivers, as it would not just affect the marine life in the rivers but also at sea," he said.