



Kagoshima
International
Conference
on World Natural Heritage
(KICWNH)

NEWSLETTER

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Greetings from the new Governor

伊藤 祐一郎

Yuichiro Ito
Governor
Kagoshima Prefecture

I am Yuichiro Ito and was elected as the 47th Governor to the Kagoshima Prefectural Government. I would like to express my deepest respect to those who endeavor to preserve the global environment. I would also like to thank our many friends from 13 different countries of the Asia-Pacific region for continuously supporting activities on Yakushima since the Kagoshima International Conference on World Natural Heritage (KICWNH) in May 2000.

The 21st century is said to be the Environmental Awareness Age. I sincerely hope that children can grow up in a peaceful world surrounded by abundant nature where they can foster their five rich senses. I also think it is important that everyone tries to protect the natural and cultural resources of their homeland so that the community can aim at a peaceful coexistence between nature and mankind.

As introduced in the last issue, the Amami Islands and the Bonin Islands have become Japan's Natural Site Candidate for nomination to the World Heritage List. Kagoshima Prefecture is now working towards Amami Islands' designation as the second World Natural Heritage Site following Yakushima.

It is true, that the earth itself, the irreplaceable gift to human kind, is the world's heritage. We are determined to commit ourselves, through the various activities on Yakushima Island, and through our conservation of the ecosystem on the

Amami Islands towards achieving the designation as a World Natural Heritage Site.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask for your further understanding and support in Kagoshima's future.

Finally, I wish for your prosperity in the future.

This issue introduces the outline of the Shirakami-Sanchi International Conference on World Natural Heritage (SICWNH). I look forward to meeting you in Shirakami.



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Announcement from Aomori Prefecture, Japan

Please plan on joining us in Aomori Prefecture, Japan in October for "The Second International Conference on World Natural Heritage Sites". The Asian and Pacific International Conference, in Shirakami-Sanchi, for nature conservation, and regional and community development is based on the concept of a harmonious coexistence between nature and people.

As announced by Shingo Mimura, Governor of Aomori Prefecture, the conference is scheduled between October 15th thru the 17th, 2005 in Aomori Prefecture, Japan and under the co-sponsorship of the UNESCO World Heritage Center.

The objective of this conference is to provide opportunities to discuss how to conserve the world's natural heritage sites, an asset commonly possessed by all people. The topic of community planning by taking advantage of abundant natural resources, and as seen from the perspectives of local governments, will also be discussed. At the first conference, held in Kagoshima Prefecture in May 2000, there were many productive results including the presentation of the Yakushima Summit Declaration.

The Shirakami-Sanchi World Natural Heritage Site, spanning over the border of Aomori Prefecture and Akita Prefecture, is characterized by vast natural forests of Siebold's beech trees. It is also well known for its distinctive beauty throughout the four seasons. October is an especially wonderful time of year, as the leaves of the beech trees turn bright red.

The second conference, The Shirakami-Sanchi International Conference on World Natural Heritage (SICWNH) will be held under the theme of "Grand Circulation of Life - A Look at Ourselves in Nature". The conference will also be attended by local governments from the areas designated as World Natural Heritage Sites after the Kagoshima Conference. We are currently making preparations for this conference through the disseminating of information and exchange of ideas.

This conference will provide an optimal opportunity to

share our knowledge and experience concerning the preservation of the World's Natural Heritage sites, and the development of communities where people and nature can coexist harmoniously. This is also a good chance to establish mutual trust and cooperation between participants. I sincerely look forward to seeing the members of the relevant local governments in Shirakami-Sanchi where you can also enjoy beautiful autumn foliage.

Outline of the schedule

Saturday October 15th ,2005 Keynote speech, workshops

Sunday October 16th ,2005 Case presentations

Monday October 17th ,2005 Shirakami-Sanchi summit meeting

SICWNH Organizing Committee

Natural Resources and Conservation Division,

Aomori Prefectural Government

Website: <http://www.sicwnh.com/>



Yakushima NOW

Tree-planting
Festival

Eco-tourism in
Yakushima

Experience
Nature Seminar

A tree-planting Festival for the Conservation of Forest Genetic Resources of the famous Yaku Cedars was held under the theme of passing on the Yaku-Cedar Kings to the future.



