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# INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

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*Tel:(886-2) 936-2801 Fax:(886-2) 937-6455*

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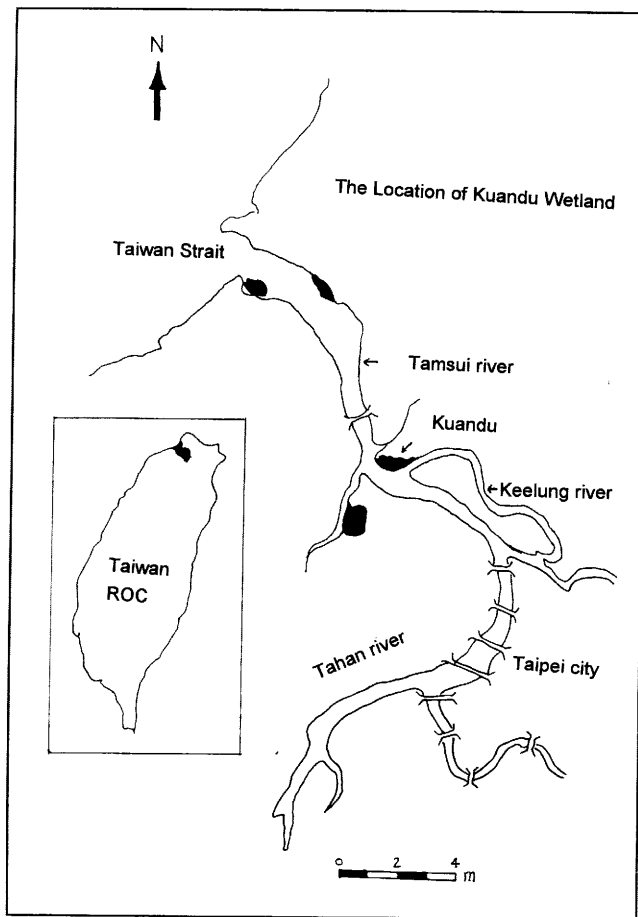
## Another Step in Nature Conservation -- The Kuandu Nature Park

The Taipei City Government and the Taipei Municipal Assembly have recently approved a budget of 150 billion NT\$ for the establishment of Kuandu Nature Park. This decision is another step forward in the conservation of Kuandu Wetland.

The Kuandu Wetland, located northwest of Taipei city, Taiwan, is situated at the confluence of the Keelung and Tamsui rivers, about 10 km from the Tamsui rivermouth. It takes only about forty minutes to get there from central Taipei. The wetland is divided by a 10 m wide dike into two parts. Outside of the dike is a 55-hectare marsh dominated by *Kandelia candel* (a mangrove species), *Pharargmits communitis* and *Cyperus malaccensis*. Inside of the dike is largely farmland, about 10 hectares of which has been flooded since 1978, and has become marsh and grassland. Over 175 species of hygrophytes, hydrophytes, xerophytes and woody plants can be found in this area.

The Kuandu Wetland is an important habitat for migratory birds. About 200 bird species have been

identified in this area in the last 12 years. The dominant species include dunlins, litter-ringed plovers, common sandpipers, little plovers, little egrets, cattle egrets and common terns. Some rare birds, such as white ibis, white-naped crane, ruddy shelduck and Chinese egret has also been recorded here.



The marsh outside the dike was declared a nature reserve (Kuandu Nature Reserve) by the Council of Agriculture in 1986. The marsh inside the dike remained unprotected and suffered a great amount of disturbance, such as rubbish and soil dumping, pollution, and land reclamation for other uses. Such disturbance not only affected the marsh within the dike but also the nature reserve. Conservation groups, such as the Chinese Wild Bird Federation and Taipei Bird Club, have been lobbying to get the

Taipei City Government to establish a nature park to protect the marsh within the dike since 1981.

