



## PRESS RELEASE

### Sea in the City

**Kuala Lumpur, 19 August 2018** – The sea came to Kuala Lumpur on 11 and 12 August with a host of activities in conjunction with World Oceans Day (WOD) 2018. From exhibitions to workshops and talks to games, all things marine were featured at the two-day event, held at the Publika Shopping Gallery.

The event was organised by MNS Marine (Marine Special Interest Group of the Malaysian Nature Society Selangor Branch) and Lions Club/Leos Club. Fully volunteer-run, it saw about 70 participants, including generous sponsors, MNS SIGs, NGOs, eco-friendly vendors and individuals.

The event drew about 5,000 visitors, including school groups from kindergarten to university level and student uniformed bodies; marine, terrestrial and zero-waste NGOs; members from the organising bodies; and the general public, from grandmothers to toddlers.

Besides being a platform to learn, share and explore eco-friendly choices, it became a venue where conservationists and activists connected and reconnected.

The objectives of the event were to raise awareness about issues related to the ocean's health and the importance of coral reefs, seagrass and sharks. It was also held in conjunction with the International Year of the Reef 2018, managed locally by the Department of Marine Park Malaysia.

“We wanted to get everyone to appreciate the beauty of the ocean and how we were linked to it,” said MNS Marine’s WOD 2018 coordinator Tan Whei Li. “We also wanted to encourage people to realise that every action of ours, everything we buy, every meal we eat, was directly or indirectly affecting the environment.”

#### *Plastic-Free*

A primary objective of WOD was to raise awareness about the impact on oceans by the plastics we use.

MNS Marine made WOD plastic-free as far as possible. Everyone worked to reduce plastic bags and packaging, including for food and drinks. The public made signature and photo pledges to use less plastic.

Vendors offered for sale, plastic-free alternatives for daily use – including at special prices – such as soaps, toothpastes, skincare, disposable packaging, kitchenware, portable water filters and Sea to Summit outdoor gear.

Workshops saw full attendance, in which visitors created ocean-friendly products such as beeswax wraps, natural scrubs and potpourri. The MNS Green living SIG drew the curious with effective zero-waste displays and games as well as cool exhibits by their teen committee members.

#### *Trips and exclusives*

Interacting with nature requires skills and people with whom to do so.

Visitors checked in on the Dungun Dive Resort booth to sign up to negotiate the underwater world with proper training or gain specialist underwater skills. From MNS Marine, they learned to bring beach cleanups to the next level with a hands-on data-based approach. Other nature specialty trips were on offer from MNS' Herpetology, Bird, Flora and Caving SIGs.

Exclusives at WOD included a preview of a made-in-Malaysia marine-themed card game called Reef Stakes, which was developed by four young passionate conservationists. It aims to mirror real-life decision-making when it comes to development and conservation. World Oceans Day Youth Advisory Council member Gabby Tan tested the Reef Stakes card game and took a walk around the event too.

A real treat was in store in the shape of a specially-created marine-themed Lego display for WOD. It took two months for its creation by Lego enthusiast Vincent Liew, spotlighted in the media for his Lego models of Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Mahathir and his wife.

### *Animals, animals, animals*

Animals and their habitats featured big in WOD too. Participants got to bust those myths about sharks in Shark 101 by Shark Savers Malaysia. Kids loved the shark clay-craft workshop, hugging walking 'sharks' and getting shark tattoos.

They gleaned turtle facts from chelonian expert and Dr Chen Pelf Nyok and mobbed her afterwards. Likewise, a talk on dugongs and other creatures in seagrass meadows by seagrass biogeographer Dr Jillian Ooi got a great reception. Visitors to the Seagrass Guardians booth learned about the seagrass ecosystem and blue carbon from Michael Yap, who came all the way from Sabah.

Meanwhile, visitors got acquainted with sea snakes and other reptiles from the enthusiastic Herpetology SIG members. In the poster exhibition section, the wonders of seahorses were on display. Visitors also got a chance to learn about Malaysia's marvellous marine parks – spread across 42 islands – and why they were established.

Reef-safe sunscreen was available for sale as well as quality durable adventure gear that wouldn't fall apart while used in the ocean. Meanwhile, the Malaysian Vegan Society was at hand to tell visitors how their food choices affected the ocean.

### *Prizes and youth*

Lots of prizes were available for visitors, thanks to sponsors. Answering a special quiz while learning, won one participant the grand prize of an SSI open-water dive course courtesy of Dungun Dive Resort. There were more quizzes offering gift cards and products by Frangipani and Speak.

Youth was a focus of WOD. MNS Marine collaborated with PINTAR Foundation and Tesco Malaysia Sdn Bhd to workshop the students of SMK Vivekananda to write and present WOD-themed poetry at the event, a huge success which also saw beat-boxing thrown into the mix.

Meanwhile Monash University Malaysia presented technical student project posters on greenhouse gasses and the ocean, and eutrophication.

Four-fifths of the volunteers were under the age of 24 and they also got the chance to participate in activities.

“WOD is a celebration of life. Without water, nothing will survive in this planet,” said Wong Wee Liem, MNS Marine Coordinator. “Our planet was called planet earth; I prefer to call it planet water.”

*World Oceans Day 2018 was held from 10am–9pm on 11 & 12 August 2018 at the Boulevard, Publika Shopping Gallery, KL. The list of SIG and NGO booths, vendors, workshops, talks, performances and poster exhibits are on Facebook and Instagram: @mnsmarinegroup.selangorbranch.*

### *About MNS Marine*

The Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) was the oldest membership-based conservation organisation in Malaysia. It has branches throughout the country and carries out numerous activities. The Marine Special Interest Group, under the Selangor Branch, was made up of passionate volunteers who work towards conserving Malaysia's marine ecosystem through awareness-raising and field trips. For more information, please visit us on Facebook and Instagram: @mnsmarinegroup.selangorbranch or email mnsmarine.my@gmail.com

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MNS Marine's WOD had a full programme of marine-related activities that attracted people from all walks of life. - pic: SLWong

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Visitors enjoyed booths, workshops, talks, exhibits and stuff to buy. – pic: Leisure Su

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A poem on seagrass was among several written and presented by SMK Vivekananda. – pic: Ivan Ho

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Green Living used fun games to educate these Lions Club visitors on zero waste. – pic: Ivan Ho

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Kids had fun posing with Shark Savers Malaysia 'sharks' and learned a thing or two too. – pic: Jessica Ng

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Dr Chen Pelf Nyok mesmerised the audience with turtle and terrapin facts. – pic: Ivan Ho

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Doing a 'beach cleanup' using data. - pic: SLWong

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World Oceans Day Youth Advisory Council member Gabby Tan (far left) participated in a conservation game and took a walk around the event too. - pic: SLWong

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The MNS Marine WOD organising committee and some of the volunteers; Wee Liem is on the far right, Whei Li, 4<sup>th</sup> from right (holding the bag) – pic: SK Mandal

*MNS Marine/SLWong 19 Aug 2018*  
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