The tree-planting festival, held on April 17th, 2004, at the site of the former Kosugidani elementary and junior-high schools, in Kamiyaku Town, was attended by nearly 200 guests from all parts of Japan. The goal of the festival was to establish a conservation forest for famous Yaku Cedars such as the Jomon Cedar.

The Director of Kyushu's Office of Forestry and the Director

of Yakushima's Office of Forestry were both present to deliver greetings and introduce the background of this project. The opening statements were followed by the congratulatory speech of Mr. Tomo, Deputy Mayor of Kamiyaku Town. As noted in his speech, the festival is to preserve the precious genes of famous Yakusugi* cedars, therefore, it is important to raise them with great care. Following the speech, a list of seedlings from famous Yakusugi cedars was presented from the Director of Kyushu's Regional Breeding Office, Forest Tree Breeding Center, to both towns of Kamiyaku and Yaku.

113 seedlings from famous Yakusugi cedars were then planted with the help of all participants, and the ceremony ended with the taking of commemorative group photographs.

Kyushu's Regional Forest Office and Kyushu's Regional Breeding Office, Forest Tree Breeding Center, worked jointly to collect the genes of 26 individual famous Yakusugi cedars as part of a Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and FORESTRY Gene Bank Project. After proliferation, 16 cloned seedlings became ready for transplantation, and these seedlings were transplanted within the Yaku National Forest.

The transplanted forest will be known as "The Famous Yakusugi Cedar Genetic Resources Conservation Forest," and will be used as a public exhibit and for academic studies and publications.

*"Yakusugi" is a term given to cedar trees, grown on Yakushima, with an age greater than 1000 years. "Kosugi," meaning smaller cedar, is a term used to refer to trees younger than 1000 years. Famous Yakusugi cedars include Yayoi Cedar, Kigen Cedar, Daio Cedar and Jomon Cedar. Jomon Cedar, is especially well known with an estimated age somewhere between 2600 to 7200 years.

The third meeting to promote Eco-tourism in Yakushima



A person's understanding of nature conservation as well as economic infrastructure plays a pivotal role in preserving protected areas. In Yakushima, the utilization of eco-tourism has been discussed in order to enable the simultaneous pursuit of environmental preservation and economic development.

On Thursday June 24th, 2004, The third meeting to promote Eco-tourism in Yakushima was held under the sponsorship of the Kyushu Regional Ranger's Office for Nature Conservation, Nature Conservation Bureau, and Ministry of the Environment.

The afternoon session was open to the public and was attended by members of the Yakushima Eco-tourism Promotion Committee, the Yakushima Eco-tourism Support Council and by many others with interests in eco-tourism.

The previous session's results, as well as the results of this year's enterprise proceedings, were reported in the meeting.

The presentation on the Yakushima Area Eco-tourism Promotion Model Project (provisional) was correlated to activities based upon; 1. the establishment of tour guide accreditation and registration system, 2. support to develop new tour programs showcasing the specialty items of each community, and 3. the establishment of the promotion system.

At the evening session, the guide accreditation and registration system was discussed. Reports from previous meetings and dialogues with future guides concerning the guide registration system were also under consideration.

The evening session was attended by 77 people and included members of the Yakushima Eco-tourism Promotion Committee and guides, which showed their high interest in this issue.

Overall, the meeting sessions were quite productive where opinions such as "We should establish the system from the perspective of an Eco-tourism promotion," and, "Who should be responsible in promoting this system?" were presented.

Yakushima's Experience Nature Seminar- The activities of instructors who bridge Yakushima with training participants



Training instructors, in support of environmental studies on Yakushima, such as Yakushima's Experience Nature Seminar, are working on programs unique to the southern island of Yakushima. This issue introduces Yakushima's Experience Nature Seminar

- Yakushima's Water Story -

Yakushima is an island of wondrous natural enchantments. Any of which is sure to draw a crowd. It has been three years since I first came to this island and I find myself becoming more and more fascinated with each visit. I am involved in the Yakushima Experience Nature Seminar, which introduces the beauty of Yakushima to other people.

Yakushima is an island of water- water from rain, rivers and ocean. Water is the source of life. All life here, is blessed by her abundant sources of water. This issue introduces, "Experience Nature Seminar: Yakushima's Water Story," conducted in June, 2003, held under the theme, "Water."

Day One

Participants come from all walks of life.: Some are visiting Yakushima for their very first time, while others, enchanted by

Yakushima's beauty, and have been here numerous times. Married couples, single men and women, retirees, they come from all parts of Japan, to meet here in Yakushima for the four day seminar. And without realizing, everyone naturally becomes friends.

