



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

**19 April 2024
10 Syawal 1445H**

SENARAI AKHBAR	TAJUK
Utusan Malaysia	•
Berita Harian	•
Harian Metro	•
Kosmo	•
Sinar Harian	•
The Star	• The art of tagal
New Straits Time	•
Nanyang Siang Pau	•
Malaysia Gazette	•
The Sun	•
Malaysiakini	•
Bernama	•
Free Malaysia Today	•
Guan Ming Daily	•
Awani	•

UTUSAN MALAYSIA	KOSMO!	THE STAR	NANYANG SIANG PAU	MUKA SURAT TARIKI
BERITA HARIAN	SINAR HARIAN	THE SUN	ORIENTAL DAILY	
HARIAN METRO	NEW STRAITS TIMES	THE MALAY MAIL	PELBAGAI	
KATEGORI LIPUTAN	POSITIF	NEGATIF	NEUTRAL	

19.04.2024

The art of tagal

The Star (2)

This traditional concept helps to preserve natural resources in Sabah's rivers.

THE tagal system of conserving rivers and aquatic life practised in Sabah has been proven successful in providing a sustainable supply of freshwater resources for local communities.

The concept of tagal, which in this context is translated as "refrain" in Kadazandusun, has been practised by the native folks of Sabah for many generations, not only for the management of rivers and its freshwater inhabitants, but also for other natural resources such as the forest.

This traditional approach has also been adopted by the Sabah Fisheries Department which has formed smart partnerships with local communities to protect, restore, conserve and manage freshwater fishery resources.

The Sabah government and state Fisheries Department have been expanding the tagal system throughout the state since 2003. However, efforts to implement this system reportedly began in the 1980s.

How it works

The management and monitoring of rivers placed under the tagal system are undertaken by a committee comprising the respective local community of the areas where the rivers are located.

Under the tagal system, each pre-assigned stretch of river is divided into three zones – red, green and yellow. Fishing is prohibited in the red zone, and is allowed only during specified periods in the yellow zone. The green zone, meanwhile, is an open fishing zone.

Bernama recently had the opportunity to participate in an activity known as *menuai tagal* or tagal harvesting in several villages in Kiulu, located 67km north of the

state capital Kota Kinabalu, where the community-based fisheries management system is practised.

Mostly populated by the Dusun ethnic group, the villages concerned were Kampung Ranap, Kitapol, Pukak, Lokub, Sukang, Linga, Tulung, Mantob, Dumpiring, Mangkaladom, Pinahawon, Pinagon and Tiku.

Their harvests of fish such as barob, pelian, sarawi and river lampam or gayomato vary in quantity, with some of the rivers providing bountiful catches exceeding one tonne and others producing less satisfactory yields.

The tagal harvesting activity, which takes place in stretches of rivers categorised as yellow zones, is carried out once a year – or sometimes, once in two years – with the dates determined by the village committee.

Ensuring the success of the tagal system is not an easy task. Some of the villagers said that in nurturing the symbiotic relationship between humans and rivers, local communities must collaborate closely with the authorities, with the management and conservation of the rivers carried out systematically to ensure bountiful catches during the harvesting seasons.

Monitoring is crucial

According to some villagers, one factor that determines the yield of a river and the effectiveness of the tagal system is the way the river resources are managed and cared for by the local community.

Edjilon Tongiak, chairman of the Sungai Pisapakan Dumpiring Tagal committee, said that although their river's yellow zone was harvested about nine months ago, this year's harvest was even more satisfactory.



(Left) Ensuring the success of the tagal system is not an easy task as it needs the cooperation of several parties, including villagers and authorities. – Bernama

Under the tagal system, each pre-assigned stretch of river is divided into three zones. – Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka

He said within two hours of fishing, their haul came to over 600kg and each member of the village tagal committee took home 14kg of fish.

"Our bountiful harvest would not have been possible without the cooperation of all the committee members as well as the villagers. We all went home happy that day," he said.

Edjilon said besides providing food for the fish, the tagal committee members also regularly monitor the river to prevent irresponsible people from fishing or violating the tagal rules in the prohibited zones.

"During the day and night, our members take turns to monitor the areas concerned. This is crucial as we have heard of fish stocks depleting in rivers elsewhere. Those rivers are also being managed under the tagal system but intruders have managed to go in there to fish (in the prohibited areas). This is why we have to step up monitoring to prevent such incidents from happening in our river," he added.

The tagal system comes with its own rules and regulations and violators are imposed a fine of RM5,000 or ordered to give a buffalo (a practice called *sogit*, in which a person pays with a buffalo or other livestock in lieu of cash) if found guilty of committing an offence by the district native court.

Longkumin Kimus, 60, chairman of the Tulu Sala Pinahawon Tagal committee, said currently, intruders caught stealing fish from the prohibited zones are let off with a warning.

"Perhaps, the RM5,000 fine should be imposed on them. I'm sure if this is done, thieves will think twice (before committing an offence)," he said.



Kampung Pinagon Tagal committee chairman Martin Lotupas, 59, who is also the village headman, said the tagal system comes with rules and regulations but "they are not being applied".

"Instead, we choose to impose less harsh punishment such as ordering the culprits to pay *sogit* with a chicken," he said.

Tourism product

Kampung Mangkaladom Tagal committee chairman Lodimun Balantis, 65, said it is time for villages with rivers managed under the tagal system to install closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras in strategic areas to facilitate monitoring and prosecuting trespassers.

"If we have CCTV, we can monitor the rivers from our homes through our mobile phones," he said, adding his committee will discuss this matter soon.

"For a long time, forest reserves and farms have been using CCTV cameras for monitoring purposes and they have proven to be effective," Lodimun added.

Meanwhile, Sungai Gumaton Tagal committee chairman Unus Lumun, 49, said the tagal system can also be turned into a rural tourism product to attract more

tourists to Sabah.

He said the tagal system practised by various villages in Sabah, particularly those in the Kiulu area here, has shown its effectiveness in conserving their river ecosystems and sustaining their freshwater fish stocks.

In fact, he added, some villages where the tagal system is practised, like Kampung Luanti in Ranau, are already drawing tourists from other states and abroad.

"Tourists are coming to see how the (rivers and) fish resources are being sustained as they don't have such a system in their own areas," he said, adding the villages in Kiulu should look to Kampung Luanti as a model for advancing their tagal system as a tourism product as it would bring economic benefits to the villagers.

Kadie Calvin, 45, a member of the Kampung Ranap Tagal committee, said rivers managed under the tagal system also happen to be the favourite fishing spots of anglers from not only Sabah but also the peninsula.

"Usually the anglers would contact the chairman of the tagal committee first before coming and to be allowed to fish there, they would have to pay a fee which is fixed by the committee concerned," he added. – Bernama