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The ROC Steps Up Protection for Marine Mammals.

As marine mammals all over the globe are facing the danger of a decrease in numbers, the ROC's Council of Agriculture (COA) has stepped up protection work for marine mammals. They have cooperated with the academics in investigating the distribution of marine mammals in the waters around Taiwan, especially the cetaceans: dolphins, porpoises and whales; continued biological research work and emphasized education work on marine mammal protection. For this they have distributed posters and DMs on the various types of marine mammal protection. For this they have distributed posters and DMs on the various types of marine mammals to relevant organizations and undertaken discussions with fishermen.

The COA's Wildlife Protection Unit is working in tandem with the police to step up investigations in to the killing and selling of whale and dolphin meat. On December 30 in Yunlin county and January 16 in Taitung they uncovered two different case in which large amounts of dolphin meat were in cold storage and sent these cases to the courts.

In Yunlin, 12 tons of dolphin meat was found, including: the carcasses of 15 bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), 19 pantropical spotted dolphins (*Stenella attenuata*), 10 Spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*), 7 rough-toothed dolphin (*Steno bredanensis*), 1 common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*), 2 pygmy sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*). In Taitung, 528 kilos of dolphin meat were uncovered, including: 2 Fraser's dolphin (*Lagenodelphis hosei*), 2 beaked whales, 2 Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*) and 2 unidentified small dolphins.

According to surveys, there are at least 27 types of dolphins in the waters around Taiwan, all of which are already designated as protected species. Under the wild conservation law it is illegal to catch, kill or otherwise use these species in any way; punishment is from 6 months to five years imprisonment, with fines of up to NT\$200,000. For repeat offenders the prison sentence is from one to seven years with fines of from NT\$500,000 to NT\$2,500,000.

Ensuring ROC's Involvement in International Commercial Fisheries through Participation in the UN International Conference

From Dec. 4-9, 1995, International Conference on the Sustainable contribution of Fisheries to Food Security held in Kyoto, Japan. The Conference was sponsored by the Japanese government and FAO (UN Food and Agriculture Organization).

This conference, with its discussion of the world's rising population and food requirements, was convened in order to decide the important role which the fishing industry played in offering animal protein resources to mankind as a whole. Although the topics of the conference were confined to the fishing industry, the main points were food security, and organization to offer sustained aquatic products; thus the conference received international attention.

There were 105 representative groups at the conference. Apart from UN members, NGO's were also invited to audit the conference as observers. Representatives of International Cooperation in Fisheries Association (ICFA), a ROC NGO consisting of representatives from the main fishing countries, which exchanges and communicates information to strengthen the relationships between fishing countries, also attended the conference.

Coral Reef Conference in Taiwan

"International Coral Year" starts from June of this year. Recognizing the important role of coral reef in marine ecosystem and the need for its conservation, Kenting National Park Headquarters in southern Taiwan hosted "4th Coral Reef Conference" on March 9, and invited scholars and scientists from the Academia Sinica, National Taiwan University, National Ocean University, National Sun Yet-sen University, National Pingtung Polytechnic (Institute, National Museum of Marine Biology/Aquarium and several other research institutions to discuss the status, conservation, and effective management of coral reefs in Kenting.

The coral reefs in Kenting support the most types of corals in Taiwan. survey results indicated at least 250 species of stony corals, 50 species of soft corals, and 25 species of gorgonian corals. surveys also indicated many fish species inhabit the reefs and nearby waters. Sop far, 1015 marine fish species of 124 families have been recorded in Kenting, of which 48 are new records to Taiwan, 10 are world new species.

However, the heavy pollution of Taiwan's coastal waters, over-exploitation and heavy development of coastal zones have seriously impacted the coral reefs, which in turn would diminish the fish stocks and other marine organisms that inhabit the reefs. To avoid the further damage to the coral reefs and to

ensure sustainable utilization of the marine resources, all participants of the conference made a joint announcement at the conclusion of the two-day conference, which calls for the support of the public:

1. To recognize the importance of coral reefs, and not to pick or illegally collect corals or other marine organisms.
2. To respect the existence of marine life, and not to rear, buy, or eat reef organisms.
3. To conserve the marine resources, and not to catch fish by poison, electrification or dynamiting.
4. To implement water and soil conservation, and not to dump rubbish or waste earth by seashore.
5. to be a volunteer and actively participate the conservation of coral reef ecosystem.

The Taiwan Market for Bear Gall Bladder(II)

(continued from the previous issue)

Three market surveys in questionnaire form were conducted in March, May and July 1994 in order to analyze the authenticity, the price distribution of bear gall bladders and bile, the stock held by TCM community and the number of TCM traders in Taiwan selling gall bladders of bears and other species.

There was disappointment at the low response rate to the questionnaire. The prices quoted by respondents in the mail survey were significantly higher than during a similar survey done in 1991. However, availability of bear gall bladders and bile was somewhat less. The fact that 76.2% of respondents sold bear bile indicates that demand for this medicine remains robust. The results also show that the gall bladders of other animals are frequently used and, therefore, that consumers run a high risk of buying counterfeit bear gall bladders.

