



## Batu Batu

*Johor, Malaysia*

Batu Batu is a 22 villa retreat on the off-grid island of Pulau Tengah, in the Sultan Iskandar Marine Park, Johor, Malaysia. We aim to provide restorative and thought-provoking retreats in nature whilst creating positive impacts on local biodiversity and communities.

Batu Batu founded and continues to contribute to Tengah Island Conservation, an independent, non-profit biodiversity conservation organisation. The organisation employs 8 biologist and environmental scientists conducting work within the Mersing Marine Protected Area.

*Cher Chua-Lassalvy*

*President, Tengah Island Conservation*

*Managing Director, Batu Batu Resort*





## Mersing District

*Johor, Malaysia*

Mersing District is in the Southern Malaysian State of Johor. It is home to the protected rainforests of Endau Rompin National Park and the Sultan Iskandar Marine Park which comprises of 41 marine protected islands.

According to a Government website, Mersing district in Johor is an important southern gateway for ecotourism, as well as coastal and island tourism in the East Coast Economic Region. The tourism sector is developed based on the 'Rainforest to Reef' (R2R) concept, focusing not only on its rainforest and island assets but also the integrated urban and coastal tourism assets in Mersing.

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*President, Tengah Island Conservation*

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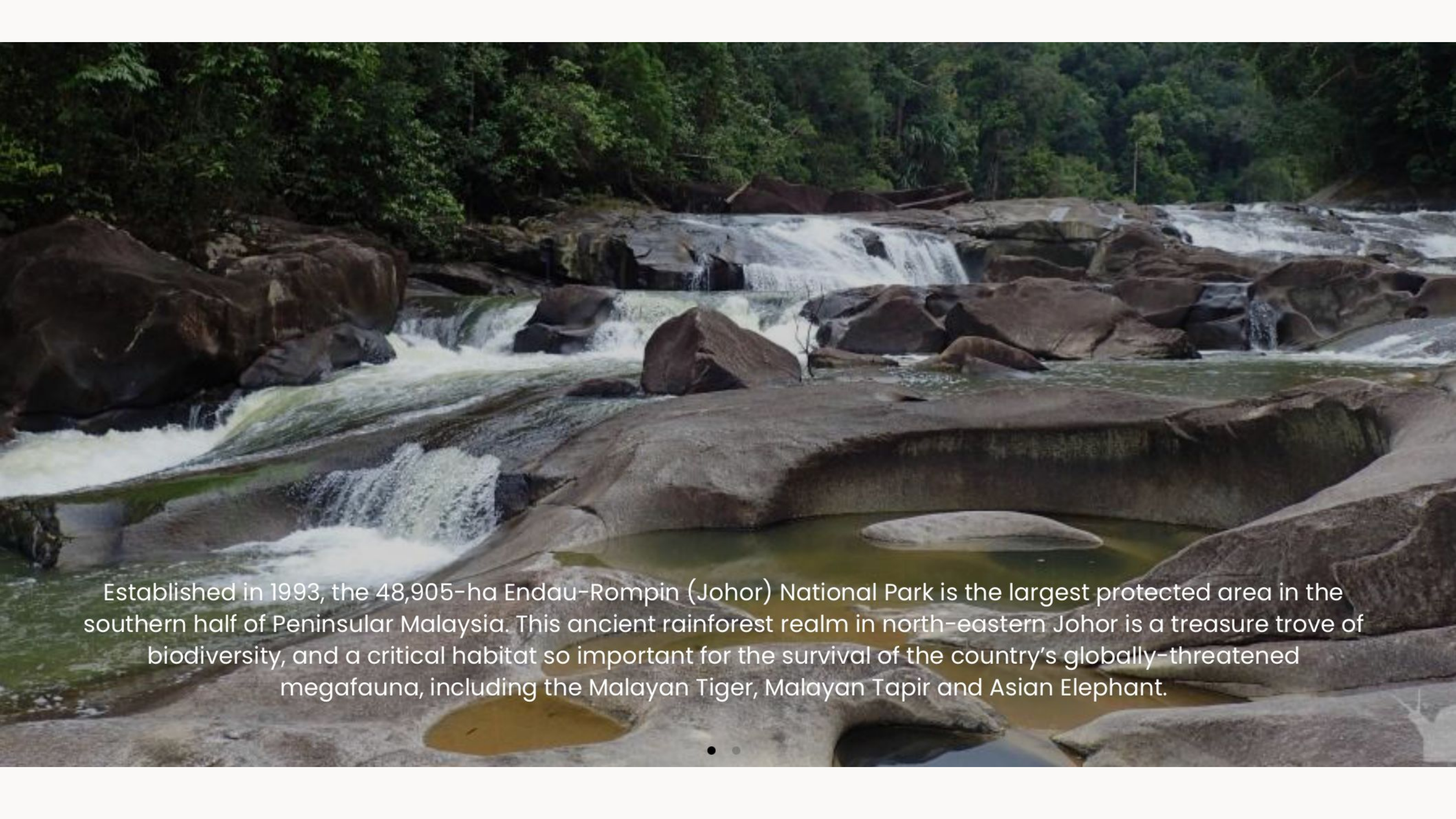
# Mersing District

