



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பினாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

Websites:  
(in English, BM, Chinese,  
& Tamil)  
[www.consumer.org.my](http://www.consumer.org.my)

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

**Letter to the Editor**

**8 May 2023**

## **Firecrackers and fireworks traumatise pets and wildlife**

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) fully supports the call by the Chairman of the Selangor Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Christine Chin to protect pets from explosive firecrackers and fireworks during festive seasons.

Fireworks and firecrackers, a feature during Malaysian festivals, have always traumatised animals and left them quivering from fear. Ironically, some are pet owners, themselves are simply insensitive to the fear and the stress they are inflicting on their pets.

It is important to remember that the hearing of many animals tends to be much more sensitive than humans. Explosions from fireworks can physically hurt and permanently damage their hearing and can threaten the lives of animals in a handful of different ways.

The sound of explosions and the bright bursts of lights is terrifying to both domestic pets and wildlife. Making a frantic escape is a survival instinct for dogs and cats when they become frightened by the noise and commotion of firecrackers and fireworks. As a result, they may run away in fear, become lost and homeless, or they may be involved in traffic accidents while fleeing in a panic state.

In the case of wildlife, loud sounds from firecrackers often make them anxious and afraid such as causing birds to take flight. Mothers that flee from their nests at the sound of the explosion will not know how to return to their young after the noise cessation, leaving their vulnerable hatchlings cold, hungry, or falling victim to predation. There is also the danger of birds crashing into buildings as they rush to escape or become disoriented in the sudden burst of lights from the fireworks. Fireworks also cause frightened birds to burn vital energy reserves that they need for daily living, especially if they are tending their young.

Some birds fly higher only to be exposed to the harmful by-products from fireworks that include sulphur dioxide and nitric oxide. Sulphur dioxide is a threat to animal health.

Inhalation of firecrackers and fireworks gaseous by-products is toxic to humans as well. The gases can cause great discomfort to adults, and they could induce attacks of coughing and asthma in allergic children. Besides noise pollution, firecrackers and fireworks can easily startle the sick, the elderly and infants, causing much inconvenience to them.

However, these may pale in comparison with the sufferings of those whose homes have been burned down by fireworks, or set ablaze by sparklers, rockets or bottle rockets. There are also incidents of children ending up with permanent disabilities due to loss of limbs, or loss of hearing caused by self-made fireworks or modified fireworks.

CAP has been instrumental in calling for a ban on fireworks and firecrackers for more than two decades. It is difficult to understand why this call has fallen on deaf ears. The latest move by the Local Government Development Minister Nga Kor Ming to legalise firecrackers and fireworks in the country in a move to put a halt to the smuggling of these items is a great disappointment to CAP. His intent was to prevent the smuggling of these items — a good intent with bad outcomes.

From the perspective of environmental protection, CAP believes there are strong grounds, both environmentally and legally, for banning firecrackers and fireworks which will prevent environmental pollution, ensure people's safety, protect property, and maintain a harmonious social order.

As such CAP reiterates its stand for a blanket ban on the sale of fireworks to the public to avoid accidents and injury and distress to pets and wildlife.

**Mohideen Abdul Kader**  
**President**  
**Consumers Association of Penang (CAP)**