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LETTERS

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

EXOTIC ANIMAL STAMPS WILL DOOM THEM

PHILATELISTS in Malaysia may be over the moon with the release of stamp depicting exotic food in Langkawi and Perlis, Sahabat Alam Malaysia, however, is horrified to learn of this.

It is important that Pos Malaysia consider the ramifications of perpetuating the trend of featuring exotic meats.

For example, pangolins have been poached into near extinction, and sharks are disappearing from the oceans partially to fuel the demand for shark fin soup.

Back to the porcupine dish, the brush tailed and Malayan porcupine are permitted to be hunted and eaten by the Orang Asli without a need for a permit.

The Chinese prefer porcupine boar for use in traditional Chinese medicine.

The promotion of the food stamp will expose the animals to being excessively hunted and lead to humans encroaching on their habitats.

Without a little consideration and help from mankind, they face extinction on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red list category.

Sea cucumbers are valued by Malaysians for their medicinal benefits and as culinary delicacies.

Commercial species of sea cucumbers are overfished in many countries due to the ease in which sea cucumbers can be collected from shallow reef flats.

In Malaysia, the lack of fishing regulations — such as the minimum legal permitted size for harvesting, closed season and catch quota — contribute to excessive harvesting.

Additional threats to sea cucumbers are degradation and destruction of coral reef habitats, and uncontrolled demand.

In Sabah, the number of horseshoe crabs is declining and on the verge of disappearing due to mangrove habitat loss.

Muhammad Ali Syed Hussein of Universiti Malaysia Sabah's

Borneo Marine Research Institute said the decline of the horseshoe crab is compounded by a renewed interest in horseshoe crabs as a delicacy.

Previously collected for their eggs, they are now collected commercially, especially in Peninsular Malaysia, for restaurants and for export to Thailand.

Since horseshoe crabs take a long time to reach maturity, the loss of breeding adults is detrimental to the population.

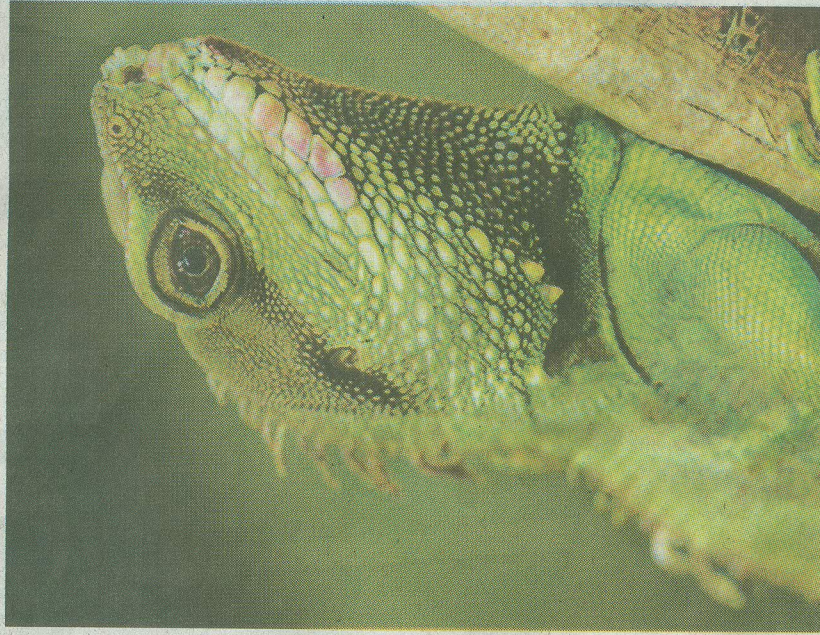
SAM is certain the new stamp series will encourage Malaysians to seek out unusual, exotic and exciting eating experiences.

SAM recalls that in 2013, another stamp collection and philately products with the themed exotic pets was promoted.

Animals such as the green iguana, African pygmy hedgehog and the sugar glider were showcased.

Promoting exotic animals to the public is a sure doom for them.

When the public buys exotic an-



The green iguana was one of the exotic animals showcased in a stamp collection series in 2013. FILE PIC

imals — such as hedgehogs, iguanas, lizards, sugar gliders and tortoises from stores or on the Internet — for keeping as pets, it often leads to pain and death for these animals because of confinement in an unnatural and uncomfortable environment.

Human ignorance breeds misery for these animals.

Hedgehogs, who roll themselves into tight balls, can become injured when children try to “uncurl” them, or if cats attack them.

Sugar gliders are social animals, and if they are not given enough attention, they may mutilate themselves or die from loneliness.

The public should never support the pet shop trade in exotic animals.

People often buy exotic animals without an understanding that these animals belong in their own habitats.

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