

(4) Protected Areas in Japan

4-1) Outlines of Protected Area Systems in Japan

a) Protected Areas System Under the Nature Conservation Law

1) Wilderness Areas

To conserve primeval natural environment, natural areas with primeval features and of a certain consistency are designated as Wilderness Areas where, based on the policy of leaving the area to natural succession, strict protection measures including prohibition of activities altering natural features are taken. To date, five areas with a total area of 5,600 ha have designated as Wilderness Areas.

2) Nature Conservation Areas

The Nature Conservation Area system aims to conserve natural areas of a certain consistency by regulation of activities and systematic conservation projects, etc. Natural areas to be designated include forests made up mostly of natural forests, water and waterside areas with their outstanding natural environment including coasts, lakes, tidal flats, rivers and oceans, and outstanding natural habitats of plants and animals.

To date, 10 areas with a total area of 21,598 ha have been designated.

b) Protected Area Systems for Nature Conservation Unique to Local Governments

With the aim of conservation the natural environment around residential areas, local authorities have their own protected area systems such as the Green Zone Conservation Area and Local Zone Conservation Area, etc. aside from the Prefectural Nature Conservation Area.

c) Natural Parks

Twenty-eight National Parks, 55 Quasi-national Parks, and 301 Prefectural Natural Parks have been designated under the Natural Parks Law to conserve Japan's scenic areas and promote their utilisation.

Natural parks, making up about 14.1% of the total area of the country, contain diverse ecosystems based on the natural vegetation, etc., full of variety in areas ranging from the subarctic zone to the subtropical zone and from the alpine zone to the coastal region. In natural parks, inhabiting wildlife, marine animals and plants, and their habitats are positioned as components of natural scenery. To protect them, the regulations are being implemented.

d) Natural Habitat Conservation Area

Preventing the extinction of species of wild fauna and flora poses as an urgent task because they are important components of ecosystems and indispensable for mankind to lead an

abundant life. Endangered species of wild fauna and flora in Japan are designated as National Endangered Species in accordance with the “Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.” To preserve their habitats, areas are designated as Natural Habitat Conservation Areas and, in particular, important areas are treated as Managed Areas. Acts in the areas are regulated under a permission system. Areas outside the Protection Zone are treated as Monitoring Areas where natural environment will be conserved by making notification of acts mandatory.

Priority areas to be designated as Natural Habitat Conservation Areas will be selected among those areas such as areas where National Endangered Species inhabit with good conditions and habitats of a large size. For species of a wide range of distribution, main habitats in each major distribution area try to be designated as Natural Habitat Conservation Areas. These efforts will be taken to avoid the extinction of the species.

Protection guidelines have also been established for each Natural Habitat Conservation Area according to the ecological features of the designated species, environment management is performed to maintain the living conditions of the designated species, and periodic surveillance of the conservation areas and surveys of the living conditions of the designated species are conducted.

Furthermore, Projects for Rehabilitation of Natural Habitats and Maintenance of Viable Populations are also implemented actively to maintain and improve habitat conditions of the Natural Habitat Conservation Areas.

e) Protection Areas for Birds and Mammals

Serving as important components of nature, birds and mammals play a significant role in maintaining the ecosystems, and are crucial to realising a rich living environment for man. For purposes of the conservation and propagation of birds and mammals, indispensable areas have been set up as Protection Areas for Birds and Mammals (Wildlife Protection Areas) based on the “Law for the Protection of Birds and Mammals and Hunting (Wildlife Protection and Hunting Law) “ and capturing and hunting are prohibited. Especially important areas are designated as Special Protection Areas (Special Wildlife Protection Areas), and various acts are regulated for the conservation of the living environment for the diverse variety of birds and mammals.

f) Natural Monuments

Based on the “Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties” efforts are presently underway in Japan to commemorate nature that is abundantly diverse and contributes to the formation of the indigenous culture, and preserve nature that is valuable academically as natural monuments.

The law designate the following as natural monuments that shall be preserved: animals and plants indigenous to Japan including rare species, primeval forests (natural forests) with differing climaxes, the various vegetation of marshes and mountainous areas, and secondary natural environments such as manmade village mountains. Increased to a total number of 955, the natural monuments contribute enormously to the conservation of biological diversification in Japan.

g) Protected Forests, etc.

