

Len: Strong demand, market prices boost applications for of swiftlet farming licences

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THE growing demand and high market prices for bird's nests have led to the increase in applications for swiftlet farming licences.

Assistant Minister of Urban Planning, Land Administration and Environment Datu Len Talif Salleh said as at Sept 30 this year, 535 licences for swiftlet houses and 106 licences for swiftlet farming in caves had been issued.

From the total swiftlet house licences, 130 were issued in Samarahan Division, 118 in Sarikei, 100 in Betong, 88 in Mukah, 35 in Bintulu, 25 in Sibul, 19 in Kuching, 12 in Miri, four in Sri Aman, and two each in Limbang and Kapit.

For licences for swiftlet farming in caves, 51 were issued in Niah, 38 in Baram, 12 in Bintulu, and five in Serian.

“Most of the bird's nests harvested were marketed to China and also to the domestic markets, with market prices now in the range of RM3,000 to RM4,000 per kilogramme,” he said in reply to Mohamad Razi Sitam (PBB-Saribas).

Len, who is Kuala Rajang assemblyman, acknowledged that there are still unlicensed swiftlet farmers, although he did not disclose the statistics.

He said Sarawak Forest Department had issued warning letters to unlicensed operators ordering them to cease operations, and also to take down twitters used to attract the swiftlets.

Relevant agencies such as the local councils, Land and Survey Department and police also carried out enforcement exercises as stipulated under Wild Life Ordinance 1998, he added.

“The state government, through Sarawak Forest Department, encourages operators and those involved in the bird's nest industry to apply for the appropriate licensing for swiftlet farming, as well as to sell, export and import bird's nests.

“This is in accordance with the Wild Life Ordinance 1998, Wild Life Protection (Edible Bird's Nests) Rules 1998 and Sarawak Swiftlet Farming Guidelines,” he said.