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## The First Meeting of Experts on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity

At the invitation of the Government of Indonesia, the first meeting of experts on marine and coastal biological diversity held under the Convention on Biological Diversity's "Jakarta Mandate" took place in Indonesia from 7 to 10 March 1997.

The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (held in Jakarta, Indonesia in Nov. 1995) agreed upon the need for a program of action on the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity. This program has become known

as the "Jakarta Mandate." In its decision 2/10, the Conference of the Parties suggested that the Executive Secretary establish a roster of experts on marine and coastal biodiversity, on the basis of inputs from countries and convene meetings of experts drawn from the roster to assist in advancing the work.

Fifteen experts were invited to take part in the first meeting. They had been nominated to the roster by: Australia, Barbados, Croatia, the European Community, Japan, Latvia, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Senegal, South Africa, The Netherlands, and Uruguay. The Chairman and the Chairman-elect of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) took part, as did representatives of six international agencies (Food and Agriculture Organization, International Development Research Center, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, United Nations Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization, United Nations Environment Program, and the World Bank). Dr. Peter (Australia) was elected Chairperson/Facilitator of the Meeting.

The Conference of the Parties instructed the Executive Secretary to provide the SBSTTA with advice and options for recommendation to the Conference of the Parties on the further elaboration of the agreed priority issue areas: integrated marine and coastal area management; marine and coastal protected areas; sustainable use of marine and coastal living resources; mariculture; and alien species.

The meeting of experts considered these issues in the context of the recommendation from the Conference of the Parties to: identify options for a pragmatic but comprehensive approach in addressing marine and coastal biological diversity on the basis of

an ecosystem approach, including its components at the levels of species and genetic resources; identifying gaps in knowledge of the distribution and abundance of marine and coastal biodiversity; identifying the particular needs for conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biological resources in the context of activities that will impact on marine resources; and reviewing the mandates and activities under international agreements that affect marine and coastal biological diversity.

At the end of the three-day meeting, the experts agreed upon conclusions and recommendations covering:

- implementation of marine and coastal activities;
- application of the precautionary approach to biodiversity impacts;
- implementation of integrated marine and coastal area management;
- defining a "healthy ecosystem";
- regional implementation capacity;
- open oceans ecosystems; and
- eco-labelling.

The meeting identified elements of a three-year work program, including time frames and ways and means. The elements are:

- evaluation of the precautionary approach as applied to the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biological diversity;
- integrated marine and coastal area management;
- marine and coastal living resources;
- marine and coastal protected areas;
- mariculture;
- alien species; and
- general elements.♣

## The Second International Symposium on the Biology and Conservation of Owls of the Northern Hemisphere

The Second International Symposium on the Biology and Conservation of Owls of the Northern Hemisphere took place between February 2 and 5, 1997 in Winnipeg in the state of Manitoba, Canada. As the first meeting was convened way back in 1987, the second symposium attracted over 200 academics involved in the study of owl ecology. The Republic of China was represented by Academia Sinica researcher Liu Hsiao-ju, who gave an oral presentation on the status of the ROC's endemic subspecies, the Lanyu scops owl (*Otus elegans botelensis*.)

The plenary address at the symposium was given by Finnish scholar, Dr. E. Korpimaeki, who gave a report entitled, "Population ecology of Tengmalm's owls: interspecific interactions, breeding and dispersal, and paternity revealed by DNA-fingerprinting." In addition, a total of 79 oral presentations were also given. Most of these presentations were focused on owl habitat research. Research into breeding was also widely reported on. The topics of these reports also included owl feeding ecology, physiology, owl parasites, niche analyses, habitat utilization, habitat fragmentation, capture method, population estimation, migration, population ecology, conservation, etc..

ROC researcher Liu Hsiao-ju gave an oral presentation at the meeting entitled "Life expectancy and reproduction of the Lanyu Scops Owl, *Otus elegans botelensis*." Lanyu scops owls are particularly long-lived birds. Despite 12 years of research and information, researchers still are unable to accurately

calculate the mortality for the bird at various ages. As most other academics are concentrating their research on migratory birds, the fact that the Lanyu scops owl is resident, meant that Liu's report was well received and the subject of much encouragement.

