

# INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION

## NEWSLETTER

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### Documentary on Formosan Rock Macaque Garners IWFF Awards

A documentary on the Formosan Rock Macaque introduces Taiwan's endemic monkey to the world and garners global honors at the 32nd International Wildlife Film Festival (IWFF) held in the US. The documentary was produced by the Forestry Bureau's Nantou Forest District Office in an effort to promote conservation of the species.

The Formosan Rock Macaque, or *Macaca cyclopis*, is endemic to the island of Taiwan. And prior to filming the documentary, in the 1980s, the Forestry Bureau under the Council of the Agriculture (COA) set up a forest reserve dedicated solely to conservation of the rock macaque in Ershuei township in central Taiwan.

By the end of 2005, a monitoring station there was transformed to a museum featuring conservation of the rock monkey. Over the years, people believed efforts to preserving the species finally paid off. A reserve dedicated exclusively for the macaques was no longer seen as necessary. Given the fact that the macaque is still rated as "Other Conservation-Deserving Wildlife" category on the COA's List of Protected Species, the Nantou Forest District Office remains responsible promoting awareness of conservation in the region.

The documentary, entitled "*The Lively Spirit: On the Formosan Rock Macaque*," was fruit among strings of efforts dedicated to promote conservation of the macaque. It took the Nantou Forest District Office two years to complete, beginning in 2007. The film received

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Honorable Mention from the jury of IWFF for “Cinematography,” “Scientific Content” and went into finalist for “Government Agency Category.” There were screenings of participating films open during the jury period. In addition, the award-winning films would go on permanent collection at the IWFF library and would be presented to the public throughout conservation venues in the US.



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## Taiwan’s NGOs Safeguard Indonesian Rainforests and Orangutans

To give a helping hand for the rapidly disappearing rainforests and orangutans, Taiwan’s Hsinchu City Quing Cao Hu Community University and National Center for High-performance Computing (NCHC) have worked with SOS-OIC, an orangutan protecting organization in Indonesia. Calling out to the world via the internet about the crisis facing Indonesia, Taiwan’s NGOs wish their efforts will help garner support from conservationists around the globe and bring changes to Indonesian rainforests.

The three parties work mainly on setting up a digital base, entitled CDOC, on local Bukit Lawang and Tangkahan, two important conservation sites for orangutans. The center is to pass on the concept that orangutans are important asset for local residents and that their lives should be saved. In the long run, the orangutan, for example, may be helpful to boost local

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tourism.

Ranking among the top 3 tropical rainforests in the world, Indonesia faces rapid disappearances of forest because of logging. In ten years, it is estimated that the rainforest will be wiped out completely.

The program initiated by Taiwan's NGOs wishes to bring as many people involved over the internet in preserving the rainforest.



## **Flying Foxes Spotted on Turtle Island**

The Formosan flying fox (*Pteropus dasymallus formosus*), threatened with extinction as a result of over-harvesting and habitat loss, was hardly spotted in the wild for about 30 years. Recently in Turtle Island near Yilan County, about 20 flying foxes were tracked down. People believed they live in relatively stable habitats and perhaps have breeding activities there.

Formosan flying foxes are the largest bat species in Taiwan, with a wingspan of up to a

meter. They can fly as far as some 150 kilometers. In the 1970s, people started to raise them as pets and that trend brought forth over-harvesting. By 2005, we could only find as many as 4 Formosan flying foxes in their original habitats in Green Island.

In 2006, a group of researchers located about 20 Formosan flying foxes in Turtle Island and started to monitor their activity and locating their roosting sites by radio-tracking. Through long-term tracking, the team documented footage of one "reportedly" pregnant flying fox holding its baby close to herself while flying.

The present spotting of the flying foxes on Turtle Island, however, bring up concerns over tourism impact on them. After preliminary evaluation, researchers believed that the animals' home range and active time are apparently different from those of the tourists. Therefore, they do not see any possible negative impacts on the flying fox for now.

In the future, the research team wishes to track the flying foxes with satellite tracking

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devices instead of current transmitters so people will have better picture of the animal's distribution and ecological patterns.



## **Taiwan's Sponsorship of International Program Brings Fruitful Results**

The Forestry Bureau under the Council of Agriculture (COA) has sponsored a total of 28 international conservation programs in 2009. Among these are enforcement of the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF), evaluation of listing important commercial fish in CITES Appendix II, tracing the illegal poached tusks of African Elephants, conserving seahorses, setting up a Chinese version of the invasive species database, preserving Asian Rhinoceros, and supporting Tanzanian community program and elephant species survey in Manas National Park in India.

The Lusaka Agreement was signed by African countries, including Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Tanzania, Swaziland, Zambia in

Zambian capital Lusaka in September 1994 to jointly stop illegal trade of wild flora and fauna. Since then, the LATF has worked to collect, analyze and investigate wildlife trading information, and successfully cracked down illegal poaching across borders and brought relevant traders, smugglers and criminal groups to justice. For years, Taiwan's Forestry Bureau has sponsored to implementation of the LATF program in terms of the general operation of the program, law-enforcement training, and investigation operation.