This first day is an introduction to Yakushima by touring the museums.

The day ended with a special welcome party and a small concert. Yakushima attracts people not only with its splendid natural resources but also through its people. Local songs admire the appeal of Yakushima and sing about the joys of their lifestyle. Both comical and yet cynical these songs imply questions as to the negative impact their lives have on nature. They sing, "The more we scrub ourselves with detergents and shampoo, the more polluted our rivers and oceans become.

Day Two

In the Shiratani Unsui ravine, droplets of water glitter on the lush and bushy moss. While walking deep in the forest, alongside a stream, we occasionally came across giant trees and our necks strained as we tried to see their tops. Through our guide, we learned about the formation of the island and the forest as well as about the Yaku cedars. Everyone was showing their admiration. We brought back small pictures, a summary of the message we each received from the forest.

Day Three

Last night's rain, continued to fall late into the morning making a rhythmic tapping sound as it touched the roof. Water from rain falling high up in the Okudake mountains ran down to the Anbo River, swelling over its banks with fast flowing waters. We practiced canoeing, perfecting our paddling technique according to the instructions of the professional guides. Canoes were set out into the Anbo river, one by one. At first it was difficult to paddle against the current, but with the help of the staff and the other participants, we each tried our best to go upstream. Later we enjoyed eating bayberries on the water, and frolicking like children in an Edgar Rice Burrough's Tarzan novel, swinging from ropes over-hanging the river. Due to occasional heavy rains, we were all drenched. Truly, we were the wettest group of people in the world. Then it was back for one more time in the canoe. After coming around a bend, Matumine Bridge made itself visible in the mist. Finally, we stopped paddling, preferring instead to let the stream's current carry us where it may.

In the evening, we arrived at the Yakushima Umigame-kan (turtle museum) at Nagata. We ate dinner in a circle and listened to a lecture on turtle ecology. Everyone was very interested. As the evening went on, we waited for the turtles to land on the secluded beach. June is the peak season for nesting loggerhead turtles. Cloudy nights, after the rain, are the perfect time for them. While awaiting notice from the observers, the interesting lecture on turtles continued. Then we received a message saying that a turtle, failing to dig its first nest, was beginning to dig a second one. We headed towards the beach, taking utmost care to avoid shining any light on the beach. Turtles are very sensitive during their nesting period. Quietly and breathlessly, we witnessed history being made - their behavior has lasted for more than 200 million years. And as I sat there, I could not help but feel its profoundness.

Day Four

We had a tea party using water taken from the Shiratani Unsui ravine and Oko waterfall. We enjoyed the green tea at the tea ceremony. Participants taught the tea ceremony procedures to each other and we took turns making tea. It was fun learning about our traditions.

Finally, we took time to reflect back on the four days that had passed so quickly. We made a circle, each one of us, sharing our feelings, about how the waters of Yakushima run through each one of us before ending the "Yakushima Water Story."

The water will continue running inside each participant of this seminar. The Experience Nature Seminar is held monthly according to the changing seasons and no two seminars are ever the same. It is you, that creates the Experience Nature Seminar, by sharing your time with others.

Yoshiko Muramatsu, Instructor

"What kinds of rare animals are there?"

In the last issue, it was reported that the Amami Islands were nominated as a candidate for inclusion as a World Natural Heritage Site. This issue introduces the many rare and attractive animals living there.



Ishikawa Frog

There are many endemic species and subspecies unique to the Amami Islands. While many are entirely unique to the Amami Islands, some are relics of species that have died out in other regions. The rich biota is derived from

the fact that the Amami islands were once connected to the Asian continent. The Amami Islands are now separated and isolated. Additionally, a low environmental diversity has resulted in a scarcity of endemic flora and fauna. Therefore, a number of rare, wild plants and animals inhabit the Amami Islands. This issue introduces rare species protected according to Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna.

