KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	NEW STRAITS TIMES			
TARIKH	:	21/1/2022 (JUMAAT)	MUKA SURAT	:	9
JABATAN	:	SABAH WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT			

NST 21.1.2022_9

NO REPORT OF SUCH INCIDENT

'Orangutans not likely to kill humans'

KOTA KINABALU: Wildlife authorities have clarified that orangutans are unlikely to kill people.

Following a claim by Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin that the primates could do so, Sabah Wildlife Department director Dr Augustine Tuuga said orangutans were more likely to shy away from people.

He said the primates in the wild would naturally stay away or hide upon seeing humans in the forests.

"It is their instinct to stay away from humans, whom they may perceive as a dangerous species.

"The same goes for other wildlife such as the monkeys and other animals in the wild," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Augustine, however, said there might be a possibility that an orangutan would attack if it was provoked such as if one threw stones at it or tried to injure it.

He added that there have been no reports of people being killed by orangutans so far.

"There were cases where people had been injured at Sepilok (Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in Sandakan), but this merely involved being bitten and they had minor injuries.



Sabah Wildlife Department director Dr Augustine Tuuga says the primates in the wild would naturally stay away or hide upon seeing humans. FILE PIC

"Furthermore, unless you go to Kinabatangan, forest areas or zoo, it is unlikely for humans to stumble upon an orangutan," he said, adding that there were about 11,000 orangutans in Sabah based on a survey done in 2000.

In Sabah, orangutans are a fully protected animal as listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997.

The issue cropped up following a video clip of Zuraida at the Malaysian Palm Oil Council's 2022 seminar and dialogue on Jan 5, who was heard saying that: "In Malaysia, if you see an orangutan, it will kill you first, not you kill the orangutan first, correct?"

The footage has since gone viral on social media. **By Olivia Miwil**