The establishment of Kuandu Nature Park will not only help improve the protection of the Kuandu Wetland, but also provide Taipei residents with a place of nature observation and environmental education, thus raising the quality of life for city inhabitants.

## Black-faced Spoonbill Conservation Workshop

The Black-faced Spoonbill Conservation Workshop was held in Beijing from May 6-7, 1995. Ornithologists from Japan, mainland China, South Korea, North Korea, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Taiwan reported on the status of black-faced spoonbills in different areas, and discussed strategies and further actions for the conservation of this endangered species. The workshop concluded with following recommendation:

1. Establish a black-faced spoonbill conservation network to undertake monitoring work. Participants representing different regional groups are now members of this network. The Wild Bird Society of Japan will serve as a clearing house.
2. Translate "Action Plan for the Black-faced Spoonbills *Platalea minor*" (L. L. Severinghaus, et al., 1995) into different languages for real, practical actions by conservationists throughout the areas where the species is found.
3. More action at breeding sites, including search for new breeding sites, protection of breeding sites and feeding habitats, banding young birds, monitoring and management of breeding population, public education, and risk assessment.
4. More actions at wintering sites, including identifying new wintering sites, banding and satellite tracking, protecting known and new sites, banning hunting, population study, public education and management of eco-tourism. Most recent counts of

black-faced spoonbills were conducted on February 5, 1996, and total number of birds counted in Hong Kong (99), Vietnam (104), Taiwan (253) was 456. (The Chinese Wild Bird Federation, monthly report, June 1996).

### The Fourth Symposium on Cetaceous Ecology and Conservation

The "Fourth Symposium on Cetaceous Ecology and Conservation", organized by the Council of Agriculture, the Society of Stream and National Taiwan University (NTU) was held on May 29, 1996 at the NTU's International Conference Hall to promote the conservation of marine mammals.

Reports on stranded cetaceans in recent years in Taiwan, the numeric distribution of schooling cetaceans, food habit analysis, application of breeding programs and the inspection techniques of cetaceans meat were given. Cetacean expert Dr. G. Lento reported on the application of breeding programs in conservation and the management of wild animals.

For several centuries, marine mammals have been an important resource for mankind. To conserve this precious resource, an international convention on whaling was signed in 1946 to effectively protect whale species. All cetaceans are included in the Appendix/III of the CITES. In recent years, the conservation of marine mammals has become the focus of various nations and conservation groups.

The COA said the problem of marine mammal conservation has become the main thrust of international conservation efforts, and a reason for economic sanctions. As a member of the international community, the ROC has a duty to conserve the sustainable use of marine resources. Conservation work to protect our ecology is not confined by national borders and affects the maintenance of man's survival all over the earth, with

the sustainable use of resources, and the balance of ecology systems. Henceforth, the government will implement timely policies to strengthen various aspects of conservation work.

### Regulations Concerning the Application and Approval for Import and Export Live Wild Animals

The Council of Agriculture has recently announced the regulations concerning applications for approval to import and export live wild animals. A summary of the regulations is as follows:

The process for applying to import or export live wild animals is based on detailed rules and regulations in clause 26 and clause 27 of the Wildlife Conservation Law (shortened to this law below).

The import and export of endangered species is restricted to educational use at academic research institutes, university and colleges, state or government registered private zoos, academic research or circus performances.

The import of non-endangered carnivorous animals, rodents snakes, turtles, lizards and insects is restricted for the use of experimental research, the manufacture of biological medicine or for educational purposes. Persons wishing to export the animals listed above must have proof of the animal's origin before this will be approved.

The export of wild animals indigenous to Taiwan will be approved if the exporter has proof of the animal's origin.

Importers of non-endangered aquatic wildlife for breeding as listed on Appendix I of this regulation, must first obtain an import certificate from the Ministry of Economic Affairs International Trade Bureau.

*Fugu rubripes rubripes* and its fertilized eggs are approved for import for use in breeding.

The import of non-endangered aquatic species for exhibition are restricted to those species listed on Appendix II of this regulation.

