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CHALLENGES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PAYAR ISLAND MARINE PARK

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This case was written by Raslinda Mohd Ghazali and Azilah Kasim, Universiti Utara Malaysia. It is intended to be used as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a management situation.

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In January 2016, Encik Mohamad Faiz Shaharuddin, one of the Assistant Fisheries Officer in Department of Marine Parks Kedah raised his concern regarding challenges in the management of Payar Island Marine Park. According to him, the impacts of excessive tourist numbers coupled with negligent behavior were some of the reasons for environmental degradation in this island. There are several issues need to be considered when implementing policies to educate, enforce the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) regulations, limiting the use of visitors, monitoring and evaluation program and also management actions. This is important to ensure the sustainability of marine resources and to protect the tourism activities at the MPA. Based on Encik Mohamad Faiz Shaharuddin, the quality of the marine environment is important for the tourism industry and uncontrolled tourism activities can adverse effects on the environment. An uncontrolled activity of the tourism industry, especially in the MPA could cause three main effects such as reduction of natural resources, pollution and harmful physical effects. There are many factors that could contribute to the reduction of natural resources, pollution and harmful physical impact on the islands of the marine park. The high number of tourists could potentially threaten the attraction of the marine park and appropriate measures to lessen these threats are needed urgently. The issues in the management of sewage and solid waste, the management of tourism activities, water and energy consumption, and other development practices were the factors mentioned. However, if these factors are not aptly planned, controlled and managed, it would cause its own downfall although these factors can be reduced and are within the control of management of the MPA.

Background: Department Of Marine Park Malaysia (DMPM)

Marine Park is a type of marine protected area (MPA) which can be described as an area of sea where a government has put limits on human activity for recreation use, in effort to conserve a specific habitat and ensure the ecological unit is sustained. Marine Parks is a protected area of sea zoned one or two nautical miles from the shore at lowest sea level. However, these marine parks are facing pressure from a number of threats and Payar Island Marine Park is one of them.

Marine Parks in Malaysia were established in 1983 by the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Fisheries) which introduced by Ex-Prime Minister of Malaysia, Rt. Hon. Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohammad to protect, conserve and manage in perpetuity representative marine ecosystems of significance, particularly coral reefs and their associated flora and fauna, so that they remain undamaged for future generations. In 2004, Marine Park Section was shifted to a new management under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) and effective on 16th of July 2007, Marine Park Section officially becomes Department of Marine Park Malaysia that are responsible to manage and administer MPA especially Malaysia Marine Park. The section was formerly under the Department of Fisheries and due to the awareness of the essential role that marine parks play in the sustainability of the overall marine environment, the Government has turned it off as an independent agency under the NRE. Table 1 below shows the chronology of the establishment of Malaysia Marine Parks.

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