

SEMINAR ON PROJECT IGFA MALAYSIA
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OPENING SPEECH

By

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It is said that lawyers are paid to talk and judges are paid to listen. So, even though I am now speaking as President of PeMM, the judge in me will make my speech very short.

I thank you all, the participants, for participating in this seminar. Frankly, I am very happy that we manage to get about fifty participants for this seminar. This is because, first, I know how busy Kelang Valley people are. Secondly, the nature of the seminar itself i.e. Malaysian Game Fish Record. When I was chairing a session on environmental law at a law conference which was held a few days after the 2001 Malaysian Angling Seminar at Bukit Merah, I mentioned to the participants about the Malaysian Angling Seminar and the participants of the law conference burst into laughter. They must have thought that it was something funny and that the participants of the Malaysian Angling Seminar were crazy people: What do you talk about? That was the question they asked me later.

What more this seminar on game fish records! Never mind. At least in this country now there about fifty people who think that this is a serious enough subject for a seminar and to participate.

It goes without saying that this is the first seminar of this kind in this country. So, in a way we are making history.

Malaysian fresh water is (or was?) blessed with many species of fish. Unfortunately, as often happen in this country, we take things for granted: that they are there and that they are going to be there forever. That is no so. Some species may have disappeared forever, some are on the verge of disappearing. We have to put a stop to it. And that requires everybody's cooperation and effort. The first thing we have to do and I urge all of you to do is to instill the

consciousness in the minds of all Malaysians that we have to conserve the species.

Turning to game fishing. The term “game fish”, like the term “catch and release”, are new terms in Malaysia. Only in last decade that these terms came into the vocabulary of Malaysians. Previously, fish, even arrowana (kelisa), were simply food meant for the stomach. Thanks to people like you all, these terms have become popular terms in Malaysia now. Now many of us catch fish for sport and release the endangered species for future sport, hopefully.

We too now realise that we have quite a good variety of game fish. But, what we lack is the an organisation to keep an official record of the catches, recognised by a world body like IGFA. As result, I am told that even the record for toman, which is abundant in Malaysia, is currently held by a Frenchman, caught in Thailand.

So, PeMM has set up a committee called the Malaysian Game Fish Records Committee to be the official record keeper of Malaysian fishes. This committee, will, among other things, establish the angling rules and regulations pertaining to applications for records based on IGFA rules, the administrative procedures, application fee and others. The committee shall attest, maintain and publish in Rod and Line the Malaysian Fish Records. The committee shall also award Certificates of Recognition to each record holder. The committee shall also, from time to time, decide on the number and types of Malaysian sport fishes to be recognised as Malaysian Game Fishes for record purposes.

We will discuss the details in this seminar.

I thank the organisers, be they from PeMM, Rod and Line and Siow Chiang for their support. I thank the speakers for their contribution. Last but not least, I thank you all for your participation. Without you all there will not be this seminar. Right now you may not think that this afternoon is a significant afternoon in your life. But, if and when this project is well established, you can proudly tell your children and grandchildren that you were one of the participants at that first seminar that established the Malaysian Game Fish Records.

