



**UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT JABATAN
PERIKANAN MALAYSIA
BERITA PERIKANAN HARI INI**

21 Jun 2022

SENARAI AKHBAR	TAJUK
Utusan Malaysia	•
Berita Harian	•
Harian Metro	•
Kosmo !	•
Sinar Harian	•
The Star	•
New Straits Time	• Finding Mackerel, Leader
Nanyang Siang Pau	•
Malaysia Gazette	•
Harakah	•
Malaysiakini	•
Bernamea	•
Borneo Post (Kuching)	•
The Sun	•
Sabah Media	•

JENIS AKHBAR								MUKA SURAT	TARIKH
UTUSAN MALAYSIA		KOSMO!		THE STAR		NANYANG SIANG PAU			
BERITA HARIAN		SINAR HARIAN		THE SUN		ORIENTAL DAILY			
HARIAN METRO		NEW STRAITS TIMES	✓	THE MALAY MAIL		PELBAGAI			
KATEGORI LIPUTAN :	POSITIF		NEGATIF		NEUTRAL			2	21/6/2022

Finding mackerel

Why fish is becoming scarce

“NOT enough fish”, this newspaper warned the nation yesterday. This is not because our fishermen have become less competent. No, not at all. There aren't enough to be caught. Mackerels aren't the only ones missing. True, this is a global trend. But the fact is this: what happens in other seas is not under our control; what happens in Malaysian waters is. Have we, meaning our fishermen and authorities, done enough to enable a sustainable supply of fish? We think both could have done more. Start with the fishermen. If the WWF-Malaysia website is right, the Fisheries Department as long ago as 2012 warned us that there will be no fish to catch by 2048. The reason? Our fishermen — not all but many — are using illegal and destructive methods to fish. This is a 40-year depletion story caused by overfishing, by-catch, clearing of natural habitats and use of cyanide, bombs and electrofishing. Our fishermen need to change. Fishes, like us, need time to grow. They know their drag nets, crocodile nets and trawl nets are catching juveniles. They can't blame anyone else but themselves when “not enough fish” becomes “no fish”. It might even be earlier than 2048.

The authorities, too, must do more. True, the open sea is an expanse too wide and shortage of brawn and boats a frequent lament. Laments alone will not bring in the catch we need. Enforcement will, in the long term, that is. As we said, fishes need time to grow. But we must start now. According to a Perak Fisheries estimate of 2012, Malaysians needed 55kg of fish per year per person in 2020. Today, for lack of official figures, it should be 60kg per person per year, give or take a few kg. Enforcement and more would help sustain such a catch. And the more is this: the Fisheries Department must listen more. Do not get us wrong. We are not saying it is not listening. No, not all. It needs to harvest ideas from others. True, the department knows a lot about fish. But there are others out there who know as much, like the environmental and consumer organisations. If they can help bring in the 60kg of catch, why not pay due heed?

Then there is the Fisheries Plan. Not much of this is being discussed in the media. WWF-Malaysia tells us the Fisheries Plan is in need of more input. Why not encourage a discussion in the media? Never underestimate the power of the media's column inches and sound bites in harvesting the information needed to develop the Fisheries Plan. It is, after all, an end result of data gathering, analysis and consultation. There is one more thing, which needs more attention than the Fisheries Plan: climate change. Climate change has a profound impact on marine life. According to the Climate Stewardship Council's website, the oceans, which are home to about 10 million marine species, have absorbed 93 per cent of the excess heat from greenhouse gas emissions since 1970. Changes to oceans means changes to fish stock. Neither our fishermen nor our Fisheries Department can arrest the warming of the Earth. This requires a whole-of-the-world approach. A whole-of-Malaysia approach is part of it. Every Malaysian must do his part. If we want the mackerel on our plate, that is.

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