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Tawau Hills Park updated wildlife checklist launched

KOTA KINABALU: It was a proud moment for participants involved in the Tawau Hills Park wildlife survey expedition who witnessed the launch of the updated wildlife checklist at the Sabah Parks office on Wednesday.

The year-long expedition, with the aim of documenting the amazing wildlife inhabiting the biodiverse-rich sanctuary, comprised teams of citizen scientists and avid wildlife enthusiasts which successfully recorded 336 species of birds, 70 species of reptiles, 40 species of snakes, 84 species of frogs and 100 species of mammals.

"Our aim is now to have one checklist that puts the spotlight on the amazing fauna we have in Tawau," said founder of IStopBorneoWildlife Shavez Cheema in a

statement.

The newly-updated checklist was officiated by principal assistant director of Sabah Parks (Research and Education Division), Rimi Repin during the function with Yvonne Koid Qian Qun from IStopBorneoWildlife. Also present during the launch include Borneo Rhino Alliance (BORA) Executive Director, Dr Junaidi Payne.

From the number of wildlife documented, the checklist which also featured potentially new species of frogs and snakes discovered by expedition teams during field visits at the park, will be soon available online at www.istopborneo.org.

"Through such efforts, it is hoped that this will inculcate more interests in the Park and encourage more scientists to carry out more comprehensive surveys," said Shavez, adding the checklist would

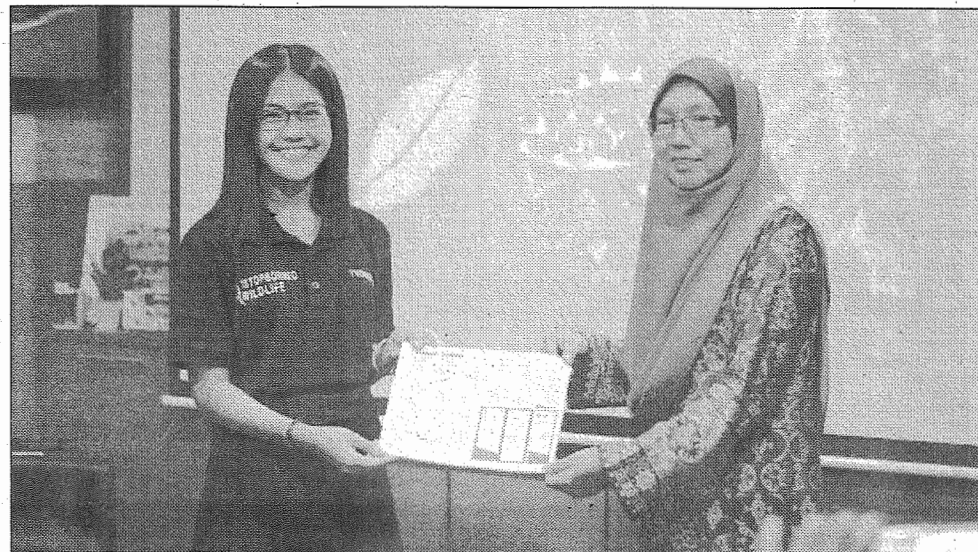
serve as a useful guide for scientists and wildlife tourists.

Among wildlife experts and naturalists involved in the Tawau Hills Expedition included Chien Lee, Lars Fehlandt Michael Gordon, bat experts Isham Azhar, Juliana Senawi and John Bakar (bird expert).

Among the main objectives of the expedition is promoting Tawau Hills Park as one of the main eco-tourism destination and conservation sanctuaries in Sabah.

The expedition comprised various stakeholders, including scientists from University College Sabah Foundation, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), professional wildlife photographers (Chien Lee & Lars Fehlandt) and representatives from tourism companies.

Up next for IStopBorneoWildlife is the field guide and



Yvonne (left) presenting the Tawau Hills Fauna Checklist to Rimi at the launch on Wednesday at the Sabah Parks Office.

coffee table book of Tawau Hills, complete with text and photographs.