It is significant to note that Taiwan's DOH and COA are planning to work with the TCM community to phase out the use of bear bile in Taiwan.

The Life Conservationist Association of the ROC

With about 500 members and 100 volunteers, the Life Conservationist Association of the ROC (LCA) might seem small, yet within three years has established itself firmly as a force to be reckoned with in Taiwan.

Started in January 1993, LCA has aimed to unite all those who share concern for conservation. Working on the principle that every life is unique and should be respected whether it seems useful to human beings or not, LCA hopes to conserve life and breed respect for it. This is done mainly through education, but also through group efforts, working towards correcting social ills.

LCA is the first and still the only animal rights think tank in Taiwan. While animal rights are regarded as a secondary issue by many, LCA aims to bring widely neglected animal rights and wildlife conservation issues to the light. As animal welfare is not deep-rooted in Taiwanese culture, animal rights groups are still in the minority and have to shift their roles from time to time to fend off a crisis.

One of LCA's primary goals is the establishment of influence in the government's policy-making processes. With this goal in mind LCA recently combined forces with other NGO's to form the Ecology Conservation Alliance(ECA) to jointly pressure the government towards more reasonable action.

The passing of the revised Wildlife Conservation law by the government, forbidding the breeding or sale of endangered and protected species, was one of LCA's concerted efforts. Currently LCA is campaigning for the passing of an animal protection law.

LCA's main concerns mostly realize in terms of specific issues. LCA campaigns against the consumption and commercial use of wildlife products. This belief has led to a campaign "No eating, no buying, no breeding", urging people to, for example, stop consuming bear bile, bear paws and swallow nests. LCA also takes a firm stand against the industrialized exploitation of animals.

The recent visit from the Great European Circus to Taiwan was an example of exploitation LCA campaigned against. Numerous endangered species were included in the Circus acts and LCA saw this as a violation of the wildlife Conservation Law which prohibits the commercial use of endangered and protected animals.

LCA is also concerned with the rescue of endangered species from private ownership and the protection of natural habitats through the monitoring of ecology conservation.

Finding a new home for five tigers in the Taipei Zoo is merely one example of how LCA has been instrumental in the relocation of some endangered species. The protection of the Tawu Mountain Reserve also came under close governmental scrutiny thanks to the efforts of combined efforts of the ECA.

LCA hopes to see the day when a universal convention on general animal welfare standards will exist. Hoping to see the realization of this dream, LCA has expanded its alliances to the international arena. Recognizing the need for action in Taiwan, many international organizations have pledged their support for LCA. Combining world wide concerns and efforts, LCA hopes that the rights and welfare of every living creature can be respected and protected. LCA publishes a quarterly magazine entitled Animal's Voice of Taiwan(AVOT), as well as periodical English-language newsletters. LCA has also produced a number of videotapes, which are available on request.

Conservation News

The city government invited animal protection societies, to inspect the Taipei city domestic animal inspection and holding center, and other holding centers used in Taipei city.

The Life Conservation Association said that the holding centers for stray animals, in government planning stages and now extent were far from adequate. It is difficult to obtain land, neighborhood residents object, and both government and voluntary organizations lacked specialist knowledge and experience for planning holding centers.

The Association estimates that there are about 200,000 stray dogs in Taipei. According to 1994 figures only 14,000 dogs were caught, only 5% of the total population, which does not solve the problem of stray dogs. The Association suggests that while the government looks for new holding centers for stray animals, they need to upgrade care at current holding centers. Taipei city domestic animal inspection center said that in order to solve the problem of stray dogs, they had to publicize the importance of neutering and spaying dogs.

(Dec. 28, 1995)

The Legislative Yuan has passed laws on infectious animal diseases, the main points of which were to enhance professional rearing of farm animals. However, as the aquatic industries don't check products for diseases, but flourishing international trade requires inspection of aquatic products for disease before they are imported, the legislative Yuan amended the original infectious animals diseases law to include the aquatic industry and changed the name to reflect this. They also strengthened the law to include prevention, cure and inspection of animal disease. The most important points of the new law are:

1.The industry will be centrally managed by the COA instead of the MOEA(Ministry of Economic Affairs) as previously.

2.Fines will be raised.

In addition, the law will expand import inspection restrictions on diseases, regulate inspection on products from certain areas, and transportation of products from these areas, including those which cannot be treated. Diseased products, or those suspected to be diseased will not be given entry to the ROC.

(Oct. 1, 1996)

The Majia reservoir in Pingtung county in southern Taiwan is set to become solution tot southern Taiwan's water shortage when it is developed by the MOEA's Water Resources Council.

According to environmental impact assessment (EIA), issued by the Council, the area covered by the reservoir will be 40,004 square kilometers and the reservoir area will cover early historical sites belonging to the Paiwan tribe, dating from 2,200 to 400 years ago.

Apart from the loss of these historical sites, this site is also home to four types of rare mammal, four types of rare bird, ten types of protected bird, three types of rare amphibian, ten types of rare insect species and two types of rare fish.

