

**THE ENFORCEMENT OF LAW IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE
ENDANGERED MARINE SPECIES: DUGONGS AND LEATHERBACKS**

By

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The student/ authors confirm that the work submitted is their own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

ABSTRACT

As we are heading towards rapid growth and hasty development, there are lots of things that have been neglected. Sometimes, we tend to forget other matters that are more important to us. To bring the issue at hand, let us look into the matter of our endangered marine species. The two species that we will be discussing are the Dugongs and turtles. They face a dramatic decline in their numbers. Recent studies have shown that these two species are heading towards extinction. It has been stated by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) that, six of the seven species of marine turtles are listed as Endangered or Critically Endangered. In the Pacific, leatherbacks are heading towards extinction, fast, and in the Mediterranean, green turtle numbers have plummeted. However, Turtle and Marine Ecosystem Centre (TUMEC) claims that Leatherbacks will be extinct in Malaysia by year 2007.

The Dugongs on the other hand are historically common in the shallow coastal waters of East Malaysia. They are hunted, particularly in Sabah. Today, sightings of Dugongs are only occasional but their presence are in very small numbers. There are various reasons for this occurrence. As for turtles, they are seriously endangered because of human activities like egg collection, coastal and offshore development, and fishing activities. Dugongs however, have been hunted for human consumption and their habitat has been destroyed by development.

This research is carried out to determine the effectiveness of the enforcement of law in the preservation of endangered marine species especially the dugongs and turtles. This research is focused on the enforcement of law, its relevant Act and statutes in the preservation and protection marine species. It will also highlight the bodies that are responsible in carrying out the enforcement of the law.

This research is based on qualitative methodology where besides referring to books, articles, journals as well as internet, interviews are also conducted with several officers and bodies for example Fisheries Department, Maritime Institute of Malaysia, WWF and Turtle and Marine Ecosystem Centre to get the relevant information.

The aim of this research is to answer the question regarding the effectiveness of law and its enforcement, and whether there is a need to amend laws that is already in existence for the preservation and protection of endangered marine species. This is so, because the continuing existence of these endangered marine species will largely depend on the effectiveness of the enforcement of the relevant laws. This should go hand in hand with efforts to educate the public on the importance of preserving our marine species as a heritage for future generation. The implementation of realistic conservation management strategies should be given high priority to avoid these species from extinction. This research project shall determine the best manner in which these may be accomplished.

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