



Capture memorable moments at KL Bird Park by taking photos with some of the more colourful parrots, cockatoos, conures and macaws at a dedicated booth.

(Far left) Visitors taking photos with a magnificent peacock.

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KL's bird park all set to soar again

With lift of restrictions, world's largest free-flight, walk-in aviary now open to visitors

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TUCKED within the lush grounds of Perdana Botanical Gardens is KL Bird Park, a unique attraction located close to Kuala Lumpur city centre.

Touted as the world's largest free-flight walk-in aviary, it was designed to give visitors a chance to view the birds in close proximity, in a semi-natural environment.

The park was officially opened on Feb 10, 1991, and first managed by Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL).

"Safari Bird Park and Wonderland Sdn Bhd took over its management in 2000, and manages both KL Bird Park and Hornbill Restaurant and Cafe," said the company's marketing and promotions executive Taufik Mohd Sharif, adding that DBKL was still the land-owner.

The park is divided into four zones and features over 3,000 birds comprising 200 local and foreign species.

Highlights include Hornbill Park which houses the great hornbill, Asian black hornbill and Sarawak's state bird the rhinoceros hornbill; Free Flying Bird Zone where storks, egrets, ibises and peafowls mingle freely; as well as World Of Parrots where visitors can view these colourful creatures up close.

The education centre and bird school were later additions to the three-decade-old park. They allow visitors to learn about Malaysian birds and their life cycle (and view live hatchings if they are lucky) as well as understand the relationship between birds and human beings.

"We have an on-site curator and veterinarian who work together to manage and care for the birds," said Taufik.

"The curator manages and does the inventory of the birds. His duty includes daily checks to monitor their number and condition.

"The veterinarian takes care of the health of the birds. Certain birds are tagged to monitor their health and other concerns."

On the rare occasion that a bird escapes the park, he said employees would be sent to track down and catch it.

"Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, park visitors comprised 70% foreigners and 30% locals, most of whom reside outside the Klang Valley.

"With the travel restrictions and international border closures, the visitors are now 99% Malaysians and 1% expatriates or foreigners on long-term stay in Malaysia.

"When interstate travel was allowed during the recovery movement control order last year, the ratio of local visitors who came from the Klang Valley and other states was about 50:50," he added.



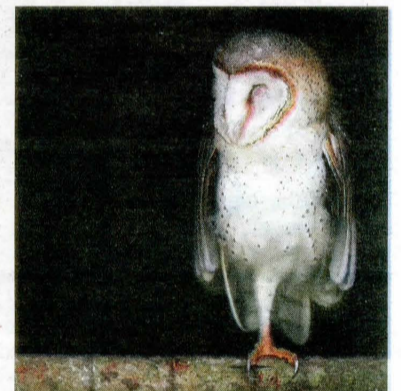
The park is designed to allow visitors to view the birds in close proximity, in a semi-natural environment.
— Photos: GLENN GUAN/The Star



The pandemic and drop in tourist numbers has impacted the park's operating costs, says Taufik.



Storks, egrets and ibises eagerly await their meals during feeding time.



There are several owl species in KL Bird Park, though these nocturnal creatures are likely to be sleeping during the day.

Taufik said the Covid-19 pandemic and drop in tourist numbers had an impact on the bird park's operating costs.

"Its income comes from ticket sales, souvenirs and food and beverage kiosks. The restaurant is run as a separate business.

"As for visitors, we are only getting half of the number compared to pre-Covid-19 days.

"To address that, the management had to reduce usage of non-essential operations matters, such as switching off air-conditioners in the education centre (during movement restriction periods when no visitors were allowed)," he said, adding that the park also had to do away with part-time and contract staff.

The park reopened on Sept 10 when restrictions were lifted after Kuala Lumpur moved to Phase Two of the National Recovery Plan.

Taufik urged visitors to continue being mindful of adhering to stand-

ard operating procedures. "We welcome the public to visit and support local tourism. But they must be responsible tourists.

"People tend to forget about physical distancing when taking photos or watching the bird show.

"They are also not allowed to take anything out of the park for hygiene reasons, not even if they find a dropped feather on the ground," he said.

He highlighted that the ticket purchase process was made as seamless as possible to reduce crowding.

Lana Ishika Shashinathan and her family were among those who enjoyed a fun day out at the park on a weekday back when it was open in March.

"I liked the parrots because they can talk! I hope to get an orange parrot as a pet," said the five-year-old.

Her parents Shashinathan Selvanathan, 41, and Shivani Vijayakumar, 36, said the outing was a reward for Lana Ishika for doing well in kindergarten.

"We gave her options to experience other attractions, and she chose the bird park because of her fascination with nature.

"This is our first time here and we never realised it is so big," said Shashinathan, adding that they were impressed by the attraction and its clean condition.

Some of the activities park visitors can look out for are the bird feeding sessions held across various zones as well as bird show at the amphitheatre.

These are held at specific times, so visitors keen to catch the sessions are advised to plan their visits accordingly.

A day-long photo opportunity

with some of the more colourful parrots, cockatoos, conures and macaws is also available at a dedicated photo booth.

The entire site is wheelchair- and stroller-friendly, except for its amphitheatre.

Entry to the park is only for fully vaccinated individuals with low-risk status. Children are allowed to enter when accompanied by fully vaccinated parents.

Admission rate for Malaysians with MyKad is RM25 per adult and RM12 per child/senior citizen. Entry is free for disabled individuals.

The park is open daily from 9am to 6pm, including public holidays and school holidays.

Visitors are advised against visiting during inclement weather; refunds and rain checks are not provided.

For details, visit www.klbird-park.com