

NEWS



Feathery fun

EDUCATIONAL: An eco farm in Trong, Perak, allows visitors to get close to ducks and explore the beauty of the flora and fauna there, writes *Sylvia Looi*



Chalets overlooking the water at the farm-turned-resort.

At a time when children seem to be more preoccupied with their gadgets than venturing out to explore the great outdoors, an opportunity to get close to real animals sounds as exciting as it is educational. In Trong near Taiping, Perak, an eco farm turned resort allows visitors the chance to get cosy with ducks while exploring the natural

beauty of its surroundings. Operated by the Oon family, the Trong Leisure Farm & Resort first started out as a duck farm. Its director, Oon Leng Keong, said the farm, which is spread out over a 28.3ha ex-mining pond, was started by his father in the 1980s. "We have more than 60,000 ducklings and adult ducks wad-

dling in the farm at any one time," he told the *New Sunday Times* during a recent visit. Oon said the idea to transform the farm into a resort for tourists came during the 2009 Bukit Gantang parliamentary by-election. "Reporters covering the by-election back then often came to the farm and enquired about the attractions in the area," he said.

"During that time, Trong was synonymous with agriculture. We then started toying with the idea of turning the farm into a tourist attraction." Oon said he learned about the existence of such eco-tourism farms in Taiwan. "I then decided to visit Taiwan in 2013

to learn more about running such a farm," he added. Trong Leisure Farm and Resort opened its doors to the public in July 2014. "Visitors are able to see the different stages of a duck's life," he said, adding that visitors could also feed them. "A duckling's feathers are yellow at birth, but after a month, its feathers turn white," said Oon.

Aside from the ducks, the farm also offers visitors a chance to go fishing, as there are many species of fresh-water fish in the farm's pond.

"There are Mekong catfish, *patin*, *pacu*, *haruan*, *jelawat* and *tilapia*," he said, adding that the farm was home to thousands of egrets, which often come out in the evenings.

There are also several chalets for rent for those who wish to spend the night.

To get to the farm, take the North-South Expressway northbound and exit at Changkat Jering toll plaza. The farm is located 9km from Trong town.

It is open from 9.30am to 7pm daily. For details, call 010-4640918/010-4642917 or email trongleisurefarm@gmail.com



Visitors feeding the ducks at the Trong Leisure Farm & Resort in Perak. Pix by L. Manimaran