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TAGGING PROGRAMME

'Voluntourism harming Mabul turtles'

SEMPORNA: More diving fraternities have come forward to criticise the "one off" turtle protection programme in Mabul waters.

Semporna Professional Divers Association (SPDA) and a non-governmental organisation, Green Semporna, hope the authorities would look into the tagging programme held annually during the Mabul Turtle Week here.

"Every time after the programme, the number of turtles drop drastically.

SPDA president Abdul Razak Ismail said: "This programme, in collaboration with a public university, is merely to get profits from selling voluntourism packages."



Turtles found during diving and snorkelling activities off Semporna waters. FILE PIC

He said he had voiced his concerns about their methods in tagging turtles, which included handling and forcing them to come out from the water abruptly.

Both organisations had received feedback from the public on videos that showed turtles dying during tagging.

Razak questioned whether the incidents, which were caused by untrained volunteers, were reported to the authorities.

"We are concerned that if the activity continues, the turtles will leave Mabul for good."