

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGY IN MALAYSIA: A REVIEW FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE (Strategi Pemuliharaan Biodiversiti di Malaysia: Satu Pandangan dari Sudut Islam)

MOHD. AZLAN J. ABDUL GULAM AZAD

ABSTRACT

The rapid decline of world's biodiversity and increasing need of natural resources to accommodate the growing population suggest that the current western philosophy of conservation biology is not achieving its mission and objective as expected in Southeast Asia. The existing religious tools and channels for conservation should be seriously considered. There is a high potential in achieving high standards of conservation biology if management of natural resources adheres to the fundamental principles of Islam in Malaysia. However religious approaches are mainly limited to Islamic norms and treated independently in many parts of Southeast Asia, including Malaysia. Therefore there is an urgent need to synergize Islamic concepts in conservation biology with the existing governance system. It is believed if Islamic concepts are genuinely practised and amalgamated into the existing implementation and governance structure in conservation biology, the future for biodiversity in this region will be bright.

Keywords: Islamic perspective, biodiversity, conservation strategy

ABSTRAK

Ancaman serta pengurangan biodiversiti dunia sejajar dengan keperluan tinggi untuk sumber alam semulajadi terutamanya untuk menampung penduduk yang semakin meningkat, menunjukkan bahawa falsafah serta ideologi barat biologi pemuliharaan tidak mencapai misi dan objektif seperti yang diharapkan di Asia Tenggara. Kemudahan dan saluran agama Islam yang sedia ada untuk pemuliharaan perlu dipertimbangkan secara serius. Malaysia mempunyai

*Corresponding author.
Email: azlan@frst.unimas.com

potensi yang tinggi dalam mencapai standard biologi pemuliharaan yang tinggi sekiranya pengurusan sumber asli berpegang teguh kepada prinsip-prinsip asas Islam. Walau bagaimanapun, pendekatan agama kebiasaannya terhadap kepada norma-norma Islam harian dan diasingkan dari sistem pentadbiran awam di kebanyakan negara di Asia Tenggara, termasuk Malaysia. Justeru itu, keperluan untuk menggabungkan konsep Islam dalam biologi pemuliharaan dengan sistem pentadbiran yang sedia adalah amat penting. Sekiranya konsep Islam yang asas di praktis dan digabungkan dalam sistem pelaksanaan dan struktur pentadbiran yang sedia ada, dalam konteks biologi pemuliharaan, maka pemuliharaan biodiversiti di rantau ini mempunyai masa depan yang cerah.

Kata Kunci: Biodiversiti, pemuliharaan, Perspektif Islam

INTRODUCTION

The world is experiencing its sixth great extinction event, exclusively attributable to human activities (Kingsford et al. 2009), and the impact in the Southeast Asia region has been particularly dramatic (Brook et al. 2003; Sodhi et al. 2004; Sodhi et al. 2009; Sodhi et al. 2010; Wilcove & Koh 2010). It is known that Southeast Asia has the highest rate of deforestation compared to any other tropical region where approximately 75% of the original forest and 42% of its biodiversity is expected to be lost by 2100 (Sodhi et al. 2004). Therefore these habitats face a high risk of eradication and localized extinction.

Meyer et al. (2000) identified 25 regions in the world known as hotspots having the highest diversity and endemics, which contain the sole remaining habitat of 44% of the earth's plant species with 35% of its vertebrate species. Of these 25 regions, Southeast Asia claims two of the world's hotspots of diversity, Sundaland and Wallacea. Besides hosting a variety of flora and fauna, Southeast Asia also boasts a diverse range of religion, cultural and ethnic background despite the fact that most of the range countries have received strong influence from the western society through colonization including Malaysia. Sundaland, the third most threatened eco-region in the world claims the highest Sunni Muslim population and is socio-politically divided into Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore. Malaysia, one of the most developed Muslim countries in the world is rising economically and has tried to adopt various Islamic values in its governance. Indeed development is an utmost essential in the developing regions such as Sundaland but this could not be achieved to its highest level if the basic ecological processes are not