Parts of national forests are classified as “Nature Conservation Forests” where management priority is given to conservation of natural environment such as primeval-like forest ecosystems based on the “National Forest Management Bylaw”. These forests should be managed leaving as they are, in principle, without any forestry works.

Among the National Conservation Forests, those that especially play an important role in the protection of natural environment such as protection of rare wild animals and preservation of genetic resources are designated as “Protected Forests” and intensive efforts are made to conserve natural environment in accordance with the “National Forest Management Bylaw” and “Guidelines for Establishing Protected Forests”. Protected Forests are classified into seven categories according to object to protect and objectives of protection: “Forest Biosphere Reserve”, “Forest reserve”, “Forest Genetic Resources Reserve”, “Forestry Tree Genetic Resources Reserve”, “Plant Community Reserve”, “Specific Animal Habitat Reserve”, “Specific Geographical Feature Reserve” and “Local Symbol Forest Reserve”. Protected Forests totalled 787, comprising about 470 thousand hectare.

h) Protected Waters

Water areas suitable for the spawning of aquatic animals, as a habitat for young fish, and for the growth of seedlings of aquatic animals and plants are specified as protected waters in accordance with the Preservation of Fisheries Resources Law.

Reclaiming, dredging, and work that changes the flow rate, water level, etc. of rivers within the protected areas are restricted. At present protected waters consisted of 2,200 km of rivers, 240 ha of lakes, and 3000 ha of sea surfaces. Protection activities that have been conducted within the designated areas include everyday management of surveillance and guidance to prevent poaching, increased awareness and education of residents and fishermen, and PR activities as well as the development of spawning areas and surveys of the environment and resources beneath the sea so that the relevant environment within the areas can be maintained.

i) International Protected Areas

There are three types of international protected areas in Japan registered and/or approved in accordance with international conventions or a programme as shown below. As of June 1995, there were 15 such areas with a total area of about 220,000 ha (excluding overlapping designated areas in Yaku Island).

Two areas (Yaku Island and Shirakami Mountains and) for the World Heritage Convention,
Eleven areas (e.g. Kushiro Marsh, Lakes Izu/Uchi and Yatsu Tideland) for the Ramsar Convention,

Four areas (Yaku Island, Odaigahara/Mt. Omine, Hakusan and Shiga Highlands) for the MAB.

Council of Ministers for Global Environmental Conservation, Government of Japan (1995):
National Strategy of Japan on Biological Diversity.
(<http://www.eic/or/jp/eanet/en/pol/nsj/index.html>)

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Laws Concerning Ecosystem Conservation and Protected Areas Designated by These Laws.		
Law	Year of Enactment	Protected Areas
Nature Conservation Law	1972	Wilderness Area Nature Conservation Area
Law for Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	1992	Natural Habitat Conservation Area
Wildlife Protection and Hunting Law	1963	Wildlife Protection Area Wildlife Special Protection Area
Natural Parks Law	1957	Special Zone Special Protection Zone
Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties	1950	Nature Reserve
Preservation of Fisheries Resource Law	1951	Protected Waters, etc.
Fisheries Law	1949	Capturing Prohibited Area Capturing Regulated Area, etc.
Guidelines for Establishing Protected Forests, etc.	1915	Forest Biosphere Reserve, etc.

堂本 暁子 (1997) : バイオスフェアリザーブ (生物圏保存地域) と生物多様性、ワールドライフ・フォーラム 2 (4)、野生生物保護学会

4-2) History of Establishment of Protected Areas

4-2-1) Legislation for Nature Conservation before National Parks Law

The National Parks Law was established in March 1931. This law has had epoch-making significance in the history of measures for natural environment conservation. The law was modelled after the national park systems in the USA and saw the introduction of moderately large areas of National Parks, in which human activities are controlled and facilities for their utilisation are provided. The objectives of the Law are to conserve natural scenery of aesthetic value and landscape, plants and animals of academic worth, to offer opportunities for the improvement of the health of the public and to secure places for recreation.

This Law has a predecessor however, in that the concept of nature conservation had been already incorporated to the legislative systems in the Meiji era in the 19th Century.