In addition to sponsoring the LATF, the Forestry Bureau has funded the works of the BirdLife International to carry out preservation of major habitats for wild birds at global level. For years, the BirdLife International has been doing surveys, compiling data, understanding the threats and updating current information to identify critical wild bird habitats, also known as the Important Bird Area (IBA), that needed for protection. It also works with locals to draft measures for conservation, encourage the public to take part in conserving the IBA, and set up

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protect zone. To safeguard the birds, the BirdLife International also works with many countries to implement programs that help to protect endangered birds and their habitats. Some of their major tasks are assisting governments and organizations concerned by drafting action plans to guard the species and enforcing emergency rescuing plans. Taiwan's Forestry Bureau has been an important sponsor behind BirdLife International's work in Palau, Vietnam, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Russia, Brazil, Paraguay, and São Tomé.

Since the sponsorship of this international conservation program taking shape in 1996, the Forestry Bureau has raised funds to sponsor more than 183 international programs in more than 38 countries across the continents. Many programs, including protection of endangered species, anti-poaching in Africa, assisting CITES enforcement, implementing IBA plan, preserving, tropical rainforest, and conservation training and education have taken shape and won recognition globally. And these programs also put many species under the umbrella of the

programs, including seahorses, sea turtles, amphibians, Sakhalin Taimen (*Hucho perryi*), sharks, Sciaenidae croakers and drums, *Mergus squamatus*, Black-faced Spoonbill (*Platalea minor*), pangolins, Scimitar Oryx (*Oryx dammah*), Felidae, tigers, rhinoceros, *Bison bonasus*, *Bubalus bubalus*, gorillas, chimpanzees, and elephants, etc.



## Young Pygmy Sperm Whale Rescued for Release

A young Pygmy Sperm whale beached near Yong-an Township, Kaohsiung on January 9, 2010 was released back to the sea on March 7 after rescued and carefully treated in request of the Forestry Bureau at Taijiang Whaling Rescue Center for nearly 2 months.

The young Pygmy Sperm whale when first rescued to the shore appeared to be weak with scars on the body and having struggled with parasite in stomach and high white blood cell level. Many doubted that the whale was attacked and bitten by shark and lost its way, and later

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washed to the shore.

A 2 months treatment and more than 700 appearances of voluntary manpower were involved to treat the young Pygmy Sperm whale. When the young whale was ready to be released back to the sea, the Forestry Bureau worked with National Cheng Kung University, asking veterinarian to fit a satellite transmitter device to the young whale. So later, researchers will be able to continue monitoring the whale's migration by tracing its route and behavior pattern.

According to satellite information collected from the whale, the young whale has arrived near the Kuroshio currents near Orchid Island in south-eastern Pacific. The whale has traveled more than 350 kilometers away from where it was released and swam under 4 to 5 kilometers in depth. The researchers will continue to follow the whale's route in the future.



## Forestry Bureau Publishes Protected Species of Taiwan

The Forestry Bureau under the Council of Agriculture (COA) revised and made public the latest "Protected Wildlife List" according to the Wildlife Conservation Act in March 4, 2009 and announced a total of 3,005 species, both native and exotic. Following that, the Forestry Bureau published "Protected Species of Taiwan Areas" which covers a range of 212 species, including 17 land mammals, 27 sea mammals, 90 birds, 32 Reptiles, 12 amphibians, 10 freshwater fish, 23 arthropod insects, and one crustaceans.

The Forestry Bureau believed that after years of endeavors put together by government, the academic and local organizations, researchers have been able to closely monitor many wildlife species' status when comparing with time when the Wildlife Conservation Act was just enacted. To reflect the current status of the wildlife species, the Forestry Bureau has invited a group of experts to assess and evaluate, based on the Wildlife Assessment and Classification

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Guideline, the distribution of wildlife populations, their numbers and trends of population changes, as well as their taxonomic status and the threats they are facing to come up with the final list.

Newcomers of the list all face certain kinds of threat. Formosan weasels are rare in number. *Chimarrogale himalayica* faces habitat being destroyed because of stream engineering. Facing wetland loss, other low altitude wetland inhabitants, such as the *Sinonatrix annularis*, Chinese water snakes (*Enhydris chinensis*) and the *Rana plancyi* Lataste are in danger, too. Formosan salamanders, a relict species, are losing their mountain habitat as the result of global warming, and their existence is jeopardized. The other newcomers to the list belong to the freshwater category. Golden-stripe gudgeon (*Squalidus banarescui* Chen & Chang), *Squalidus iijimae*, *Leiobagrus formosanus* Regan, Molterrecht's minnow (*Pararasbora moltrechti* Regan) and *Sinogastromyzon nantaiensis* all face habitat loss because of mudslide, road and bridge construction and an overwhelming number of exotic Cichlid

invasion. The newcomer of the insect category is *Pachyrrhynchus*. The species is easily poached because of their vibrant colors and because their habitats in Orchid and Green Island has introduced more construction work than ever before.

In the wake of the crisis facing endangered species, the Forestry Bureau published the book to enhance the law-enforcement body in their abilities to recognize protected species. In addition, the Forestry Bureau would like to make the public more aware of the existence of the protected wildlife. The Forestry Bureau hopes, by doing this, it can encourage the public to join force in protecting wildlife species and to eventually reduce the number of wildlife species needed to be included in the protected list.

According to the Forestry Bureau, protected wildlife is not to be molested, mal-treated, poached, killed, sold, nor displayed, possessed, exported, and bred. But in circumstances that wildlife might pose threat to public safety, human existence, and jeopardize crops, poultry, and aquaculture, people need to file report to the

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government unless it is way too urgent. People will face penalty if catching ordinary wildlife without prior notice to government. To safeguard wildlife protection and economic prosperity, people need to lower environmental impact when carrying out development project especially when it has a lot to do with protected wildlife's habitats.



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