

(4) Protected Areas in Japan

4-6) National Forests and Protected Forests

4-6-1) Management of National Forests

a) Role of National Forests

National forests under the jurisdiction of the Forest Agency, totalling 7,600,000 hectare, account for about 20% of the land area and about 30% of the forest area of Japan. Since most of the national forests lie in the mountainous backbone of the country ,and there are more primeval-like natural forests compared to private forests, national forests have more forests where public benefit functions should be particularly performed, such as the conservation of national land , conservation of headwaters, conservation and formation of natural environment, and to allow the forests to be used by the public for health and relaxation. On the other hand, with long-term plans, national forests, according to the plans provide in sustainable forms various types of wood, accounting for about one quarter of the domestic supply volume of Japan (1993). In addition, various activities in national forests such as timber production greatly helps to develop rural communities that otherwise are economically weak, though providing forest products and land to meet the requirements of local residents and industries, providing infrastructure for living such as forest roads, and increasing employment opportunities. The management of the national forest, as a central entity for forest and forestry, aims at contributing to development of nation's economy and people's lives by securing various functions.

b) Basic Policy for Management of National Forests

In order to fulfil the above-mentioned roles, the following eight management points of national forests must be emphasised:

- i. conservation of national land;
 - . conservation of headwaters;
 - . conservation and formation of natural environment;
 - . promotion of health and cultural use of national forest;
 - . timber supply in various species and characters;
 - . coordination of forestry activities in national forest and non-national forest;
 - . improvement of forestry techniques, training and dissemination, and;
 - . contribution to development local communities.

To promote forest management accordingly, National Forest Operation should be managed under the following basic policies:

- 1) Establish a “Regional Forest Plan of National Forests” for every forest area (158 areas in

the whole country)corresponding to the same area for private forests based on the “ Forest Law, ” and promote suitable forest management and forestry production according to characteristics of each area through coordination between private and national forests, and upstream and downstream area based on the “ River Basin Management System”.

- 2) To answer the various needs of the people accurately and fulfil tasks appropriately, by clarifying the function to be emphasised among various overlapping functions of forests categorise forests into the following four Types:
 - i. forests whose principal function is conservation of land (Land Conservation Forest),
 - ii. forests whose principal function is conservation of natural environment (Nature Conservation Forest),
 - iii. forests whose principal function is utilisation of recreation and public welfare such as for recreation(Recreation and Welfare Forest), and
 - iv. forests whose principal function is timber production and other industrial utilisation.(Timber Production Forest)

In addition, efforts should be made in all forests to conserve headwaters. Each forest should be managed properly with appropriate techniques to perform principal function. In view of the importance of fulfilling public benefit functions of forests such as conserving nature, tie-ups with national land and environment administrative policies should be strengthened for the management of the national forest.

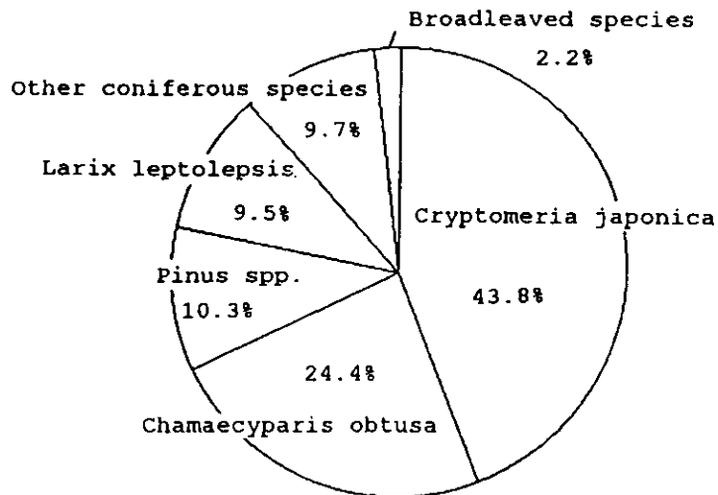
c) Promotion of Forest Management for Nature Conservation

Among national forests, forest where principal function to be performed is conservation of natural environment is classified as Nature Conservation Forests. In Principal, they are protected and managed by leaving as they are without human manipulation, and also aimed for conservation in the protected areas by designating there forests as the Protected Forests.

