Probe into how the killings went unnoticed

Dr 25 3 14
Mary Chin and Jason Santos
KOTA KINABALU: The island barely two weeks ago, following tip off from a fish towkay in Kudat last January. The poachers are said to comprise foreign-ers from Mangsee island in Philippines and locals from Manabuan and Dogotan Islands within the Banggi region.

Dr Alin decided to make the matter public after doing field research on the island barely two weeks ago, following tip off from a fish towkay in Kudat last January. The poachers are said to comprise foreign-ers from Mangsee island in Philippines and locals from Manabuan and Dogotan Islands within the Banggi region.

According to Dr Alin, villagers told him that they reported the matter to the authorities but nothing came of it. The role of the Sabah Wildlife Department in protecting the endangered species of fauna and flora in Sabah as well as controlling international trade of these species is stipulated in the Sabah Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997.

When told that the authorities have the tendency to pass the buck when something like this happens, Masidi quipped: "I don't think they can pass the buck because the 'bark' is too heavy to carry."

The Minister said according to the time line, the Government should be able to gazette the proposed Tun Mustapha Marine Park by next year. "And hopefully, that would put us in a better position to monitor activities within the designated Park."

Asked on the delay in gazetting, he said: "There are certain stages to go through when you want to gazette a particular place as a marine park. We need time to educate the kampung people on the implications of gazetting the area and for them to make sure that their best interests are always protected."

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SABAH Parks Director Dr Jamili Nais echoed the need to speed up gazetting of the Tun Mustapha Marine Park so the Sabah Parks Enactment can be enforced to protect the local wildlife there.

Sabah Wildlife Department Director Datuk Dr Laurentius Ambu refused to comment, saying it had come under Sabah Parks’ purview due to the marine park proposal.

"Although the park has not been gazetted yet, tentatively it has been agreed," he said.

Kudat marine police chief Asst Supt Safardi Abd Samad refuted Dr Alin’s claim that the turtle carcasses were new, saying the images looked like “remnants” of a poaching case they had taken action on before.

He believed that the killing of turtles was done by the Pelauh – sea gypsies who lived all their lives on boats since August last year.

“We have in our records observations up till in August last year," said Safardi, adding that they had received complaints from villagers before.”

Safardi’s claims, however, were refuted by Sabah Parks Research and Education Assistant Director Dr Maklarin Lakim, adding that the stench and flesh description made by Dr Alin revealed the poaching was actually new.