The non-endangered eels (eggs, larvae, elvers) which are prohibited for import include the following: (a) *Aguilla japonica* (b) *Anguilla anguilla* (c) *Anguilla rostrata*. The regulations pertaining to the prohibition of the import of elvers are as listed below: (a) Eel eggs: one kilo of 5000 eggs and up; (b) Eel larvae: one kilo of 501 to 5000; (c) Elvers: one kilo of 11 to 500.

For detailed information, please contact "Resource Conservation Division, the Council of Agriculture".

## Conservation Society: The Zoological Society of Taipei

The Taipei Zoological Society was established in October of 1986. The mission of this Society is to actively and voluntarily support Taipei City Zoo's educational function, such as encouraging the public to take part in wildlife protection and promoting scientific educational activities held by the Taipei City Zoo.

Through the effort of the Honorary Chairman, Dr. Hung Wen-tong, a former legislator, Madam Chairman Yang Li-hua, the staff and many volunteers, and the help of late director of Taipei City Zoo, Mr. Wang Kuan-ping, the Society has held various symposiums on Applying Behavioral Research to Zoo Animal Management, Symposium of the Conservation of Formosan Black Bear, Symposium on Population and Habitat Viability Assessment for the Formosan Black Bear, Symposium on Population and Habitat Viability

Assessment for the Clouded Leopard and so on. Other activities held are: parent-children's learning camps, Taiwan animals photography competition and various conservation exhibitions. To make our efforts on conserving wild animals internationally known, the Society cooperated with Taipei Zoo to hold an "International Symposium on the Conservation of Endangered Animals" in 1993 and the Fifth Conference of South-East Asian Zoological Park's Association(SEASA) in 1995.

## Conservation News

On April 26th Chonghe, Taipei County, police together with the Wildlife Protection Units discovered a cache of 1,107 kilos of ivory and half-ivory products, with a value of around 100 million NT\$. The police apprehended two people who were producing the ivory objects and charged them with contravening the Wildlife Protection Law. This is one of the largest cases against the Wildlife Conservation Law.

On the premises of the operation, the police found 25 whole tusks, as well as various animal antlers. There were also 7 sacks of worked ivory. According to the testimony of the accused, there were 51 tusks at the factory, plus a 20 kilo bag of ivory chops, 43 kilos of ivory carvings, four ivory Buddhas, and 773 kilos of raw ivory material; in all a total of 1,107 kilos of ivory. The whole ivory tusks came from the Asiatic elephant, with one tusk from an African elephant.

Officials from conservation groups noted that last year the COA introduced compulsory registration of ivory over 30 cm for the general public, where ivory was to be registered and photographed for records at municipal or county agricultural bureaus. Those trading in ivory also had to apply to register their stocks of worked and half-worked ivory products. It was anticipated that when their stocks ran out, a complete ban on trading in ivory would be enforced.

The COA said that originally worked ivory and half-worked ivory pieces were to be registered, but due to opposition from chop dealers, in the end the law only included finished ivory pieces. Half-worked pieces were only registered by weight.

(27/4/96)

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A male pygmy killer whale was stranded on shore of Fon-bin Hsiang, Hua-lian County, east Taiwan, on April 21th. Local people tried to bring it back to the sea, but the whale kept coming back on shore, and eventually died. This was the nineteenth pygmy killer whale to be stranded in Taiwan this year. In February, 18 pygmy killer whales were stranded in Tainan County, south western Taiwan. Fifteen of them were rescued by local people in time to return to the sea, but three died.

Also on April 21th, a beaked whale was found dead on the beach of Tainan City. On the morning of April 23, two other pygmy killer whales were discovered stranded on a beach not far from the location where the beaked whale was found. They were rescued by being taken backout to sea.