Lanyu scops owls are nocturnal, resident birds. They are found only on Orchid Island (Lanyu Island) and live mainly on insects. During their nesting period they prefer to nest in the hollows of trees. Their breeding period is from March to August every year. The birds have a distinctive call which sounds like "du du wu." Research into Lanyu scops owls began in 1986. According to annual population surveys, the population of Lanyu scops owls is generally maintained at a stable rate. An average of 37.5% of Lanyu scops owl chicks live to the age of one year after leaving the nest. Of these 11.1% reach nine years old. Records also show that some of these birds live longer than 12 years. Lanyu scops owls begin breeding at the age of two years. The average number of chicks born to each adult bird decreases with the bird's age. Most individuals manage to raise at least one chick every year. The Lanyu scops owl's ability to breed depends, however, on whether or not it finds a suitable nesting site. They nest in naturally existing hollows in trees. Each nest can be used for no more than four years. The difference in breeding success rates at different nests is great.

The International Symposium on the Biology and Conservation of Owls in the Northern Hemisphere takes place only once every 10 years, but most scholars agreed that this interval is too great and does not benefit mutual exchange. Therefore the third international symposium will take place within the next five years in North America. ♣

## 1997 Report on Whale Meat Trade in East Asia

According to a report by TRAFFIC into the whale meat trade in East Asia, illegal trade in whale meat is still being seen in a number of Asian nations due to severe loopholes in the laws of these countries. The International Whaling Commission (IWC) adopted a moratorium on commercial whaling in 1982, which formally came into force in 1986 under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW). In the same year, to coincide with the enforcement of the International Whaling Commission's moratorium, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) banned international commercial trade in all the whale species protected by the IWC moratorium.

The use of whale meat in East Asia is most predominant in Japan and in communities along the southern coastal region of South Korea, which are influenced by Japanese culture. The consumption of whale meat is not common in Chinese societies. Whale meat has long been a part of the Japanese diet, but consumption increased markedly after World War II, when the threat of famine forced the Japanese people to hunt whales on a large scale. The number of whales caught by these nations since the whaling moratorium was put into effect has in fact far exceeded the number of whales caught before the ban.

This report is the result of research by TRAFFIC into the whale meat market in Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. This research is mainly in preparation for the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES which will take place in June 1997. Representatives at this assembly will discuss

five proposals by Japan and Norway to reopen international commercial trade in whale meat.

The results of the investigation are as follows:

### **JAPAN**

Japan is the world's largest market for whale meat. Illegally supplied whale meat can enter legal markets because Japan's legal markets are not yet formally organized and legal supply does not meet demand. At present, there are three legal sources of whale meat in Japan: 1. Via processing ships involved in the hunt of cetaceans for scientific purposes. The movement of supplies from this source can be traced easily because every whale captured has a DNA file. 2. Frozen stocks made up of whale meat caught before enforcement of the IWC whaling moratorium; and 3. Bycatch (accidental capture) of whales by Japanese fishermen. These last two sources of legal whale meat make it extremely difficult to monitor the presence of illegal whale meat in the market. TRAFFIC collected 57 whale meat samples in Japan. After a comparison of DNA tests they found that the majority were Minke Whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*), while the remaining few were either Fin Whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*) or Bryde's Whales (*Balaenoptera edeni*). Without a complete inventory of frozen whale meat stocks, nearly any Minke, Sei (*Balaenoptera borealis*), Fin, Bryde's, or Sperm Whale (*Physeteridae*) meat can be dismissed as coming from frozen whale meat stocks. With the current shortfall in legal whale meat supply, it is practically impossible to detect illegal whale meat in Japan.

### **SOUTH KOREA**

Two major legislative loopholes in the South Korean legal system mean that the trade in illegal whale meat by South Korean citizens remains largely unpunished. Firstly, South Korea's regulations for

dealing with whales taken as bycatch are unclear. Citizens can declare that whale meat be taken as bycatch and clear of restrictions. Secondly, if whales caught at sea are already dead then domestic trade in whale meat can be conducted. In 1986, the South Korean government banned whaling, but the figures released in 1996 for Minke Whale taken as bycatch were far higher than the number of whales caught in any one year two years before the moratorium on commercial whale hunting was enforced.