The representative rare mammal of the Amami Islands is the Amami Rabbit *Pentalagus furnessi*. Endemic to the Amami Islands, the Amami Rabbit is known to inhabit the islands of Amami Oshima and Tokuno-shima exclusively. It weighs between 1.3 - 2.7kg and its body length is 42 to 51 cm with a tail of 1 to 4cm. It has small eyes and ears and short limbs, with strong claws suitable for burrowing. Generally nocturnal, Amami rabbits forage at night on a diet that consists primarily of the leaves and stems of various seasonal grasses, and occasionally acorns. Burrows, 3 to 4 meters in length, are usually dug under large stones or at the base of trees for use as dens and nests. Dense forests with adjacent swamps, or secondary forests with abundant grasses are habitats most suitable for Amami rabbits. Increasing habitat reduction due to logging and predation by introduced mammalian species such as the Javan mongoose *Herpestes javanicus* is primarily responsible for the decreasing numbers of the Amami rabbit.

Well known birds include; the Amami woodcock *Scolopax mira*, the Owston white-backed woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos owstoni*, the Great scaly thrush *Zoothra dauma major*, the Ryukyu robin *Erithacus komadori komadori*, and the Purple jay *Garrulus lidthi*. This time, we will focus on the Great scaly thrush.

The Great scaly thrush is an endemic, nonmigratory

subspecies whose habitat is limited to Amami Oshima. The population is very small. Its main distribution is areas south of Naze City. The Great scaly thrush prefers to inhabit areas with thick underbrush such as the valleys of virgin forests and old broadleaved forests. Although similar to White's thrush *Z.d.dauma*, a basic subspecies of Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu, the Great scaly thrush is larger with a total body length of approximately 30 cm. It has longer legs and 12 tail feathers as opposed to White's thrush with 14 tail feathers. With a population that is on the decline, a recent survey indicates that the number of breeding individuals during the mating season is less than 100.



Amami Rabbit

As for amphibians, the Ishikawa frog *Rana ishikawae* and Anderson's crocodile newt *Tylototriton andersoni* are valuable. The Ishikawa frog inhabits only Amami Oshima and the Okinawa Islands. This is a large frog with a body length of more than 10 cm in length. It has large eyes and its suckers, posterior legs and flippers are well developed. Blackish brown mottles with golden colors are scattered on lime green skin. It is said to be the most beautiful frog in Japan. During the mating season, male frogs emit a high, shrill mating call. Ishikawa frogs live in the upper reaches of rivers covered by broadleaved forests. Cutover of natural forests has resulted in the decrease in habitat. Furthermore, due to exploitation for commercial purposes the population is becoming increasingly scarce.

These are just a few of the rare species living in the forests of the Amami Islands. The Amami Rabbit is designated as a special national natural monument, and also as an endangered species according to Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The Ishikawa frog is designated as a prefectural special natural monument and is also protected according to the Prefectural Bylaw for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Birds and mammals are generally protected under the Wildlife Protection Law.

Moreover, a project to exterminate the Javan mongoose has been implemented because this exotic species has preyed on existing rare species since its introduction to the Amami islands around 1979. In addition to these protection measures, it is vital to mention the importance of increasing protection awareness among residents of the Amami islands.

Feedback from Yakushima correspondents and newsletter members

- I will support building a community where we can feel as if we have landed on an "Island of Dreams" when we disembark from our plane or a ship. - N.T. male, Saitama Prefecture-

- Yakushima is surrounded by superb nature. I hope that more people visit here and discover some important things to do as a human being. - O.M. male, Kanagawa Prefecture-

- I recognized for the first time that there are so many different shades of green. - T.S. male, Tokyo-

- I visited Yakushima in late March and went to see Jomon-sugi cedar. Although I am only eight years old, I was really impressed. - A.N. female, Shizuoka Prefecture-

Letter from Tasmania :

Thank you very much for sending the World Heritage Conference Newsletter.

Letter from Indonesia :

Thank you very much for keeping in touch by sending the newsletter. This

kind of information contributes towards the environmental development of different nations, and especially, by our local government....

Editor's notes

Subtropical areas are usually characterized by abundant grasslands or vast deserts. Therefore, it is extremely unusual to find such an expansive rain forest as seen in the subtropical Amami Islands. In the next issue, we will introduce the subtropical evergreen forests and other endemic flora, the topography, geology and coral reefs that make the Amami Islands an attractive temporary nesting ground for many migratory animals. Also featured in the next issue : The unique cultures of Amami Islands' local people.

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Nature Conservation Division, Kagoshima Prefectural Government
10-1, Kamoike Shin-machi, Kagoshima City 890-8577
<http://chukakunet.pref.kagoshima.jp/home/kanhogoka/heritage>
email : kanho@pref.kagoshima.lg.jp