

Biodiversity

Biodiversity by definition is the variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

Biodiversity supports various ecological, economical, scientific, educational, cultural and esthetic functions, which are irreplaceable. Yet, loss of global biodiversity is so fast that scientists estimate one quarter of species on the Earth may be lost by 2050.

At the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, leaders from many nations signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which became effective in 1993. Seventeen years later, in 2010, 193 parties have joined the Convention and committed themselves to achieving the three goals of the CBD, i.e. the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity, and sharing the benefits arising from the commercial and other utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way.

Although the land area of Taiwan is only 0.02% of the global land mass, due to its geographical and environmental vantage resulting in rich biodiversity, more than 50,000 species, or 2.6% of the world's species has been identified locally. The rich biodiversity helps maintain economic development in Taiwan and ensure the quality of living environment for all citizens as well as a foundation of enduring benefits. Therefore, Taiwan has devoted herself in the work related to biodiversity so that the goals of the sustainable management and utilization of biodiversity can be achieved both locally and globally.



Taiwan's National Biodiversity Action Plan

The scope of biodiversity works involves many aspects such as protection of natural ecosystems, sustainable use of resources, preservation of knowledge of indigenous and local communities, setting of policies and laws, enhancement throughout institutions, organizations, education, and research, etc. Biodiversity work in Taiwan is directed by the Executive Yuan, yet emphasizes integration and coordination among all agencies as well as full participation of NGOs and citizen.



► The National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP)

(<http://sta.epa.gov.tw/NSDN/download/creature.xls>) was approved in 2001, and later revised in 2007 to meet the 2010 Biodiversity Target. Taiwan is also working in the international realm to promote exchanges and development of partnerships related to biodiversity.

To Understand Biodiversity

Biodiversity is disappearing faster than ever due to human disturbance. We must take actions now to reverse the trend. The most important first step is to understand the biodiversity around us, what they are and where they are, what needs to be protected, what kinds of threats to biodiversity that need to be removed, and what kind of knowledge gaps that need to be filled to achieved the goals of conservation, sustainable management and utilization of biodiversity.

► National Biodiversity Information Facility

Along with further research to improve our understanding of the status, trends, threats and proper ways of managing biodiversity, it is also crucial that we carefully store, manage, analyze, and share biodiversity information. Therefore, CBD requests all the nations involved to set up clearinghouse mechanism of biodiversity information, so as to facilitate sharing, integration and utilization of those valuable information internationally. In Taiwan, there are many related databases being built, for example, "the Wild Animal and Plant Resource Database" of the Endemic Species Research Institute, "the Taiwan Biological Resources Database" of the Forestry Bureau, etc.

Recently, the Biodiversity Research Center of the Academia Sinica, with the support of the National Science Council and the Forestry Bureau, set up the website of Taiwan Biodiversity Information Facility (TaiBIF), which coordinates the effort of more than 700 local biodiversity experts to provide most up-to-date information on more than 50,000 species in Taiwan. The website also provides information on news and recent development of biodiversity research in Taiwan. TaiBIF has already succeeded in joining international organizations such as GBIF, BioNET-International, GTI, Species 2000, AO, BoL, EoL and OBIS, and participating in international academic activities.

► Vegetation Map

Vegetation Map is a map of vegetation distribution that is based on the integration of field investigation and the indoor data analysis. Such map and the data collected for making such map are very useful in national land planning, management of ecological systems, monitor of vegetation dynamics, conservation of resources, and environmental assessment.

Other relevant works on increasing our understanding of biodiversity in Taiwan include selection and establishment of biodiversity indicators, publication of Biota Taiwanica, survey on the status of wetland and coral reefs, etc.

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The Achievement of Taiwan's National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) I

Know Our Biodiversity



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