#### **HONG KONG**

TRAFFIC found that even though Japanese restaurants in Hong Kong did not openly sell whale meat, whale meat was readily available at all restaurants if ordered in advance. The source of the meat was Japan.

#### **TAIWAN**

In 1990, Taiwan listed all cetaceans under its *Wildlife Conservation Law* (WCL) making the hunting, killing, bycatch, and trade of cetaceans and their products illegal. TRAFFIC did not find that Taiwan was continuing to consume large cetaceans.

TRAFFIC concluded that the most serious problems concerning illegal catch and trade of cetaceans are found in Japan and South Korea. Japan is the largest market for whale meat. In addition, the number of Minke Whales taken as bycatch by South Korea poses a serious threat to the survival of this species. TRAFFIC recommended that Japan and South Korea should clarify and strengthen regulations regarding the reporting and disposal of whale bycatch. Secondly, a system in both countries by which all legally obtained whale meat from all sources is inventoried and recorded via DNA profiling before entering the market should be created. DNA databases should be established for use in frequent

monitoring of commercial whale meat trade in each country. In addition, the findings of the Hong Kong section of the report suggest that other markets catering to Japanese tourists, like Singapore, Bangkok, and Jakarta should also be investigated. ♣

(Excerpt taken from "Whale Meat Trade in Asia," by TRAFFIC, 1997)

### **Wildlife Conservation Progress in the ROC**

The ROC's Council of Agriculture (COA) recently released a summary report on the progress of wildlife conservation in 1996. In law enforcement, over 4,300 cases of infringement of the Wildlife Conservation Law were investigated by various government agencies, including the Investigation Bureau of the Ministry of Justice (2 cases), Local Government (over 4,127 cases, among which 2,017 cases involved Chinese Medicine Shops), Local Police Stations (169 cases), the Wildlife Protection Unit of COA (31 cases) and the Office of the Inspectorate General of Customs (52 cases). Follow-up work resulted in a total of 127 persons being prosecuted, of these 13 were released without charge and the remaining 114 were found guilty of breaking the law. Of those found guilty, 109 persons were sentenced to between two months and two years' imprisonment, two people were detained, and three were fined.

In habitat protection, the ROC's protected areas can be divided into four categories: Nature Reserves, Wildlife Refuges, National Parks, and Forest Reserves within national forests. Under the Cultural Heritage Preservation Law and the Wildlife Conservation Law, the COA has established 18 Nature Reserves and 9 Wildlife Refuges. Under the National Parks Law, the Ministry of the Interior has established 6 National

Parks, and the Department of Agriculture and the Forestry Bureau of the Taiwan Provincial Government has established 35 Forest Reserves within national forests under the Forestry Law. At the end of 1996, the total area for each type of protected area and their proportion of total ROC territory as a percentage are as follows:

	Nature Reserve	Wildlife Refuge	National Park	Forest Reserve	Total
Number	18	9	6	24	57
Area (hectare)	63,279	4,229	322,845	89,723	451,591
Proportion	1.8%	0.1%	8.6%	2.5%	12.1%

In education, over 150 conservation-related workshops were held in 1996 on topics including flora and fauna inventory, conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use, aboriginal culture and wildlife conservation, coastal ecology conservation and development, the drafting of the Red Data Book of Asian birds, ecology and conservation of the Formosan black bear, cetaceans, raptors, the black-faced spoonbill, conservation of nature landscapes, parks and green spaces, wildlife welfare, and law enforcement. The COA also worked with various government agencies and conservation groups to hold discussions, educational tours, workshops, exhibitions, and broadcast conservation message via television, newspapers, and magazines. The Government Information Office also arranged for eight short conservation films to be broadcast on televisions in railway stations and bus stations. Twenty conservation films were shown on national television, and nine conservation films will be broadcast on international EVA Airways flights. The aim of these efforts is to enhance and promote ideas about conservation, to educate the general public not to buy products made of threatened animals and plants. ♣

