



PRESS RELEASE
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Wildlife Findings Point to Opportunities for Ecological Connectivity in Sabah Palm Oil Landscape

Petaling Jaya, 27 October 2026 – Camera trap surveys in identified ecological corridors within Guthrie's plantation landscape in Sabah recorded several threatened species, including the Bornean clouded leopard, sun bear and Sunda pangolin, highlighting the importance of connected habitats within production landscapes and their potential role in supporting biodiversity conservation.

The wildlife records form part of a baseline assessment conducted under a regenerative palm oil pilot jointly implemented by Guthrie and WWF-Malaysia. Covering about 13,000 hectares within Guthrie's Benuang plantation in eastern Sabah, the pilot landscape borders more than 56,000 hectares of neighbouring forest habitat, including the Madai Baturong and Ulu Kalumpang Forest Reserves. The assessment helps identify opportunities to strengthen ecological connectivity across the landscape, while the pilot serves as a practical testbed for understanding how regenerative palm oil approaches can support production, conservation and restoration goals at scale. Lessons from the pilot may help inform similar efforts across palm oil-producing landscapes in Malaysia and beyond.

KEY FINDINGS

- **13,000-hectare** regenerative palm oil pilot landscape in eastern Sabah
- **Bornean clouded leopard, Sunda pangolin and sun bear** recorded through camera trap surveys
- **Orangutan nests** documented in adjacent forest habitats
- **Three priority connectivity zones** identified to strengthen links between the Madai Baturong and Ulu Kalumpang Forest Reserves
- **1,073 hectares of conservation areas** within Guthrie operations
- More than **56,000 hectares of neighbouring forest habitat** connected to the landscape
- **Independent third-party** review completed

The findings reinforce one of the assessment's key recommendations: strengthening habitat connectivity between the Madai Baturong and Ulu Kalumpang Forest Reserves through three priority corridor areas identified within the plantation landscape. By improving links between forest habitats, these corridors can help facilitate wildlife movement across the landscape,

enhance long-term ecological resilience and improve opportunities across the wider landscape.

The assessment found that important forest habitats remain across the wider landscape and continue to support a rich diversity of wildlife, including threatened and Borneo-endemic species. Surveys also documented orangutan nests in adjacent forest habitats, further underscoring the area's conservation significance.

While the findings point to important biodiversity values across the landscape, the assessment also identified opportunities to strengthen ecological connectivity. These include restoring degraded habitat, enhancing riparian corridors and addressing barriers to wildlife movement, such as electric fencing in selected areas.

The baseline assessment was conducted between February and September 2026 across four estates and one mill within the Binuang plantation. It assessed conditions across six Priority Commitments that underpin the regenerative palm oil pilot: productivity, human wellbeing, biodiversity, ecosystem services, climate resilience, and greenhouse gas emissions and carbon storage.

The findings provide an evidence-based foundation for the pilot's next phase, helping to identify priority actions to strengthen habitat connectivity, restore degraded areas and improve landscape resilience. Through this process, the pilot is testing how regenerative palm oil approaches can support biodiversity conservation, ecosystem health and climate resilience while maintaining productive agricultural landscapes.

Dr Henry Chan, Senior Director, Strategic Conservation Partnerships, WWF-Malaysia, said, "The presence of threatened wildlife within these proposed corridor areas highlights the importance of maintaining and restoring habitat connectivity across the landscape. This baseline assessment provides valuable evidence to guide conservation actions that can strengthen ecological linkages and support nature recovery. Importantly, it also helps identify where regenerative palm oil approaches can deliver the greatest impact, by addressing landscape-level challenges such as habitat fragmentation while maintaining productive agricultural land. This pilot demonstrates how working landscapes can contribute to biodiversity recovery by enhancing habitat connectivity and restoring ecological functions. It also offers an opportunity to test how regenerative palm oil approaches can address drivers of species decline while supporting resilient agricultural production."

Mohd Haris Mohd Arshad, President & Group Chief Executive Officer of Guthrie, said the baseline is an important step in moving from ambition to measurable action.

"Our 13,000-hectare pilot landscape borders more than 56,000 hectares of forest habitat. That makes the way we manage our estates important not only for palm oil production, but also for the ecological links between these forests. The assessment has identified three priority connectivity areas, giving us a clear basis for targeting restoration and improving wildlife movement. For us, regenerative palm oil must translate into practical changes on the ground, supported by evidence. This baseline will guide those interventions and provide the starting point for measuring their results. The test is whether we can strengthen biodiversity and

ecosystem resilience while maintaining productive estates and build credible evidence to inform how these approaches could be applied more widely,” he said.

The findings were presented during the COP17 side event, "The Role of Plantations Towards Global Biodiversity Targets: Guthrie's Adoption of a Regenerative Palm Oil Framework," co-organised by Guthrie and WWF-Malaysia. The pilot illustrates how production landscapes can contribute to implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by supporting ecosystem connectivity, habitat restoration and species conservation alongside sustainable agricultural production.

The baseline assessment will inform the next phase of the pilot, including targeted interventions to strengthen habitat connectivity, restore degraded areas and improve landscape resilience. By translating these findings into on-the-ground action, the initiative aims to demonstrate how regenerative palm oil can contribute to biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and sustainable production goals. Lessons from the pilot may also help inform broader efforts to integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable commodity production across palm oil landscapes in Malaysia and beyond.

The partnership was formalised on 1 February 2026 to pilot regenerative palm oil approaches in Sabah. For Guthrie, the pilot is a testbed that could guide how its plantations in Malaysia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands change over the long term, supporting its “Beyond Zero” sustainability commitment.

About SD Guthrie Berhad

We are a responsible global leader in Certified Sustainable Palm Oil production, employing nearly 83,000 people who serve the needs of food consumers and brands in 86 countries. All our palm oil is fully traceable and deforestation-free.

Our 200-year history has led us to where we are today – a leader in innovation, developing next-generation robotics and technology-driven solutions for the palm oil and agri-business sector. We are addressing demand for renewable energy through the creation of solar projects and high-performance industrial parks, drawing on our sustainability leadership to expand our horizons and create a future-ready company.

Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do. As the world’s first palm oil company with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets approved by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), we push boundaries with our enhanced sustainability framework, “Beyond Zero”, driving meaningful change in our sector.

We operate 232 plantation estates in Malaysia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, supported by 10 refineries with a combined annual capacity of four million metric tonnes. We produce 12% of all certified sustainable palm oil in the world. We produce and sell a diverse range of palm oil derivatives including oleochemicals, biodiesel and nutraceuticals, and we are actively engaged in the development and commercialisation of super high-yielding oil palm seeds that are more resistant to the challenges of climate change.

Listed on Bursa Malaysia (KLSE: SDG) with a market capitalisation of RM39.55 billion (USD9.68 billion) as of 26 October 2026, we are a strategic company of Permodalan Nasional Berhad, Malaysia’s largest unit trust company and our major shareholder. We are supported by a large institutional base of investors including Kumpulan Wang Simpanan Pekerja (Employees Provident Fund) and Kumpulan Wang Persaraan (Diperbadankan) (Retirement Fund (Incorporated)).

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About WWF-Malaysia

World Wide Fund for Nature Malaysia (WWF-Malaysia) was established in 1972 and is part of World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the international conservation organisation. Working to sustain the natural world for the benefit of people and nature, WWF-Malaysia's efforts to conserve nature focus on six major themes: forests, oceans, wildlife, food, climate and energy, as well as freshwater. Our mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. Find our latest news here:

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