The EIA report also stated said that although southern Taiwan has a shortage of water resources, the development of the water reservoir could lead to damage of habitat for over twenty rare species.(Dec. 27, 1995)

The COA has completed amendments to the Animal Protection Law, so that in the future animal races will become legal., as long as they don't use chemical performance enhances or other prohibited means. However, fights between animals such as

dog fighting and cock fighting; or between people and animals will still be illegal. A COA spokesperson emphasized that the law was only in relation to animals sports currently extent, and that future considerations such as gambling on domestic horse racing, would have to be approached under different laws.

The Animal Protection Law amendments researched by the COA were sent to the Legislative Yuan last year(1995). However, as the Legislative Yuan felt that some clauses were unworkable and it needed further discussion, and returned the proposed amendments to the COA. Currently, the amendments by the COA are as follows:

- 1.Animals kept as pets must be registered with a regulating body, otherwise the pet owners will not be allowed to keep pets in the future.
 - 2.Owners must take full responsibility for their pets, must not let them go, otherwise, they will not be allowed to keep pets in the future.
 - 3.Animals in public places must be accompanied by their owner, or a person over 6 years old; aggressive animals in public places must be accompanied by an adult, must be on a restraining leash, with fines of NT\$2,000 to NT\$10,000 for non-compliance.
 - 4.All animal to animal or animal to person flights are illegal.
 - 5.So that the law will be enforced, each area must have a municipal inspection officer, or an NGO animal protection organization volunteer worker.
- (Jan 11, 1996)

Alishan in Chiayi county has suffered several forest fires, the total area decimated covers over 26 hectares. The Forestry Administration of the Taiwan Provincial Government suspects that these fires were started by people unintentionally, or that they were arisen to cover illegally logging of timber.

(Jan. 5, 1996)

The Bian Fu Dong (Bat Cave) located near the northern coastal highway tunnel, used to be a roosting place for large numbers of bats before the opening of the northern coastal highway. At that time tens of thousands of bats coming out to feed in the dusk was one of the sights of the northern coastal area. Sadly after the highway was opened to traffic, the Bat Cave was badly affected by the numbers of visitors and the bats moved to other sites.

Two years ago, Director of Keelung Bird Watching Society Shen Chen-zhong discovered by accident that the bats had returned to the Bat Cave. After two years of observation, it was discovered that from May to September tens of thousands of bats return to the northern coastal area to breed. Therefore, the ROC Wildbird Society and National Taiwan University professor Lee Ling-ling of the Department of Zoology, have suggested to Taipei county government that they establish a conservation area there. Taipei county government, Ruifang Township, and the Keelung Wildbird Society would be responsible for reconnaissance in the area. The Taipei county government plans to establish a bat protection area for about ten meters from the mouth of the cave to the road. (Jan. 6, 1996)

Taichung Harbor customs officials have recently found bull frog products smuggled by fishing boats, amounting to more than 3,000 kilos. The boat owner had hidden the bull frog products below the boat hold, planning to take them to the mainland. The boat owner said that in Taiwan the price for this product was about NT\$50 per kilo, but was about double the price in the mainland; at the moment the market was saturated in Taiwan, so he decided to sell in the mainland. (Jan 5, 1996)

Yushan National Park Headquarters distributed film on the rare Swinhoe's pheasant (*Oophur*

swinhoii). The film covers the bird's appearance, documents its history, roosting grounds, distribution, habits and feeding habits, breeding; as well as its predators, society's attitude towards it and so on.

Swinhoe's pheasant is distributed in deciduous forest at under 2,000 meters. It is a timid and nervous bird, which flies off at the slightest sign of danger. It was designated internationally as an endangered species. In recent years with the destruction of the middle and lower levels of the environment it is in real danger of extinction. (Jan 30, 1996)

On January 21 of this year, 12 domestic environmental protection groups joined together in an effort to save wildlife along the northern cross-island highway. This movement originated with the Taiwan Provincial Highway Bureau's decision to improve traffic on the cross island highway, without any consideration as to the effect that this would have on the environment. The straight cut through to enlarge the road from the Ta Han bridge to the Bai Tao bridge would create double lanes. As this area is near a water source, with Taiwan red cypress (*Chamaecyparis formosensis*), camphor tree (*Cinnamomum camphora*), stout camphor tree (*Cinnamomum micranthum*), the environment is beautiful and its geology is fragile. As soon as construction work was started it would mean there would be serious land slides and erosion, making it not only inconvenient to traffic but also necessitating costly repairs at a later date. The adverse effect on the protection of the water source and the scenery spurred the environmental groups to take action and after numerous discussions and site visits with the Highways Bureau, the Bureau finally decided to shelve the expansion plan. (Jan. 23, 1996)

On April 6th, 15 dolphins were stranded on the beach at Taichung county's Tatu rivermouth, with no way to

return to the sea.. Around 60 local police and residents went to the area to try to save their and pull the dolphins into the water, but 3 of the dolphins died.

Recently many dolphins have been stranded on beaches in the Taiwan area, and due to government efforts in educating people to care for dolphins, the local residents and police contact protection authorities and make efforts to save the mammals. Thus, the majority of such stranded dolphins are able to return safely to the sea.

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