It was the Meiji government that adopted a national policy of overtaking the Western developed countries through modernisation efforts. Specifically, a policy of enhancing the wealth and military strength of the country was adopted and westernisation and industrial development were strongly promoted.

As result of these policies, the countryside was developed, the forest areas were cleared, the seashore was reclaimed and urbanisation advanced. As a consequence of this, ancient shrines and temples, famous places of scenic beauty and historical interest, primeval forests and natural coasts were destroyed and much magnificent natural scenery and landscape, plants and animals of scientific value were lost. A further consequence was the increased incidence of natural disasters and loss of places for relaxation throughout the country.

In the second half of the Meiji era, the authorities took note of these adverse impacts, and gradually began to initiate legislative systems for the conservation of nature. Under the Forest Law established in 1897, a system of Protection Forests was introduced in order to conserve water resources, scenic beauty, etc. and served to protect the remaining forests from felling as well as to preserve scenery with historical and cultural value.

A system of protecting important birds and mammals from overhunting was introduced under the Hunting Regulation in 1892, which was later upgraded to the Hunting Law in 1895, and a system of Wildlife Protection Areas was adopted under the same law in 1918.

As for an urban planning system, local ordinances were set in place in Tokyo and other major cities around 1888. In 1919, the City Planning Law was established incorporating a system for maintaining city parks and green areas, as well as to protect places of scenic beauty from overdevelopment.

The Historical Spot, Scenic Beauty and Natural Monument Preservation Law was established in 1919. Prior to the establishment of the later-to-come National Parks Law, the Law devised an epoch-making system for the preservation of exceptional natural scenic areas and academically important animals, plants, rocks, landscapes and geological features. Under the Law historical spots, scenic beauty places and natural monuments were designated, regardless their ownership, and controlled or prohibited altering of the landscape and the felling of trees. This system of restriction for conservation by the government without possessing the lands and objects is believed to take initiative to the later national park systems.

林 修三 (1981): 第一章 総説、自然保護行政のあゆみ、環境庁自然保護局

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(4) Protected Areas in Japan 4-2) History of Establishment of Protected Areas

4-2-1) Legislation for Nature Conservation before National Parks Law

List of National Parks

As of March 31,1999

Number	National Park	Data of Designation	Area(ha)	Prefecture
1	Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu	Sept. 20, 1974	21,222	Hokkaido
2	Shiretoko	June 1, 1964	38,633	"
3	Akan	Dec. 4, 1934	90,481	"
4	Kushiro Shitsugen	July 31, 1987	26,861	"
5	Daisetsuzan	Dec. 4, 1934	226,764	"
6	Shikotsu-Toya	May 16, 1949	99,302	"
7	Towada-Hachimantai	Feb. 1, 1936	85,409	Aomori, Iwate, Akita
8	Rikuchu Kaigan	May 2, 1955	12,198	Iwate, Miyagi
9	Bandai-Asahi	Sept. 5, 1950	186,404	Yamagata, Fukushima, Niigata
10	Nikko	Dec. 4, 1934	140,021	Fukushima, Tochigi, Gunma, Niigata
11	Joshin'etsu Kogen	Sept. 7, 1949	189,062	Gunma, Niigata, Nagano
12	Chichibu-Tama	July 10, 1950	121,600	Saitama, Tokyo, Yamanashi, Nagano
13	Ogasawara	Oct. 16, 1972	6,099	Tokyo
14	Fuji-Hakone-Izu	Feb. 1, 1936	121,850	Tokyo, Kanagawa, Yamanashi, Shizuoka
15	Chubu Sangaku	Dec. 4, 1934	174,323	Niigata, Toyama, Nagano, Gifu
16	Hakusan	Nov. 12, 1962	47,700	Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Gifu
17	Minami Alps	June 1, 1964	35,752	Yamanashi, Nagano, Shizuoka
18	Ise-Shima	Nov. 20, 1946	55,549	Mie
19	Yoshino-Kumano	Feb. 1, 1936	59,798	Mie, Nara, Wakayama
20	San'in Kaigan	July 15, 1963	8,784	Kyoto, Hyogo, Tottori
21	Setonaikai	Mar. 16, 1934	62,790	Hyogo, Wakayama, Okayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Tokushima, Kagawa, Ehime, Fukuoka, Oita
22	Daisen-Oki	Feb. 1, 1936	31,927	Tottori, Shimane, Okayama
23	Ashizuri-Uwakai	Nov. 10, 1972	11,166	Ehime, Kochi
24	Saikai	Mar. 16, 1955	24,636	Nagasaki
25	Unzen-Amakusa	Mar. 16, 1934	28,287	Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Kagoshima
26	Aso-Kuju	Dec. 4, 1934	72,678	Kumamoto, Oita
27	Kirishima-Yaku	Mar. 16, 1934	54,833	Miyazaki, Kagoshima
28	Iriomote	May 15, 1972	12,506	Okinawa
Total:				2,046,635

