MORE ECOTOURISM SITES

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Pictures courtesy of Alfred Molon (www.molon.de).

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Learn about the other ecotourism sites in Malaysia.

T he main concept of ecotourism is to conserve the natural area and its wildlife and plants. Many unspoilt forests in many countries have been turned into national parks, nature reserves or wildlife sanctuaries.

This way, these resources will not be used for other development which may cause more ecological deterioration.

In the November issue of BusinessToday, we highlighted some of the popular ecotourism sites in Malaysia listed in the Ecotourism Network (Expert System Research Group) of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

In this concluding part, we take a look at the remaining states in Malaysia with highlights of their natural resources.

JOHOR:

PULAU TENGAH
Pulau Tengah, an uninhabited island, is an hour away (nine nautical miles) by boat from Mersing town. During the 70s, the island became famous as a Vietnamese refugee transit camp which was subsequently closed in the early 80’s.

In 1985, Pulau Tengah was one of the islands gazetted by the Malaysian Government as a Marine Park to protect marine life and rare species of fish and coral.

Giant leatherback turtles come ashore to lay eggs yearly especially during the month of July.

ENDAU ROMPINT PARK
Endau-Rompin National Park, which is made up of pristine tropical rainforest, is the second largest national park in Peninsular Malaysia.

Among the places of interest here are the Orang Asli settlement in Kampung Peta, the waterfalls of Uph Guling and Buaya Sangkut.

OTHER POPULAR SITES:
Benut Forest Reserve, Kota Tinggi Waterfall, Pulau Besar, Gunung Ledang Forest Reserve and Pulau Hanimau.

PAHANG:

PULAU TIOMAN
Pulau Tioman, the largest in a group of 64 volcanic islands which includes Pulau Sari Buat, Pulau Sembilang, Pulau Tulai, Pulau Cheheh, Pulau Labas and Pulau Renggis, is situated about 80 kilometres northwest off Peninsular Malaysia’s east coast.

Said to be the final resting place of a fabled dragon princess who had turned herself into an island in the South China Sea, Pulau Tioman is truly one of the most beautiful islands in the region.

Nonetheless, the beautiful coral reef surrounding the island has been in limelight with the controversial marina project.

TAMAN NEGARA
Taman Negara, Malaysia’s premier park and the largest in the country extends over some 434,300 hectares of primary forests and is more than 130 million years old.

Even as early as 1938, conservation was of primary concern. The park was established for the sole purpose of protecting and preserving the flora and fauna indigenous to the area.

CHERATING BEACH
Cherating beach is a quiet seaside town with an internet cafe and inexpensive huts and food. Situated only 47 kilometres from Kuantan, its unique features are the rustic atmosphere and the warm hospitality of the village folk. You could stay in Club Med or one of those luxury hotels on the beach. But if you like to experience the true beauty of Cherating, you should stay in the many chalets along the beach.

OTHER POPULAR SITES:
Tasik Bera State Park, Tekam Forest Reserve, Fraser Hill,
At the Bako National Park in Sarawak.

Cameron Highlands Sanctuary and Tasik Chini.

**TERENGGANU:**

**PULAU PERHENTIAN KECIL & BE SAR**

Located about 20 kilometres off the northeast coast of Trengganu, Pulau Perhentian comprises Perhentian Besar (big) and Perhentian Kecil (small).

Before its discovery by tourists who wanted something else besides Tioman and Redang, the islands were nothing more than shelters for fishermen during storms.

**PULAU KAPAS**

Water surrounding the island is crystal clear.

Various types of chalets and camp sites are available but the shortage of fresh water and power supply are the biggest constraints especially during peak holiday seasons.

Pulau Kapas is a haven for swimming, snorkelling, kayaking, boating or just lazing around. It is only 6 km or a 30-minute boat ride (10 minutes by speedboat) from Marang.

Trengganu, an east coast state of Peninsular Malaysia.

**OTHER POPULAR SITES:**

Kenyir Catchment Reserve, Sekayu Amenity Forest, Pulau Redang, Pulau Bidong and Ekor Tebu.

**KELANTAN:**

**PERGAU CATCHMENT**

The Pergau reservoir is to impound water from the Pergau catchment area.