- 130km north of Singapore
- 2 hours drive from Singapore's neighbouring city Johor Bahru and 4.5 hours drive from Kuala Lumpur.
- Mersing sits on the South China Sea
- Home to the Seribuat Archipelago of islands most of which are protected and form part of the 41-island Sultan Iskandar Marine Park.



Pulau Tengah, Seribu Archipelago,

Malaysia



Established in 1993, the 48,905-ha Endau-Rompin (Johor) National Park is the largest protected area in the southern half of Peninsular Malaysia. This ancient rainforest realm in north-eastern Johor is a treasure trove of biodiversity, and a critical habitat so important for the survival of the country's globally-threatened megafauna, including the Malayan Tiger, Malayan Tapir and Asian Elephant.



# Challenges

- Coral reef and seagrass marine ecosystems are extremely fragile and are at risk of damage by global warming, irresponsible tourism behaviours and polluting waste-management practices.
- Anthropogenic threats put species such as the Critically Endangered Hawksbill Turtle and the Endangered Green Turtle at risk.
- The local stakeholders including Government would like to create an eco-tourism hub across the Mersing Rainforest-to-Reef landscape. This is challenging to implement.
- Often times success of the tourism industry is measured in numbers of visitors. This is at odds with the fragile ecosystems found in the area and could create further risks to ecosystems.



## Some solutions from a tourism operator

- Batu Batu set-up Tengah Island Conservation (TIC) as an independent, non-profit conservation organisation in 2019.
- TIC's scope of work includes data collection, ecosystem health monitoring, preservation, regeneration and community engagement and capacity-building projects.
- TIC runs a three-month ecosystem conservation internship programme and trains up local students in the field on conservation.
- TIC co-founded Sustainable Travel Mersing, a multi-stakeholder destination co-ordination group for the District which spans across private sector, civil society organisations, government and academia.
- TIC co-founded and is the Co-chair of the Sustainable Tourism Network for Malaysia.



# Outcomes for Sustainable Tourism

- Batu Batu donates > 10% of our profits annually to TIC as well as additional guest donations.
- TIC has secured funding from sources including UNDP and the Ministry of Finance for biodiversity conservation and supporting sustainable tourism development. This has drawn other funders and CSOs into Mersing District where the UNDP are currently working closely with local government on Sustainable Tourism.
- Mersing local government has stated their intention to become Malaysia's first UN INSTO member (International Network for Sustainable Tourism Observatories). We are now seeing real collaborative efforts towards realising sustainable tourism.
- The Sustainable Tourism Network in Malaysia works collaboratively and shares contacts, information and knowledge across stakeholders country-wide to advance the growth of tourism that supports sustainable development.





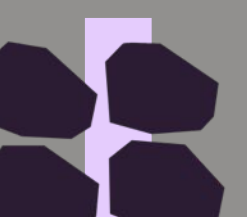
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TENGAH ISLAND  
CONSERVATION



BATU BATU