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>)

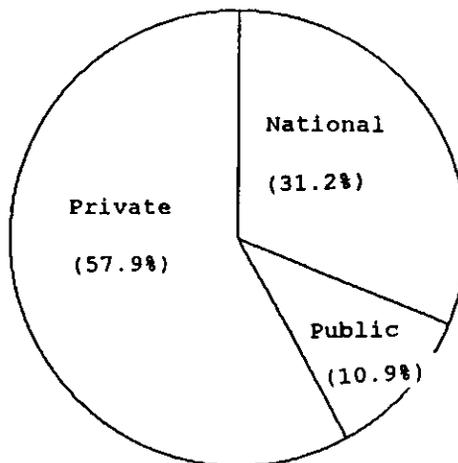
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Forest Resources and Ownership



Note:
 1) *Pinus spp.* are *Pinus densiflora*, *P. thunbergii* and other *Pinus* species.
 2) Other coniferous species mainly include *Abies sachalinensis*, *Picea glehnii* and *P. jezoensis*.

Area of Man-made Forest by Planted Species (1995)



Forest Area by Ownership (1995)

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4-6-2) Protected Forests

Appropriate protection and management are implemented for “ Nature Conservation Forests ” and “ Protected forests ” based on the guidelines on the procedures for selection and designation, and management of the forests pursuant to the “ National Forest Management Bylaw ” and the “ Guidelines for Establishing Protected Forests”. Actually, management is carried out by grasping situation of protected forests through patrols by staff of district forest offices such as forest rangers giving instructions to visitors and calling for attentions from them preventing damage by forest fires, disease and harmful insects, and taking necessary measures to recover the damage caused by large scale forest decay or landslides. In addition, necessary measures are taken for the protection of the populations, and maintenance and conservation of habitats, according to the characteristics of each object to be protected.

The seven types of Protected Forests are outlined as follow.

a) Forest Biosphere Reserve

The objective of Forest Biosphere Reserve is to contribute to maintaining the natural environment comprised of forest ecosystems, protecting animals and plants, preserving genetic resources, and academic studies, by preserving primeval-like natural forests representing the main forest zones in Japan and rare primeval-like natural forests with features seen only in respective region. As of April 1, 1995, there have been designated 24 such reserves, comprising about 313 thousand hectare, and two more are scheduled to be designated soon.

b) Forest Genetic Resources Reserve

The objective of Forest Genetic Resources Reserve is to preserve, in forest ecosystems, genetic resources of organisms that comprise natural ecosystems together with forests and have potential of sustainable use in the future. As of April 1, 1995, two such reserves have been designated comprising about 11 thousand hectare, and eleven more are planned to be designated in coming years.

c) Forest Tree Genetic Resources Reserve

The objective of Forestry Tree Genetic Resources Reserve is to preserve, in forest ecosystems, the genetic resources of major forestry tree species and rare tree species. As of April 1, 1995, 336 such reserves have been designated, comprising about 9 thousand hectare.

d) Plant Community Reserve

The objective of Plant Community Reserve is to maintain representative plant communities of the natural flora of Japan and local regions and historically and academically valuable individuals along with contributing to academic studies. Specifically, designated within this category are the areas with plant communities that become increasingly rare or exist in critical areas of distribution of the species, and with plant communities and individuals that need protection. As of April 1, 1995, 341 such reserves have been designated, comprising about 90 thousand hectare.

e) Specific Animal Habitat Reserve

The objective of Specific Animal Habitat Reserve is to protect the breeding areas and habitats of specific animals and contribute to academic studies. Specifically, designated within this category are the breeding areas and habitats of animals that become increasingly rare, the breeding areas and habitats of animal groups not found elsewhere, and the breeding areas and habitats of animals that need protection. As of April 1, 1995, 26 such reserves have been designated, comprising about 12 thousand hectare.

f) Specific Geographical Feature Reserve

The objective of Specific geographical Feature Reserve is to protect peculiar topographic and geological features in Japan, and to contribute to academic studies. As of April 1, 1995, 30 such reserves have been designated, comprising about 31 thousand hectare.

g) Local Symbol Forest Reserve

The objective of Local Symbol Forest Reserve is to protect present of which local municipalities strongly desire to maintain because they serve as significant symbols of the respective regions and contribute to development of the local community. Local Symbol Forest Reserve is set under the condition that an agreement with a term up to 30 years is made between Director of Regional Forest Office and a head of local municipalities. As of April 1, 1995, 28 reserves have been designated, comprising about 2 thousand hectare.

