



Gayana Eco Resort Achieves Major Ecological Milestone

Marine Centre Successful in Spawning all Species of Giant Clams

KOTA KINABALU, SABAH, MALAYSIA- July 1, 2009. The Marine Ecology Research Centre (MERC) located within Gayana Eco Resort has announced that its team of researchers has achieved a significant ecological milestone by successfully spawning all 7 species of endangered Giant Clams found in Malaysian waters. The first successful spawning was registered in April 2008 and thereafter additional spawnings from each species were recorded. The seventh and final species, *Tridacna crocea* was successfully spawned on 26th June 2009.

Giant Clams, once found throughout the world's tropical oceans are now facing extinction. It is now listed in the Appendix II of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and also classified as "Vulnerable" in the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. These listing and classification reflects the global concern for giant clams and their future. In Malaysia, the Department of Fisheries has listed giant clams as a protected species. This protection is much needed as from the total eight species of Giant Clam, seven are found in Malaysian waters and two of these have been classified as "locally extinct".

Unknown to many, Giant Clams play one of the most important roles in the survival of our Marine Ecosystems as they act as the *kidney's of the oceans*; they take in harmful waste nutrients like ammonia and nitrate and then expel clean water back into the environment. Giant clams live in mutualism with zooxanthellae and these photosynthetic algae releases oxygen into the ecosystem. As Giant Clams are slow growing and have minimal defense systems, they are highly susceptible to any threat, whether from natural enemies or human activities.

Under the M.E.R.C's Giant Clam propagation program, resort guests and visitors alike can observe researchers daily work as they are determined to arrest the decline of the world's Giant Clam population.

In order to successfully breed Giant Clams, mature clam specimens have to be properly induced to release eggs and sperm for reproduction. Plankton is then cultured in order to feed the microscopic hatchery bred clams. Larval and settlement tanks are used to collect and allow the juvenile clams to settle on selected sub-straights. From here, it can take up to another 3 years of patient nurturing and attention before the clams can grow large enough within the nursery to survive on their own in the wild.



About Gayana Eco Resort:

Gayana Eco Resort rests serenely at the edges of a lush tropical Jungle island off the coast of Borneo. 44 over water villas are designed to enhance the soothing sounds of the surf below, while capturing the enduring vistas of Mt. Kinabalu on the distant horizon.

Striking the perfect balance of forward thinking ecology and indulgent luxury, Gayana pampers both the body and the enlightened soul.

Contact:

Jonathan Wise
Gayana Eco Resort
+60 88 271 098 tel.
+60 88 475 714 fax.

jonathan.wise@gayana-eco-resort.com
www.gayana-eco-resort.com

###