

THOUSANDS DEAD

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'IKAN PATIN DIED DUE TO LACK OF OXYGEN IN WATER'

Pahang Fisheries Dept says high stocking density in cages among factors that killed the fish

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EXTREMELY murky river water and high stocking density of fish in cages were among several factors which led to the death of thousands of *ikan patin* (silver catfish), whose carcasses were spotted floating at farms along Sungai Pahang near Jerantut Ferry here since Sunday.

State Fisheries Department director Abdullah Jaafar said the department, acting on a report, had gone to the farms at Sungai Pahang in Kampung Lada, Jerantut, on Tuesday to collect the water and live fish samples.

He said based on statements taken from the affected breeders, inspection at their farms and lab reports from the Fisheries Biosecurity unit here, the department found several factors contributed to the incident.

"It rained for three consecutive days and the sudden change in weather resulted in the river water becoming extremely murky. The fish died from a lack of oxygen.



Silver catfish carcasses in a cage along Sungai Pahang near Jerantut on Tuesday. PIC COURTESY OF FISH FARM OPERATORS

"The high stocking density in the cages had also caused chronic stress and injuries to the fish. The fish were then easily exposed to parasite infection," he said in a statement.

Abdullah said that following the incident, the department had initiated short-term measures, including deploying officers to provide regular consultation to the breeders on how to overcome the problems.

"The department will monitor the farms and ensure the breeders harvest the *patin* when it reaches market size (that is, not keeping them too long in the cages).

"Farmers have been advised to reduce the stocking density to at least half of the current population.

"The department will organise MyGAP (Malaysian Good Agricultural Practice) awareness

courses so that the breeders will adopt proper methods in managing their ventures," he said.

On Tuesday, a group of breeders operating near Jerantut Ferry suffered more than RM100,000 in losses after being forced to remove thousands of floating *ikan patin* carcasses from their farms.

Some claimed that this was the first time they had experienced such an unusual situation which led to major losses.