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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4-6-2) Protected Forests

Protected Forests in National Forest (April, 1999)

Type	Subject	No.	Area (ha)
1. Forest biosphere reserve	To conserve undisturbed natural forests in order to facilitate maintenance of natural environment consisting of forest ecosystem, protection of wild animals and plants, conservation of gene resources, and scientific researches.	26	320,020
2. Forest organisms genetic resource reserve	To conserve gene resources which consist of important part of natural ecosystem within the forests to retain possibility for future use.	10	28,599
3. Forestry woods genetic resource reserve	To conserve gene resources of scarce tree species and main tree species for forestry activities.	331	9,286
4. Forest vegetation reserve	To maintain specific plant communities representing Japan or regions and certain individual trees and plants having historic and scientific value. And to facilitate development of forest management technology and scientific researches.	350	107,413
5. Specific animals habitat reserve	To maintain important habitat for specific animals and to facilitate development of scientific researches.	31	16,033
6. Specific geography or geology reserve	To maintain unique topography, soil structure and the natural features to facilitate development of scientific researches.	32	30,080
7. Local symbol forests reserve	To maintain forests, for which strong requests for conservation are submitted by local governments because of their important value such as symbols for the area, and to facilitate development of the region.	32	2,308
Total		812	513,739

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

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4-7) Present Situations and Problems on Nature Protected Areas

a) System of Protected Areas - Outline

There are four categories of protected areas established and managed by laws under the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency: Nature Conservation Areas, Natural Parks, Wildlife Protection Areas and Natural Habitat Conservation Areas.

1) Spatial allocation

Not all protected areas are established for the same reason and the specific conservation objectives vary from maintaining vast scenic landscapes to preservation of habitats for specific plant and animal species. The Basic Policy for Natural Environment Conservation states that nature's variety should be systematically conserved, Nature Conservation Areas and Natural Parks are designed not to duplicate of the kind of nature covered by the other. As a result, Nature Conservation Areas are designated outside Natural Parks while areas in Natural Parks duplicating Wilderness Areas lose their validity as National Parks. Thus protected areas are ranked in order of from high to low priority as: Wilderness Area, National Parks, Quasi-national Parks, Nature Conservation Areas, Prefectural Natural Parks and finally Prefectural Nature Conservation Areas.

Meanwhile, the protected areas based on different laws, such as "Wildlife Protection and Hunting Law" and "Natural Parks Law", are established to be likely unrelated each other. Because of this, for example, National Park area is not necessarily prohibited hunting except in the area of Special Protection Zone.

2) Procedures of designation and establishment

Procedures to designate and establish these protected areas are similar, except as far as the obligation to hold public hearings. The consultation and agreement with the local administrative offices concerned are indispensable while there is no obligation to obtain an agreement from landowners because the establishment of a protected area is not considered as an infringement on land ownership.

However, as a current tendency, opinions and demands from landowners are often brought in through consultation process with the local administrative offices. As a result, the cases to get an agreement with landowners are increasing recently.

The procedures to designate the protected areas reflect the times and process of establishment of the laws themselves. The Wildlife Protection and Hunting Law was established in 1918 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce and the National Parks Law in 1931 by the Ministry of the Interior. The original objectives of both these laws included promotion of regional development, agriculture, forestry and fisheries as well as nature conservation, and the

procedures for the designation were relatively simple. The other laws under the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency are all newly established laws and targeting principally at nature conservation, however procedures became tighter and less flexible to avoid conflicting with legislation by other government offices concerned. In contrast, the procedures for designation of Natural Habitat Conservation Areas under the most recent Endangered Species Law are the best regulated in terms of content, but most difficult to be completed.

3) Area and area selection

Natural Parks make up the largest area of protected areas: 53,000 km² amounting to 14% of the country, while Wildlife Protection Areas cover 33,000 km². Nature Conservation Areas occupy only 1,000 km² and Natural Habitat Conservation Areas amount to almost nothing.

The areas presently designated to Nature Conservation Areas have relatively large area and belong to two types: i) alpine and sub-alpine vegetation (over 1000 ha); and ii) outstanding natural forests (over 100ha). There are other three types requiring smaller minimum areas (over 10 ha): i) unique topography, geographic features and natural phenomena; ii) outstanding natural coastline, lakes, marshes, bogs, rivers and marine areas; and iii) habitats and breeding sites of wild plants/animals and precious man-made forests. However, only one of these designations is assigned to one particular area of Sakiyama Bay Nature Conservation Area. At present the objective of the Nature Conservation Law to conserve relatively small areas of natural environment outside Natural Parks is seems to be not achieved well.

b) Evaluation for Effect of Regulation in Protected Areas

Taking all factors such as severity of regulations and actual implementation into consideration, the functions of nature conservation are evaluated in the protected area systems at national level from more to less effective in the following order: Wilderness Areas, Natural Habitat Conservation Areas, National/Quasi-national Park (special protection zone), National/Quasi-national Park (class I special zone), Nature Conservation Area (Special Zone: Wildlife Protection Zone), National/Quasi-national Park (Class II/III Special Zone), Wildlife Protection Areas (Restricted Entry Zone) and Wildlife Protection Areas (Special Protection Zone).

幸丸 政明 (1997): 国立公園等自然保護区の現状と課題、ワイルドライフ・フォーラム
2(4) 野生生物保護学会

