

Kinabalu Park facing challenges of invasive species, farms operating without permits

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KOTA KINABALU: Farms operating without permits and an invasive dandelion species are threatening Kinabalu Park, Malaysia's first World Heritage site, says its deputy director Yassin Miki.

Marking the 20th anniversary of the Kinabalu Park as a World Heritage Site, he said that they had toughened enforcement and surveillance to curb these.

He said over the last three years, 32 people had been summonsed and issued compounds totalling RM26,000 for various offences, particularly for operating farms without permits.

Yassin also said that land disputes had been resolved, with permits granted to six villagers to carry out farming.

Kinabalu Park also opened 62 investigation papers for various offences between 2017 and 2020 in efforts to ensure that the park, that is home to Mount Kinabalu, does not lose its heritage status, Yassin said during a online panel discussion to mark its 20th anniversary celebrations.

Yassin said that four threats were identified as possible causes for losing the heritage status by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Heritage Site Outlook between 2014 and 2017.

The threats identified by IUCN were – protection and enforcement; tourism impact; local land disputes as well checking on invasive species.

Efforts have also been taken to weed out the invasive dandelions in the park areas, mainly at Mesilou highland, the summit trail and Kinabalu Park complex and efforts by the park and volunteers have seen some 6,000kg of the plant destroyed in the last three years.

Among those who participated in the panel discussion were Jakarta-based Unesco representative Prof Dr Shahbaz Khan, state Tourism, Culture and Environment Ministry permanent secretary Dr Jamili Nais, Sabah Parks director Dr Maklarin Lakim, as well as Universiti Malaysia Sabah geologist Professor Dr Felix Tongkul and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Professor Datuk Dr Ibrahim Komoo.

TAGS / KEYWORDS: Mount Kinabalu , Kinabalu Park , World Heritage Site , Yassin Miki

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