

(4) Protected Areas in Japan

4-4) Wilderness Area and Nature Conservation Area

The Nature Conservation Law, which provides the basic frames for nature conservation, is to protect and manage natural resources and natural ecosystems in cooperation with other related laws. In accordance with this Law, Wilderness Areas, Nature Conservation Areas and Prefectural Nature Conservation Areas are established.

a) Category

1) Wilderness Area

Area that preserves its original characteristics without any influence of human activities.

2) Nature Conservation Area

Natural area that preserves its valuable natural environment , as

alpine and subalpine vegetation;

valuable natural forests;

typical landscape, geology and natural phenomena;

river, lake, marsh, and sea coast with valuable wildlife;

marine area with valuable wildlife;

habitats of plants and wildlife preserving a natural environment comparable to - .

3) Prefectural Nature Conservation Area

Area that preserves a natural environment almost equivalent to a Nature Conservation Area, but does not include marine areas.

b) Designation

Wilderness Areas and Nature Conservation Areas are designated by the Director General of the Environment Agency after conferring with related governmental agencies and consulting with the Nature Conservation Council.

Prefectural Nature Conservation Areas are designated after conferring with the Director General of the Environment Agency by the Governor of the Prefecture concerned.

The areas designated so far are:

- Wilderness Areas : 5, ca. 5,631 ha;
- Nature Conservation Areas : 10, ca. 21,593 ha;
- Prefecture Nature Conservation Areas: 519, ca. 73,609 ha.

c) Regulation

1) Wilderness Area

In a restricted entry zone even entrance is prohibited except by permission of the Director General of the Environment Agency. In other zones all activities influencing natural ecosystems are prohibited except when permitted by the Director General of the Environment Agency.

2) Nature Conservation Area and Prefectural Nature Conservation Area

In a wildlife protection area capture and collection of designated animals and plants are prohibited except by the permission of the Director General of the Environment Agency or the Governor of the Prefecture concerned, respectively. In a special zone certain activities except those permitted by the Director General of the Environment Agency or Governor concerned according to the guidelines, are prohibited. In other zones certain activities must be reported to the Director General of the Environment Agency or the Governor concerned, respectively.

d) Regarding the Wilderness Area, from the standpoint of the valuableness and rareness, general and scientific survey took place from 1980-84. Further, for the Nature Conservation Area, a comprehensive academic survey has been carried out since 1985.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) (1999): Textbook for the Group Training Course in Nature Conservation and Natural Parks Management, FY99, Natural Parks
Nature Conservation Bureau, The Environment Agency (1999): Nature Conservation in Japan

(4) Protected Areas in Japan 4-4) Wilderness Area and Nature Conservation Area

Wilderness Area Total : 5 areas 5,631 ha. as of March 31, 1999

District	Prefecture	Area (ha)	Land ownership	Date of designation	Features of natural environment	Remarks
Onnebetsudake	Hokkaido	1,895	National forest	Feb. 4, 1980	Alpine vegetation mainly composed of creeping pines	No entry restricted zone
Head of River Tokachi	Hokkaido	1,035	"	Dec. 28, 1977	Virgin forest of silver fir and fir tree	"
Head of River Ooi	Shizuoka	1,115	"	Mar. 22, 1976	Temperate zone conifer forest and subarctic zone conifer forest	"
Minami Iwojima (Island)	Tokyo	367	"	May 17, 1975	Tropical and subtropical vegetation, geographical features eroded by wave, sea birds	All areas designated as entry restricted zone (on June 24, 1983)
Yakushima (Island)	Kagoshima	1,219	"	May 17, 1975	Temperate zone evergreen broadleaved forest mainly composed of natural cedar and pasania	No entry restricted zone