Nature Conservation Bureau, The Environment Agency (1999): Nature Conservation in Japan

4-2) History of Establishment of Protected Areas

4-2-2) Development of Nature Park System

a) Introduction of National Parks Law

In 1931, the National Parks Law, which marked the start of Japan's national park system, was established to conserve areas of notable scenic value and to promote their utilisation. Other factors which were conducive to the enactment of the National Parks Law included the promotion of local industries by attracting tourists from home and abroad with the prospect of acquisition of foreign currencies, the fostering of a sense of devotion among the population to the nation itself and to their home provinces.

b) The Early Era of National Parks

In March 1934, Setonaikai, Unzen and Kirishima National Parks were the first national parks to be designated, and by the outbreak of World War II, a total of 12 national parks had been designated. These national parks were classified into two types: those for the conservation of scenic beauty and those oriented for tourism purposes. Akan National Park, Daisetsuzan National Park and Chubu Sangaku National Park belonged to the former type, while Nikko National Park, Fuji Hakone National Park, Setonaikai National Park and Unzen National Park were assigned the latter category.

c) After World War

After the end of World War II, the designation of new national parks and the expansion of the existing national parks areas were actively promoted for the purpose of promotion of sightseeing recreation and the tourist industry, both considered as contributing to the country's post-war economic reconstruction.

In 1946, Ise-Shima National Park was designated as the country's first post-war national park, and by 1955 seven national parks had been newly designated.

In 1950, a partial revision of the National Parks Law, led to the inauguration of the designation of Quasi-national Parks.

d) Rapid Growth of the Economy and the National Parks Law to the Natural Parks Law

The Natural Parks Law, enacted in 1957, provides for addition of Quasi-National Parks and Prefectural Natural Parks to the national park system of the country.

Following this, the rapid growth of the Japanese economy throughout the 1960's and 1970's resulted in extraordinary increases in the both the average income and to the amount of leisure time available to the people, which in turn contributed to the sharp increase in the number of

visitors to natural parks. In accordance with these developments, the designation of natural parks was further accelerated.

During that period, however, grave concern was voiced over the disturbance to nature caused by excessive development activities, together with increases environmental pollution in urban areas, both of which came to be issues of serious concern to Japanese society.

e) Current Developments

As a measure directed at resolving these burgeoning environmental concerns, the Environment Agency was established in 1971, which took over responsibility for administrative management of natural parks from the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Ever since, the central government has been emphasising the importance of conservation of the natural environment, particularly preservation of the country's natural ecosystems.

At present, the Environment Agency, in its running of the country's natural park system is making every effort to reconcile the two inseparable objectives of protection and utilisation of Natural Parks

自然保護年鑑編集委員会 編 (1992) : 自然公園とは？、世界と日本の自然は今 自然保護年鑑 3、日正社

Japan International Cooperation Agency (1998) :Textbook for the Group Training Course in Nature Conservation and Natural Parks Management, FY99, "Natural Parks"

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4-2-2) Development of Nature Park System

