

IPOH: Arowana farms in the Tasik Bukit Merah vicinity in northern Perak will be legalised and regrouped into a special zone, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir said.

He said there was a need for proper control of arowana breeding activities around the lake, which farmers in Perak's main padi growing areas of Kerian and Sungai Manik have blamed as the reason for their dwindling harvests.

"Padi farmers have complained to me about this and I have seen with my own eyes the damage that has been done in the last two years since these fish farms started operations.

"Breeders are using water from the lake for their ponds, causing insufficient water supply for the padi fields," he told reporters after chairing the weekly state executive meeting here yesterday.



Dr Zambry, however, noted that only 182ha would be offered to the fish breeders with land premium calculated based on industrial and not agricultural usage.

“Arowana are highly-prized aquarium fish that can be sold for thousands of ringgit.

“At such, the breeders can afford to pay the land premium,” he said, adding that the state would not allow any more fish farms to be opened up after the rezoning exercise.

He acknowledged that arowana breeding was a lucrative industry “but we have to strike a balance as padi is our main food source.”

The Kerian Land and Mines Office and the Drainage and Irrigation Department, he said, had been asked to conduct a study on the water shortage problem and come up with a solution.

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