Nature Conservation Area Total : 10 areas 21,593 ha. as of March 31, 1999

District	Prefecture	Area (ha)	Land ownership	Date of designation	Features of natural environment	Remarks
Ohirayama	Hokkaido	674	National forest	Dec. 28, 1977	Natural forest of beech trees (<i>Fagus crenata</i>) located nearly to the northern limit, Limestone rock vegetation.	All areas designated as special zone and wildlife protection zone.
Shirakami sanchi	Aomori Akita	14,043	"	Oct 7, 1992	The largest natural beech forest in Japan Valuable flora and fauna, ex Black woodpecker	Part of areas designated as special zone and wildlife protection zone
Hayachine	Iwate	1,370	"	May 17, 1975	Alpine and subalpine vegetation, characteristec vegetation of Serpentine's mountain area, Vertical distribution of beech-tree's zone to alpine zone vegetation.	All areas designated as special zone. Part of them designated as wildlife protection zone.
Wagadake	Iwate	1,451	"	May 21, 1981	Beech tree forest, Natural forest of "mountain recess oak" (<i>Quercus mongolica</i> var.), creeping pine forest, permanent snowfield vegetation.	All areas designated as special zone and wildlife protection zone.
Osabiyama	Tochigi	545	"	Mar. 16, 1981	Alpine and subalpine vegetation, Natural beech forest.	All areas designated as special zone.
Head of River Tone	Gunma	2,318	"	Dec. 28, 1977	Alpine low tree forest, beech trees, Natural forest of <i>Quercus mongolica</i> var., permanent snowfield vegetation, snowbridge zone's characteristic vegetation	All areas designated as special zone and wildlife protection zone.
Sasagamine	Ehime Kochi	537	National forest and private forest	Mar. 31, 1982	Beech tree forest, "Shikoku-Shirabe" (evergreen conifer belonging to pine species)	All areas designated as special zone. Part of them designated as wildlife protection zone.
Shiragadake	Kumamoto	150	National forest	Mar. 21, 1980	Natural beech forest located close to the southern limit distribution.	All areas designated as special zone.
Inadake	Kagoshima	377	"	May 17, 1975	Evergreen broad-leaved forest mainly composed of witch-hazels and "Urajiro oaks" (belong to beech tree's species)	All areas designated as special zone.
Sakiyamawan (Bay)	Okinawa	128	Sea Surface	May 28, 1983	Large groups of "Azami" coral, coral reef	All areas designated as marine special zone.

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

(4) Protected Areas in Japan

4-5) Wildlife Protection Areas

a) Establishment of Wildlife Protection Area

To promote protection of the wildlife species and their habitats, the Environment Agency, according to the Wildlife Protection and Hunting Law, establishes two kind of protected areas. Those are Wildlife Protection Areas and Wildlife Special Protection Areas. Prefectural governor also establishes same kinds of protected areas which are locally important.

When establishing a wildlife protection area and when designating a special wildlife protection area, the opinions of local groups making their livelihood in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, as well as hunters and wildlife protection groups, and any others who are concerned will be heard. The case is then reviewed by the Nature Conservation Council in the government or prefecture concerned, and then in accordance with the Law, the area is established or designated as such for a maximum of 20 years (subject to renewal).

1) Wildlife Protection Area

The Director General of the Environment Agency or the prefectural governor, when he deems it necessary for protection and reproduction of wildlife, may establish the wildlife protection area for a duration not exceeding twenty (20) years. Wildlife protection areas are established to protect and to promote the reproduction of birds and mammals, and the hunting of wildlife is prohibited within such areas. Persons who hold any rights regarding the land or standing trees have to give precedence to any actions of the Director General of the Environment Agency and/or the prefectural governors aiming at providing facilities for nest building, supply of water and food on land and in standing trees for wildlife.

There are 3,767 Wildlife Protection Areas with the area of 3,601 thousand hectares as of the end of March 1999.

2) Special Protection Area

The Director General of the Environment Agency or the prefectural governor, when he deems it necessary for protection and reproduction of wildlife, may designate a special protection area within a wildlife protection area for a duration not exceeding that of the wildlife protection area in which such a special protection area is placed. Felling of standing trees and/or bamboo, construction of any structures, reclaiming wetlands and the like shall require permission of the Director General of Environment Agency or the prefectural governor, unless such action is of minor scale.

b) Problems of Wildlife Protection Areas

It is relatively difficult to establish new Wildlife Protection Areas even if they are proposed in

“Plan for Wildlife Protection Programme”, which is reviewed every five years. To establish the protection areas, public hearings must be held to hear opinions from the persons and parties concerned. Usually a plan for the establishment is not accepted if there are objections from a part of the attendants. Therefore, the rate of designation of the new protection areas to the proposed ones is relatively low: in some local government body, the rate of the designation is only 30 to 60%.