The instances of stranded dolphins and whales was little reported in the past. However, due to a series of public awareness campaigns, people in Taiwan are more aware of the conservation of cetaceans. When cetaceans are found stranded, local people generally report to police, rescue teams, conservation groups and researchers, and try to help the animals return to the sea. In cases where animals died, the carcasses would be sent to universities or research institutions for autopsy, scientific research, and/or be prepared into specimens for scientific or educational purposes.

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"International Symposium on Rare, Threatened and Endangered Floras of Asia and Pacific Rim" organized by the Institute of Botany, Academia

Sinica, was held in Taipei between April 30 and May 1. Botanists from Australia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand and United States presented 16 papers about plant diversity and threatened plant species in the Asia and Pacific region as well as in America.

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National Ocean University professor Chen Yi-jun, in his mid-term report on green turtle breeding conditions, pointed out that the green turtles breeding at Wang An Island in the Penghu archipelago, produce eggs from June through November, with most of the spawning occurring in July and August. Each female turtle produces between one and four batches of eggs, with each batch containing an average of 116 eggs. The eggs take approximately 52 days to hatch. The hatching rate is around 70%. Of three female turtles with radio devices attached, two migrated south after breeding, one to seas south of Hainan Island, while the other stayed near Shaonan. The third turtle swam north to Okinawa. Professor Cheng will continue studying and tracking the green turtles. (6/14/1996)

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From January to May 1996, Taiwan local governments investigated more than 1,971 wildlife-related cases and found at least 104 violations of the Wildlife Conservation Law (WCL), including the untimely registration, illegal display, abandonment, holding, trading, killing and hunting of wildlife. At the same time, local police officers investigated 89 violations of the WCL.

In addition to the establishment of a computer database to better manage registered rhino horns and tiger parts, local governments also conducted regular and random checks for the above wildlife parts. From January to May 1996, local governments rechecked 372 cases of registered rhino horns and tiger parts. They also investigated 1,029 traditional

Chinese medicine stores and found no illegal selling of rhino horns and tiger parts.

From January to May 1996, customs uncovered 12 cases of wildlife product smuggling involving 45 bottles of bear gall bladder powder, three specimens of birds of paradise, one suspected ivory tusk, 129 suspected ivory products, 120 packs (four pieces per pack) of musk adhesive plasters, 66 pieces of hawkbill shell and 26 Asian bonytongues.

From January to May 1996, the WPU and local police officers found 10,010 kg and 528 kg of illegally killed dolphin meat in Yunlin and Taitung Countries, respectively. On February 14, 1996, the WPU and Taipei City police officers investigated a case concerning the illegal holding of one rhino horn weighing 270 g. In March 1996, the WPU and the Taipei City Government jointly investigated one WCL violation case involving the illegal display of a Formosan gem-faced civet. On April 25 and 26, 1996, police officers from Taipei county and the WPU uncovered an ivory processing factory and found 51 ivory tusks, 63 kg of ivory chops, 773 kg of raw ivory material and four ivory sculptures with a total value of about NT\$100 million. On April 28, 1996, the Taipei City Government joined forces with the WPU to investigate 625 stands at the "Holiday Jade Market" and found two cases of illegal trading of four ivory sculptures. In May 1996, the WPU jointed forces with the Taipei City Government to investigate an aquarium and found 22 Asian Bonytongues.

From January to May 1996, more than 70 conservation-related workshops were held in Taiwan. Topics included conservation and culture, environmental education, wildlife conservation and management, flora and fauna inventory, aborigine culture and wildlife conservation, conservation and development of coastal areas, law enforcement, biodiversity database, animal behavior and ecology, nature landscape conservation, parks and green spaces, black bear conservation, identification of raptors, threatened and endangered species, animal adaptation, ecology and the conservation of Cetacea,

conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use, as well as other topics.

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**Publisher: Paul Chen**

**Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Ling-Ling Lee**

**Editors: Yu-chi Liu**

**Clare Lear**

**Publishers & Editorial Office:**

**Society for Wildlife and Nature,**

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