



*Sahabat Alam Malaysia field officer **Meor Razak Meor Abdul Rahman** says the decrease in coastal mangrove forests will have a **negative impact** on the environment and ecological system. Pic by Mohd Nazrulaswad*

Mangrove forests dwindling in Perak

MANJUNG: Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) has expressed concern over the state's dwindling mangrove forest.

Citing a study by Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) conducted between 1989 and 2009, SAM field officer Meor Razak Meor Abdul Rahman said mangrove forest areas in Perak had reduced from 52,366ha to 40,579ha within 20 years.

"The study found the cause of the reduction included land usage for aquaculture activities."

Razak said most of the coastal mangrove areas destroyed were in Kerian, Larut Matang and Selama, Manjung and Hilir Perak.

"It is worrying that fractions of Permanent Reserved Forests (PRF) covered with coastal mangroves had been converted for other purposes."

Among the PRFs that had been partially destroyed are in Manjung district, of which about 70ha had been converted for mixed development and settlement projects.

Another PRF in the district that

had been converted is 164ha of Hutan Simpan Batu Undan for tourism and infrastructure projects.

"There are also PRFs covered with coastal mangroves that have been encroached, cleared and converted illegally, such as Hutan Simpan Tanjung Burung and Hutan Simpan Teluk Kertang."

Razak said if the coastal mangroves in the state were not protected and conserved, it would have a negative impact on the environment and ecological system.

"The conversion and destruction of coastal mangroves expose the area and its surroundings to open sea and storm, waves, erosion and tsunamis."

He said the loss of coastal mangroves would lead to the destruction and dwindling of aquatic and coastal marine life.

"We have received numerous complaints from fishermen regarding dwindling catch after coastal mangroves were destroyed and aquaculture operations began."