



## Project Orion plants 1,000 Mangroves in Malaysia

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The sun rises above the horizon, casting against the golden sandy shores of Peninsular Malaysia's east coast, along which the Setiu River runs parallel. This is where the beautiful Setiu Wetlands, part of the Setiu River Basin and the larger Setiu-Chalok-Bari-Merang basin wetland complex lies.

The Setiu Wetlands is the largest nesting ground for painted terrapin (*Callagur borneoensis*) and are amongst the few remaining mainland nesting sites for the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), both of which are endangered species. The wetland is also a major aquaculture area and plays an important role for the local villagers' livelihood. Project Orion (2 weeks Youth Expedition

Project under the National Youth Council, Singapore, organizing by the Scouts from Singapore and Malaysia in collaboration with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Malaysia, with the aims of promoting turtle conservation and development of the nearby village, Kampung Mangkok.



Setiu Wetlands Project Community Liaison, River Foo said, "It was a fantastic experience for the locals and school children to interact with the team members of Project Orion over the two weeks. Although there had been visitors to the Kampung Mangkok in the past, but none of them actually spent time with the locals like the Scouts did. The commitment showcased by the Scouts in helping the villagers and the environment is truly inspiring. The opportunity for the locals to interact with the foreigners definitely boosted their confidence and thus encourages them to feel proud of themselves and their village. Besides, this is a good example for other future volunteers on how they can conduct activities with WWF and the villagers."

On the 26th and 27th June, the wetland saw about 60 Scouts from Selokah Kebangsaan Mangkok, Kumpulan Latihan Kelanasiswa Malaysia (KLKM) Rovers and Project Orion coming together for a community mangrove planting session. A total of 1000 Asiatic mangroves (*Rhizophora mucronata*) and Nipah palm (*Nypa fruticans*) saplings were planted along the four sections along the Setiu River over the two days.



River Foo also mentioned, "The mangroves planting session with the team members of Project Orion and Scouts from Sekolah Kebangsaan Mangkok and KLKM Rovers was a huge success. Apart from the replanting activity itself, it has also raised awareness on the importance of mangroves ecosystem to the groups involved."

This was an event that saw both local and foreign communities coming together for a common goal – the preservation of our environment and nature!