



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Letter to the Editor

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Outrage Over Illegal Pangolin Consumption at Semporna Resort

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) expresses its deep concern and profound outrage over recent revelations that a resort in Semporna was implicated in serving pangolin meat, an act that is not only illegal under Malaysian and international law, but also morally reprehensible in every sense.

Pangolins are among the most trafficked endangered species in the world. Across Asia and Africa, their populations have been driven to the brink of extinction by relentless poaching and the illegal wildlife trade, fuelled by demand for their meat and scales.

These animals are protected under strict conservation frameworks, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which prohibits their commercial trade. Against this backdrop, it is both shocking and unacceptable that a hospitality establishment would be involved in facilitating such exploitation.

Wildlife authorities in Sabah have reaffirmed that pangolins are a fully protected species, and that no one is permitted to possess, sell, or serve them in any form. The recent raid on a Semporna resort reportedly uncovered both a live pangolin and cooked dishes, leading to arrests and potential penalties of up to RM250,000 and imprisonment. These facts alone underscore the seriousness of the offence and the blatant disregard for the law.

The role of resorts extends far beyond providing accommodation and leisure. They are ambassadors of their natural surroundings and custodians of the ecosystems that attract visitors from around the world. The alleged actions of this resort reflect a disturbing disregard for conservation efforts, wildlife protection laws, and basic ethical standards. Rather than promoting sustainability and respect for nature, it appears to have contributed to the destruction of one of the planet's most vulnerable species. This is not a minor lapse in judgement, it is a grave ethical and legal failure.

Serving endangered wildlife undermines global conservation initiatives and sends a dangerous message that profit is being prioritised over preservation. The consequences extend beyond environmental damage. The illegal wildlife trade is frequently linked to organised crime, corruption, and serious public health risks. The consumption and distribution of protected species can contribute to the spread of zoonotic diseases and further destabilise fragile ecosystems. In this context, such actions are not merely irresponsible, they are potentially dangerous.

It is imperative that the resort's management responds with urgency and transparency. This must go beyond statements of regret. Concrete actions are required, including full cooperation with law enforcement and wildlife authorities, a thorough internal investigation into how such violations occurred, and the immediate implementation of strict procurement and compliance policies to ensure all food sourcing meets legal and ethical standards.

Additionally, the resort and its management must commit to meaningful reform. This includes mandatory staff training on wildlife protection laws, partnerships with conservation organizations, and the adoption of clear sustainability policies that are publicly communicated and independently verifiable. Anything less would fail to address the seriousness of the situation and would risk further erosion of public trust.

Let this serve as a stark reminder that the exploitation of endangered species is not a victimless act. It accelerates biodiversity loss, disrupts ecosystems, and diminishes the natural heritage that belongs to all of us. Businesses, particularly those operating in ecologically sensitive areas, have a duty to lead by example, not to engage in practices that contribute to loss of endangered wildlife.

CAP calls on the resort to take full responsibility and to act decisively to repair the damage caused. The world is watching, and stakeholders, conservationists, and the local community will judge the resort's response not by its words, but by its actions. There is no justification for what has occurred, and there must be no tolerance for future repetitions.

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