List of Quasi-national Parks

As of March 31, 1999

Number	Quasi-national park	Data of designation	Area(ha)	Prefecture
1	Shokanbetsu-Teuri-Yagishiri	August 1, 1990	43,559	Hokkaido
2	Abashiri	July 1, 1958	37,261	"
3	Niseko-Shakotan-Otaru Kaigan	July 24, 1963	19,009	"
4	Hidaka Sanmyaku-Erimo	October 1, 1981	103,447	"
5	Onuma	July 1, 1958	9,083	"
6	Shimokita Hanto	July 22, 1968	18,728	Aomori
7	Tsugaru	March 31, 1975	25,966	"
8	Hayachine	June 10, 1982	5,463	Iwate
9	Kurikoma	July 22, 1968	77,122	Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata
10	Minami-Sanriku Kinkazan	March 30, 1979	13,902	Miyagi
11	Zao	August 8, 1963	39,635	Miyagi, Yamagata
12	Oga	May 15, 1973	8,156	Akita
13	Chokai	July 24, 1963	28,373	Akita, Yamagata
14	Echigo Sanzan-Tadami	May 15, 1973	86,129	Fukushima, Niigata
15	Suigo-Tsukuba	March 3, 1959	34,309	Ibaraki, Chiba
16	Myogi-Arafune-Saku Kogen	April 10, 1969	13,123	Gunma, Nagano
17	Minami Boso	August 1, 1958	5,685	Chiba
18	Meiji Memorial Forest Takao	December 11, 1967	770	Tokyo
19	Tanzawa-Oyama	March 25, 1965	27,572	Kanagawa
20	Sado-Yahiko-Yoneyama	July 27, 1950	29,464	Niigata
21	Noto Hanto	May 1, 1968	9,672	Toyama, Ishikawa
22	Echizen-Kaga Kaigan	May 1, 1968	9,246	Ishikawa, Fukui
23	Wakasa Wan	June 1, 1955	21,091	Fukui, Kyoto
24	Yatsugatake-Chushin Kogen	June 1, 1964	39,857	Yamanashi, Nagano
25	Tenryu-Okumikawa	October 1, 1969	25,723	Nagano, Shizuoka, Aichi
26	Ibi-Sekigahara-Yoro	December 28, 1970	20,219	Gifu
27	Hida-Kiso Gawa	March 3, 1964	18,075	Gifu, Aichi
28	Aichi Kogen	December 28, 1970	21,705	Aichi
29	Mikawa Wan	April 10, 1958	9,464	Aichi
30	Suzuka	July 22, 1968	29,821	Mie, Shiga
31	Muroo-Akame-Aoyama	December 28, 1970	26,308	Mie, Nara
32	Biwako	July 24, 1950	97,601	Shiga, Kyoto
33	Meiji Memorial Forest Minoo	December 11, 1967	963	Osaka
34	Kongo-Ikoma-Kisen	April 10, 1958	23,119	Osaka, Nara, Wakayama
35	Hyonosen-Ushiroyama-Nagisan	April 10, 1969	48,803	Ilyogo, Tottori, Okayama
36	Yamato-Aogaki	December 28, 1970	5,742	Nara, Nara
37	Koya-Ryujin	March 23, 1967	19,198	Nara, Wakayama
38	Hiba-Dogo-Taishaku	July 24, 1963	7,808	Tottori, Shimane, Hiroshima
39	Nishi-Chugoku Sanchi	January 10, 1969	28,553	Shimane, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi
40	Kita-Nagato Kaigan	November 1, 1955	12,384	Yamaguchi
41	Akiyoshidai	November 1, 1955	4,502	"
42	Tsurugisan	March 3, 1964	20,961	Tokushima, Kouchi
43	Muroto-Anan Kaigan	June 1, 1964	6,225	"
44	Ishizuchi	November 1, 1955	10,683	Ehime, Kochi
45	Kita-Kyushu	October 16, 1972	8,107	Fukuoka
46	Genkai	June 1, 1956	10,158	Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki
47	Yaba-Hita-Hikosan	July 29, 1950	85,023	Fukuoka, Kumamoto, Oita
48	Iki-Tsushima	July 22, 1968	11,950	Nagasaki
49	Kyushu-Chuo Sanchi	May 15, 1982	27,096	Kumamoto, Miyazaki
50	Nippo Kaigan	February 15, 1974	8,518	Oita, Miyazaki
51	Sobo-Katamuki	March 25, 1965	22,000	"
52	Nichinan Kaigan	June 1, 1955	4,542	Miyazaki, Kagoshima
53	Amami Gunto	February 15, 1974	7,861	Kagoshima
54	Okinawa Kaigan	May 15, 1972	10,320	Okinawa
55	Okinawa Senseki	May 15, 1972	3,127	"
Total:				1,343,181

Nature Conservation Bureau, The Environment Agency (1999): Nature Conservation in Japan