

Zoos of the Future and Wildlife Conservation, Report on a Seminar at Kuala Lumpur

The Zoo Negara Malaysia was founded some 15 years ago in what was then the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. Today the national zoo sits "landlocked" right in the centre of sprawling, busy, polluted Kuala Lumpur, unable to develop further due to lack of space. While the Zoo serves the needs of the people for education and recreation, and even to a great extent, conservation through various programmes, it is not and will not be able to convert to the modern concept of night safaris and large immersion exhibits. A large and growing city like Kuala Lumpur with a burgeoning tourist trade may require two zoos, one in the city and one some distance away.

The former Director of Wildlife for Malaysia and Chairman of the Asian Rhino Specialist Group, Sri Mohammed Khan, consultant to the Basquitech Sdn. Bhd, a company in Kuala Lumpur, was asked to coordinate the master planning process, including a public seminar, for the proposed zoo. Khan put together a seminar with speakers from the international zoo community both from the west and also representing tropical countries.



Panelists at the Zoos of the Future Seminar at Hotel Istana in Kuala Lumpur.

The invited speakers were Mohammed Khan himself to talk about Malaysian wildlife and its needs from zoos, Dr. George Rabb, former Chairman of the Species Survival Commission, Sri Lyn D. Alwiss, former Director of Wildlife, Sri Lanka and also of Colombo Zoo and former Chairman of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group; and Sally Walker, Zoo Outreach Organisation. Dr. George Rabb was held up in Australia so Dr. Thomas J. Foose, Programme Officer of the International Rhino Foundation, agreed to speak instead.

National dignitaries such as the Minister for Science, Technology and the Environment, Sri Y. B. Datuk Law Hieng Ding and the current Director General, Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Peninsular Malaysia, Sri En Musa bin Nordin provided the opening presentations of the Seminar. Sri Datuk Law Hieng, Minister of STE, gave the Keynote Address, entitled "Zoos of the Future and Wildlife Conservation" in which he stressed

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