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# Annual bird race takes it up a notch with 'international' status

BY OH ING YEEN



Sanadure (centre) showing the species that are likely to be found during the bird race. With him are Azlina (left) and Chew.



Birdwatchers, get your binoculars and cameras ready as the Wings of KKB 2016: Selangor International Bird Race is back for the fifth time.

Organised by the Hulu Selangor District Council (MDHS), it will be held from April 22 to 24 with an estimate of 700 to 1,000 participants.

A popular misconception is that the event has live birds racing against each other, but it is actually a fun race where teams of three birdwatchers compete against each other in sighting, identifying and recording as many bird species within the stipulated time.

The event is aimed at raising awareness on the importance of preserving the environment among the public and students through bird-watching activities.

At a press conference in Wisma Genting, Kuala Lumpur, birdwatching specialist K.S. Sanadure, more popularly known as Durai or Durai the birdman, said Awana Genting was a good spot for bird-watching as there were unique ones such as hornbills, Mugimaki Flycatcher as well as migratory birds from Siberia, Japan and other countries.

Durai had been bird-watching since 1984 and is one of the judges for the bird race.

"March and April are months for bird-watching. These days, many young Malaysians are showing interest in bird-watching," he said.

Following the success of the event since its inception in 2012, the programme sees an upgrade with the word "international" added this year.

MDHS president Mohamad Zain A Hamid said, "We already have groups from India, Brunei, Cambodia and Indonesia. With 'international' included in our programme this year, we hope to attract more international bird watchers.

"This annual event will promote Malaysia as a bird watchers' destination and Selangor as a holiday destination."

With the diversity and beauty of the flora and fauna found at Kuala Kubu Baru and the Hulu Selangor district, these two areas are popular among local and international bird watchers.

MDKS development planning department director Azlina Mokhtar noted the growing number of participants with each year.

"There will be a workshop from the Malaysian Nature Society and a gala dinner for participants to meet old and new friends.

"The forest is near the hotel and there is a path available for birdwatchers to use so, it is very convenient for participants especially since they have to carry their camera gear.

"There is also a small stream in Kedondong where you can see water birds," she said.

This will be Resorts World Genting's fourth year as the programme's main sponsor.

Resorts World Genting resort communications and public relations vice-president Katherine Chew said at Awana Hotel, there were about 40 different bird species and up to 70 in total at Genting Highlands.

"There are many foreigners and locals visitors bird watching as early as 5am.

"Standing at 3,000 feet above sea level, the hotel is also known as IBA or Important Bird Area MY10 by Birdlife International.

"We hope with the collaboration with the council, this event will attract more visitors to Malaysia and to Genting Highlands," she said.

The event hoped to further promote Awana Hotel and Genting Highlands as a destination with various Malaysian birds and those on migration.

The area has a 130-million-yearold rainforest which is a prime site for birdwatchers and nature lovers alike.

Participants stand a chance to win prizes sponsored by Resorts World Genting, namely tickets to watch Power Rangers Live in Genting (first prize), buffet lunch voucher at Coffee Terrace (second prize), and Behind The Scenes Tour tickets (third prize).

Winners for the Open, College, Secondary School and Primary School Categories also have the chance to win RM10,000 worth of prizes.

There is also a drawing competition for adults and children.

In conjunction with the bird race, MDHS will also organise the Outdoor Goodies Sales Carnival at Kuala Kubu Baru on April 22 and 23.

The deadline to register is April 15. Participation fee is RM50 per adult, RM30 for college students and RM10 for schoolchildren.

For details, all 03-6064 1331, 03-6064 1155 or visit [wingsofkkb.blogspot.com](http://wingsofkkb.blogspot.com)