## Conservation News

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To strengthen the conservation of seabirds, Penghu County Government has announced the expansion of Cat Islet Seabird Sanctuary under the Wildlife Conservation Law. In addition, the county government has revised the contents of its conservation plan regarding this wildlife sanctuary. The Cat Islet Seabird Sanctuary is the ROC's first wildlife sanctuary. It was established on May 24, 1991 by Penghu County Government with a total area of around 10.02 hectares, encompassing the whole of Big and Little Cat Islets. The sanctuary mainly preserves the seabirds on the islets and their natural environment. On April 24, 1997, following Penghu County Government's revisions, the area covered by the sanctuary will include an additional 26 hectares of sea area extending 100 meters on all sides of the islands. This sea area will act as a buffer zone. The total area of Penghu County Cat Islet Seabird Sanctuary will be 36 hectares. The main aim of the wildlife sanctuary is to protect local seabirds and preserve the breeding grounds of these seabirds and the overall natural scenery. From now on, no persons will be allowed onto the islets or into the Cat Islet Seabird Sanctuary's buffer zone, except for those undertaking academic research and nature education activities that have been approved by Penghu County Government. During the annual agar-agar harvest season, however, local fishermen will be allowed onto the islets, subject to various regulations, to collect the agar-agar as they have traditionally done. The sounding of horns, use of firecrackers, killing and consumption of seabirds, and other activities that interfere with the seabirds will be forbidden in the buffer ground. Anyone found contravening these regulations will be fined between NT\$50,000 and

NT\$250,000 under the Wildlife Conservation Law. Anyone found guilty of distressing, mistreating, catching, or killing any protected species will be liable to imprisonment. (May 26, 1997)

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As part of the conservation message of "International Coral Year," SWAN International committee meeting agreed to a motion on January 29, 1997 to establish "Cetacean Committee SWAN" to educate the public about caring for marine resources and teach them to love marine creatures.

The island of Taiwan is surrounded by ocean, but there have never been any indigenous records made by the Taiwanese of the abundant marine resources living along its coasts. Therefore, "Cetacean Committee SWAN" will carry out a survey organized by SWAN's academic committee directed by National Taiwan University Department of Zoology professor Lien-hsiang Chou. The establishment of this committee is aimed at strengthening research into marine resources and marine conservation work, and promoting the work of rescuing stranded and wounded marine mammals so that the concept of cetacean conservation is extended to the public. (Jan 30, 1997)

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## Conservation Society Introduction: CNRC

The Chinese Resources Conservation Association (CNRC) is a newly established ROC conservation society. The association was established on May 24, 1995 with the aim of expanding the concept of nature resource conservation, and promoting reasonable use

of natural resources and related academic research in order to achieve a sustainable balance between man and nature.

CNRC has spared no effort to promote nature conservation. CNRC made 1996 "Wildlife Conservation Year;" 1997 "Forest Resources Conservation Year;" and 1998 "Water Resources Conservation Year." In 1996, CNRC focused on wildlife conservation and held a series of activities, including the "1996 Wildlife Conservation Year Activity," which was organized jointly with the Friends of Taipei Zoo Society. The event called on the public to care for wild animals, conserve wildlife, limit their use of natural resources to a reasonable level, and work for the sustained benefit of mankind. In order to promote academic research and conservation work, CNRC has organized seminars on preserving biodiversity and the sustainable use of resources, and has also planned a nature observation classroom, outdoor nature observation camps, etc. In order to involve greater numbers of the public in conservation work and fund-raising activities, CNRC has designed a little frog badge. Everyone who buys a badge becomes a member of the little frog club. The association has also issued a CNRC newsletter. Already the number of club members has exceeded 1,000 people. At the end of 1996, CNRC and Ta-an Commercial Bank jointly issued a "Conservation Credit Card," to create an ROC Resource Conservation Foundation. In the future, CNRC will continue to promote public knowledge of the environment, care for wildlife, and continue its efforts to create a conservation foundation. CNRC hopes that the public will participate in the use of its "Nature Resource Conservation Card" so that it can become self sufficient in conservation work and expand the focus of its conservation work.♣

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