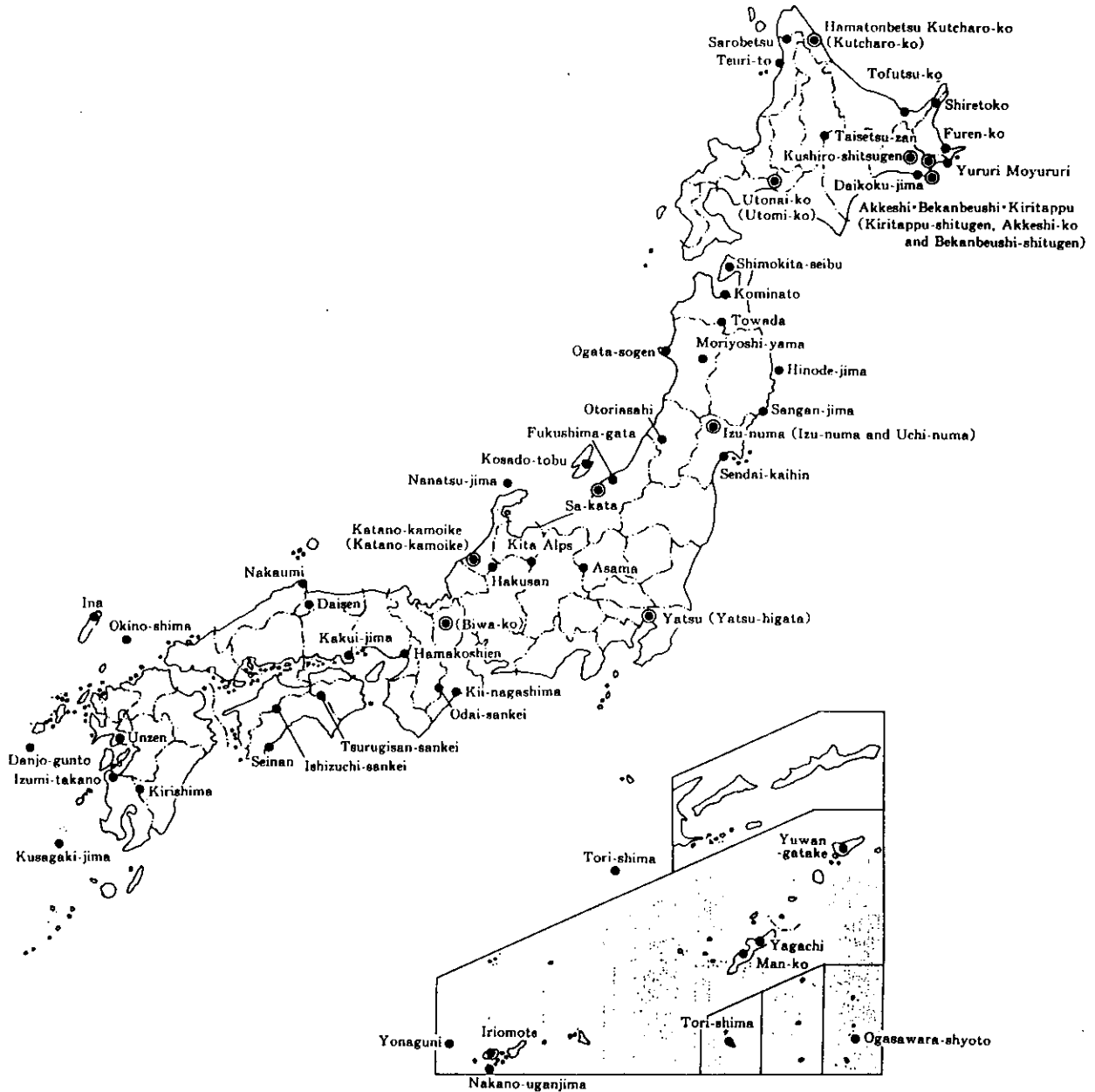
Even for the protection areas established, the conservation system is not sufficient. The number and dimension of the protection areas are limited. The period of the designation is twenty years and sometimes it is not renewed. Since the protection areas are designated without surveys on flora and fauna in and around the areas, many of them do not have data on wildlife species and populations; it is unknown that a protection area covers the home ranges of large mammals. Outside the protection areas, hunting with rifles or traps is allowed almost everywhere except city areas, etc.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) (1999): Textbook for the Group Training Course in Nature Conservation and Natural Parks Management, FY99, “Wildlife Management”
Nature Conservation Bureau, The Environment Agency (1999): Nature Conservation in Japan
川道 美枝子 (1997): 野生哺乳類の保護に関わる法律、レッドデータ 日本の哺乳類 (日本哺乳類学会 編) 文一総合出版

(4) Protected Areas in Japan 4-5) Wildlife Protection Areas

■ National Wildlife Protection Areas and Ramsar Sites

- National Wildlife Protection Areas
- ⊙ Ramsar Sites (Designated wetlands for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance)



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