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\$19 million lost due to illegal fishing

TEMBURONG

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BRUNEI lost \$19 million last year due to illegal and unreported fishing operations in its national waters.

A Fisheries officer who requested anonymity told that the illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing includes cases of encroachment by illegal foreign fishing vessels, fishing without a license and destructive fishing practices with the use of poison, explosives and cyanide. “It is considered a serious issue for us,” said the official, referring to the IUU fishing operations that have incurred losses in the marine resources.

He stressed the importance of educating the public regarding laws to combat IUU Fishing.

To avoid further economic loss and damage to the marine system due to illegal fishing practices, the government has started holding discussions with fishermen and farmers. One of these discussions was held in the Temburong District yesterday.

He added the discussions have been carried out by the officials from the Department of Fisheries at the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources.

The event, which was organised in conjunction with the celebration of 2014 Farmers, Livestock Breeders and Fishermen’s Day, was held at the Bumiputera Complex, Bangar Town.

Present were Yang Berhormat Hj Sulaiman Hj Ahad, member of Legislative Council and Head of Kg Belingos, other community leaders, officers and staff from government agencies as well as teachers and students.

In his remark prior to the start of the discussion, Acting Director of the Fisheries Department Abdul Halidi Mohd Salleh said the briefing aimed to raise public awareness on activities carried out by the department.

Abdul Halidi, who is also the event’s guest of honour, highlighted the importance of assuring national food security as the Fisheries Department has implemented several strategies and programmes to increase the commodity and value-added of fisheries products.

He called on the farmers to commit to increase production and ensure the high quality and safety of the products for these to be acceptable both to the local and foreign markets.

He added that quality would be improved by following the use of Good Aquaculture Practices (GAP).

GAP is defined as a practice or aquaculture practices which are effective and practical to avoid or minimise the impact on the environment.

The event also saw the presentation of briefings by Head of Management and Surveillance Division Zulfaisal Hj Saherin and Head of Fisheries Capture Development Division Mat Zaini Hj Juna. –*Sally Piri*

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