



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பிளாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

10 Jalan Masjid Negeri, 11600 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
Tel: 604-8299511 Fax: 604-8298109
email: consumerofpenang@gmail.com

Websites:
www.consumer.org.my

Media Statement

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ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION CAUSE OF DECLINE IN COCKLE PRODUCTION

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) is of the opinion that deteriorating environmental quality is the main cause of the decline in breeding and production of cockles in the country.

Besides rampant smuggling of cockle spats to our neighbouring country which we have failed to curb effectively, marine pollution and destruction of mangroves threaten cockle breeding in the coastal areas, causing its near extinction.

Commenting on a statement by University of Science Malaysia (USM) marine biologist Professor Dr. Zulfigar Yassin published in a local daily recently, CAP is concerned that the government has not given due attention to this 10-years long matter.

According to Zulfigar, cockle production in the country has declined 84% since then, from 100,000 metric tonnes to 16,000 metric tonnes, and hence causing a sharp increase in the price of the seafood.

CAP believes that if the source of the problem is not handled immediately it will not only burden consumers but also income of fishers and threaten our food supply in the near future.

CAP's survey in Perak and Penang found that several natural cockle breeding grounds in both the states have been threatened due to clearing of mangrove forests that also functions as source of food supply for cockles, poisonous effluents from shrimp farms, industrial waste, sludge from coastal reclamation projects and sedimentation from inland development and development on highlands.

This problem has affected the income of nearly 5,000 coastal fishers in these states. Many cockles face difficulty to breed and have died, and this has contributed to the decline in population and near extinction of this marine life.

CAP urges the government to take immediate action on the sources of the problem and enforce relevant laws stringently and effectively to curb the contributing factor to the dwindling cockle production. Cockle breeding activity among local fishers must be intensified to generate more income for fishers and increase our food supply.

S.M. MOHAMED IDRIS

President

Consumers Association of Penang