



## Kinabatangan - Corridor of Life

July 2007

### The Area:

- The Kinabatangan River is the longest river in Sabah. It flows for 560 km through eastern Sabah to the Sulu Sea on the east coast. Its water catchment area captures 16,800 square km, or about **23% of the total land area of Sabah**.
- The lower 70 - 100 km of the river meanders through low-lying ground of late Pleistocene to Holocene age, forming a floodplain - **the Kinabatangan Floodplain**, which in the distant past, must have been almost 100% forested.
- It is **arguably** the last forested alluvial floodplain in Asia.
- It is a sanctuary for diverse flora and fauna:
  - It is one of the two places on earth where 10 primates species can be found together, including the orang-utan, proboscis monkey and the Bornean gibbon.
  - It is home to over 250 bird, 50 mammal, 20 reptile species and 1056 plant species that have been identified in this area.
- In 1999, the State Government declared the Lower Kinabatangan as Sabah's "Gift to the Earth".
- In 2005, 26,000 hectares of the Lower Kinabatangan were gazetted as a Wildlife Sanctuary under the Wildlife Conservation Enactment of 1997.



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### Issues:

- Since the 1950s, forested land around the Kinabatangan has been converted for various economic activities such as:
  - logging activities (1950s),
  - development of agriculture (1970s) for cash crops notably paddy, coffee, cocoa, rubber and tobacco (Vaz & Payne 1998).
- Consequently, some logged over forests in Kinabatangan were re-designated for permanent conversion to agriculture with large scale conversion to oil palm plantations in the 1980s. Today, oil palm is the most dominant commercial crop in the Kinabatangan.
- Working with stakeholders and partners, the "Corridor of Life" vision was launched by the Chief Minister of Sabah in January of 2002 to address the issues being faced in the Kinabatangan.

#### The Vision for Kinabatangan is known as the "Corridor of Life"

The "Corridor of Life" Vision towards Sustainable Development includes:

- A forest corridor along the Kinabatangan, connecting the coastal mangrove swamps with the upland forests, where people, wildlife, nature-based tourism and local forest industries thrive and support each other.
- A floodplain that supports a thriving and diverse economy that offers opportunity and choice to local people and businesses.
- Good environmental management of the natural capital on which all partners depend upon.
- A landscape in which agriculture, people and nature conservation is united by their common source of vitality water.



## WWF-Malaysia in Kinabatangan:

- The Project is known as the **Kinabatangan - Corridor of Life (CoL)** with personnel based in Sukau and Kota Kinabalu.
  - Different teams within the CoL focus on different issues such as regeneration of degraded forest, alternative livelihoods for local communities, management and enforcement issues.
- CoL works by engaging stakeholders and partners (government agencies, oil palm companies, multinational companies, tour operators and local communities).
- WWF-Malaysia has been working in the Kinabatangan area since the late 1990s under a project formerly known as the Partners for Wetlands.

## WWF-Malaysia:

- The national conservation trust has been working on biological diversity conservation and advocating for sustainable use of natural resources in Malaysia since 1972.
- Our first Project in Sabah led to the gazettelement of Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park off Kota Kinabalu.
- We continue to work on important conservation projects, from saving endangered species such as tigers and turtles, to protecting our highland forests, rivers and seas.
- WWF-Malaysia is able to leverage upon conservation expertise worldwide as part of WWF, the global conservation organisation.
- If you would like to support WWF-Malaysia or learn more about our projects, call: +60 3 7803 3772 or visit our website at: [www.wwf.org.my](http://www.wwf.org.my)



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