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# Dry spell threatens native conservation efforts

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**KOTA KINABALU:** The prolonged hot and dry spell in Sabah is affecting freshwater fish along the Mantaranau-Kitapol River in the Kiulu area on the foothills of Mount Kinabalu.

The Sabah Fisheries Department has taken samples, including swabbing fish found injured or dead, to measure the amount of bacteria and parasites in the water.

Kiulu assemblyman Datuk Joniston Bangkual said he was informed by the department officials that they had detected higher levels of bacteria and parasites in the water, and that it was necessary to prevent it from affecting other areas.

"The fungus could be contagious, and it affects the water here; we fear that it could spread to other rivers as well," he said after joining villagers to harvest



**Bacterial threat:** Kinsong showing an infected fish harvested from the Mantaranau-Kitapol River in Kiulu near Mount Kinabalu.

fish conserved under the tagal system in Kg Kitapol in Kiulu on Monday.

(Tagal is a traditional management system in rivers practised for generations by the indigenous people in Sabah. It allows for a period of fish breeding before they are harvested.)

It is understood that the current

dry spell is likely to have contributed to the high level of fungal activity in the river following a drop in the dissolved oxygen level in the water.

The problem is compounded by rotting leaves and trees in the river, which has become shallow.

Bangkual, who is also state Assistant Tourism, Culture and

Environment Minister, said the situation has forced the community to carry out fish harvesting in the red zone, which prohibits fishing as the stretch is meant for fish breeding.

Other stretches marked as yellow zones are only open for fishing during certain periods, while villagers are allowed to fish anytime in green zones.

"The last time this red zone was harvested was about a decade ago. This time, on the advice of Fisheries Department officials, villagers were allowed to harvest the fish rather than leave freshwater fish to die.

"If it is not removed immediately, it would decay and further worsen water quality," he said.

Meanwhile, Soibon Kinsong, the Kampung Kitapol Bombon Community chairman, said they noticed the wounds on the fish and decided to call the Fisheries Department to check.

"We became worried after see-

ing the wounds on the fish and feared other freshwater fish might get infected. We immediately called the relevant authority to check; after all, prevention is better than cure," he said.

Cousins Sherry Lositim, Anjileh Alfred and Winnie Toisin were concerned with the low-level river water and the prolonged dry spell.

"The water pressure at the house is low, but at least we have the river as an alternative," said Sherry, 33, a mother of four children, aged three to 10.

"With low water pressure, household chores like cooking and doing laundry can be a challenge," she added.

She said she would take her children to bathe in the river to conserve water and later rinse themselves with clean water at home.

Anjileh, a mother of four, said she often reminds her children not to waste water.

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**BOT tunda yang ditahan di Sungai Rungkup, Lumut pada Sabtu lalu.**

## APMM tahan bot tunda dikendalikan empat warga asing

**LUMUT** – Sebuah bot nelayan tempatan kelas B1 bersama empat nelayan warga asing ditahan Maritim Malaysia (APMM) Perak pada kedudukan kira-kira 7.9 kilometer (km) barat daya muara Sungai Rungkup di sini pada Sabtu lalu.

Pengarah Maritim Negeri Perak, Kepten Maritim Mohamad Shukri Khotob berkata, bot tersebut dikesan sedang leka melakukan aktiviti menangkap ikan oleh pasukan operasi bot APMM kira-kira pukul 6.45 petang.

“Hasil pemeriksaan ke atas bot berkenaan mendapati, bot itu dikendalikan oleh seorang tekong bersama tiga kru warga

Myanmar berumur dalam lingkungan 29 hingga 30 tahun.

“Pemeriksaan lanjut mendapati, bot tersebut beroperasi kurang dari 14.8km dari daratan,” katanya dalam kenyataan di sini semalam.

Beliau berkata, kes disiasat di bawah Akta Perikanan 1985 kerana melanggar syarat lesen iaitu beroperasi kurang dari 14.8km dari daratan.

Mohamad Shukri berkata, kesemua nelayan yang ditahan bersama bot dan hasil tangkapan beserta peralatan menangkap ikan telah dirampas dan diserahkan kepada pegawai penyiasat APMM untuk tindakan lanjut.