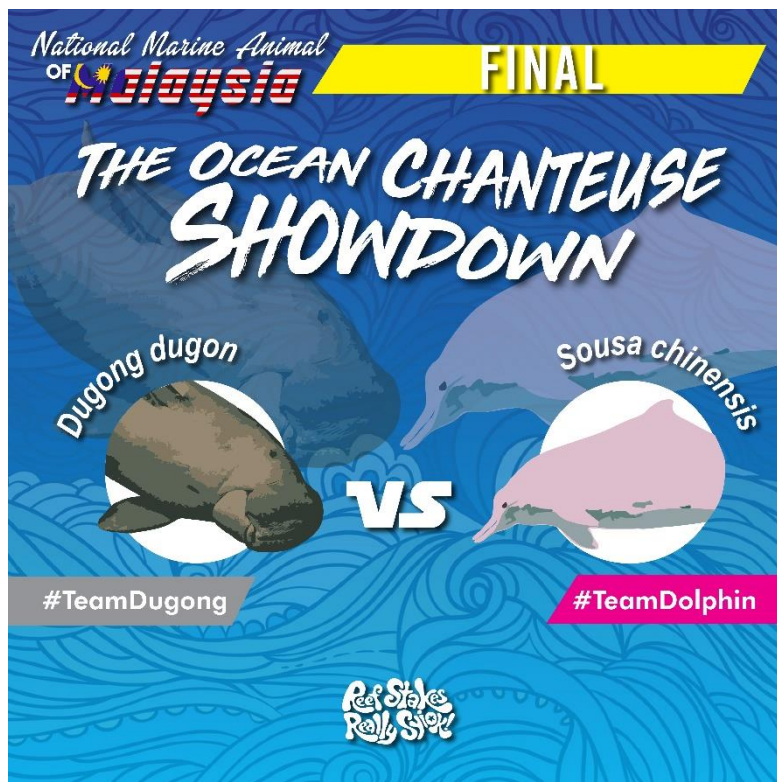




FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE GENTLE DUGONG IS CROWNED THE #NATIONALMARINEANIMAL

KUALA LUMPUR, September 5 – The Dugong (*Dugong dugon*) has been voted as the National Marine Animal of Malaysia. The announcement that came on Merdeka Day saw the Sirenian beating the Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa chinensis*) and six other species for the title.



The #NationalMarineAnimal online event organised by Reef Stakes® invited Malaysians to show their patriotism by voting for the marine animal that they feel would serve best as an icon to marine conservation.

To find the right species from the thousands of marine-dwelling animals in Malaysia, the Reef Stakes® team obtained nominations from the public through their Facebook page in early August. The top 8 nominations automatically qualify to the quarterfinals.



According to Quek Yew Aun, co-founder of Reef Stakes®, the online event comes as there has been no official marine species of Malaysia.

“It is undeniable that the Malayan tiger (*Panthera tigris jacksoni*) is the national animal for its place in our history, folklore and national psyche. But the tiger is a terrestrial species. We need a marine species to draw attention towards the marine realm and the creatures that inhabit it,” he added.



The #NationalMarineAnimal is an online event organised by Reef Stakes® during the Merdeka Month to choose Malaysia's National Icon for the marine environment. The chosen icon is envisioned to galvanize support for local marine conservation for many years to come.

*Reef Stakes® is the first marine themed role-playing card game in Malaysia. The game is designed to mimic real-life stakeholder relationships, introduce some of Malaysia's most iconic marine species and highlight threats to coral reefs.