Located at the northwest region of the state of Kelantan, the northern part of the catchment is almost bordering Thailand and the western part is bordering the state of Perak.

The Pergau Reservoir was impounded in the late February 1996, soon after the completion of the Kuala Yong Dam.

**JERAM PASU**

Situated off the Kota Bharu-Pasir Putih road at Kampung Pak Amat, Jeram Pasu is accessible by car but with extra care by motorcycle.

They can be very dangerous to other road users. No public transport is available to the waterfall. Very popular with locals during festive and school holidays, it can be very crowded.

**OTHER POPULAR SITES:**

Tumpat Lagoon, Gua Musang Limestone Hills, Pantai Biskan Bayu, and Pantai Cahaya Bulan.

**SARAWAK:**

**BAKO NATIONAL PARK**

Bako National Park (2,742ha) is located about 40 kilometres north east of Kuching.

From Kuching, you need to get to a small fishing village called Kampung Bako, and then take a boat ride to the park. Accommodation needs to be arranged in advance with the National Parks office in Kuching.

Park permit is required; the permit and the boat transfer can be arranged at Kampung Bako itself.

Some of the main natural resources in the park include mangroves and freshwater swamps, small animals and vegetation of lowland forest, primates (e.g., macaques, langurs, bearded pigs and proboscis monkeys), and flying lemurs at night.

**BATANG AI NATIONAL PARK**

The park is in the interior of Sarawak, close to the Indonesian border, about 150 kilometres east of Kuching.

A sheltered beach in Charating, Pahang.
From Kuching, via Serian and Engkilia, get to Batang Ai Dam. The journey is about 250 kilometres by road.

Then about two hours journey by boat from the dam to the park.

Permit is required, which is obtainable from the National Parks Office in Kuching. Accommodation in a well managed lodging facility near longhouses (arranged via tour companies in Kuching).

Some of the main activities that you can experience include wildlife watching, forest walks, upland river travel and cultural tourism.

**OTHER POPULAR SITES:**
Fairy Cave, Sungai Rajang and Niah National Park.

**SABAH:**

**ABAi MANGROVE FOREST RESERVE**
With an area of 1,396ha, Abai Mangrove Forest Reserve was classified under UNEP WCMC Protected Areas Programs since 1984.

In 1989, Sabah’s Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Development outlined a proposal to establish the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary; it comprises 10 lots of land.

The proposed sanctuary comprises tracts of land that link the Abai Mangrove Forest near the coast with the existing protected areas further inland, creating a corridor of floodplain habitat to maintain the ranging possibilities for native wildlife.

Travel agents are promoting Abai Mangrove river cruises along the Kinabatangan River to the riverside village of Abai, and also to search for the elusive proboscis monkeys, wild orang utan and other exotic inhabitants of the mangroves forest.

**PULAU MABUL**
Pulau Mabul is one of the three famous Islands for divers in the Sipadan group of islands.

It takes about 30 minutes by speedboat from Sempana Sabah to the 20ha oval-shaped island. The Mabul name could have originated from the local word “Makbul” meaning “blessed”.

The small island is blessed with fresh water that could be drawn from shallow wells on the island.

**MOUNT KINABALU**
Mount Kinabalu (4,101m) is the highest mountain in South-east Asia and offers a unique climb from tropical luxuriance through montane oak forest to the rocky sub-alpine summit plateau.

Ample accommodation is available within and just outside of the park.

Despite its size, Kinabalu is one of the easiest mountains in the world to climb.

No special skills or equipment are needed, and each year thousands of visitors undertake the expedition, which takes two to three days.

You can start the climb from either one of the two starting points – Melalau and Mount Kinabalu Park headquarters.

Most climbers start from the Park headquarters starting point.

Register your name at the park headquarters for the climb, pay the necessary climbing fees, and engage a guide.

**OTHER POPULAR SITES:**
Balambangan Island, Batu Puteh (Batu Tulug), Banggi Island Protection Forest Reserve, Pulau Berhala, Pulau Jambongan, Abai Mangrove Forest Reserve, Pulau Sipadan, Pulau Mabul and Kinabalu Park.
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