

(5) Wildlife Conservation and Management in Japan

5-1) Basic Policy and Strategy of Wildlife Conservation

a) Basic Concepts

Wild animals and plants serve as the basic components of ecosystems, and their diversity helps maintain the balance of the ecosystems. Japan is blessed with natural environmental variety, and despite being small, it is home to a large variety of wild plants and animals including endemic species. At present, however, a large number of animal and plant species in Japan are threatened. To maintain a diversity of wild animals and plants in Japan, we should, at the very least, avoid human extinction of any species or unique population/community. Not only should endangered and rare species be conserved, but a variety of fauna and flora, including ordinary species, established in the area should also be conserved in their totality. In utilising wild plants and animals as genetic resources, it is necessary to conserve their biological diversity by ensuring sustainable use of them. It is extremely significant from the viewpoint of conserving biological diversity to avoid, through appropriate management practices, ecosystem disturbance which is caused by a rapid increase in certain bird or mammal population.

b) Basic Strategy

In order to protect valuable wildlife, it is very important to protect their habitats, to regulate hunting and illegal poaching strictly and to implement necessary measures to preserve endangered species.

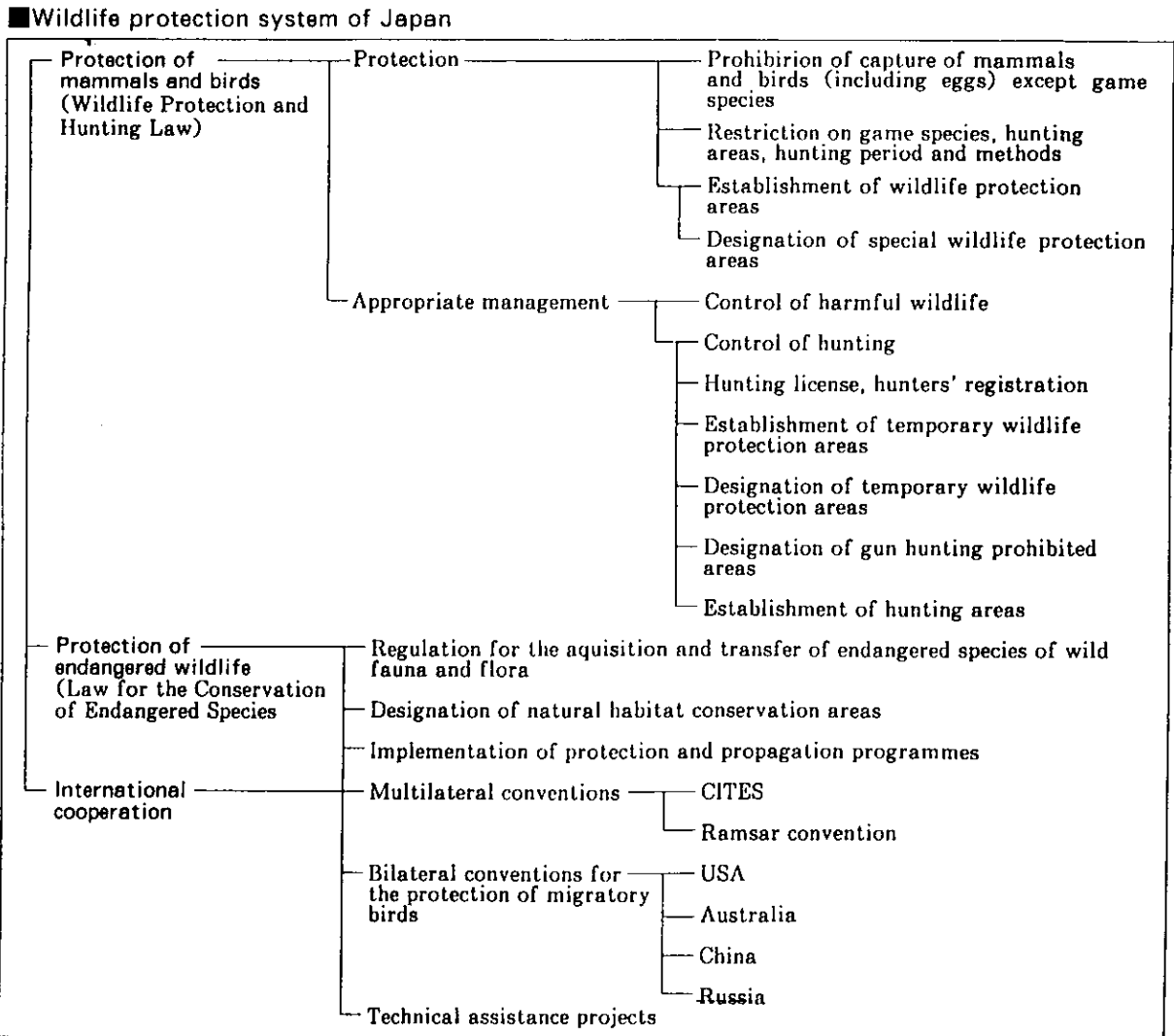
Japanese wildlife protection system has made it possible to conserve wildlife by enforcing the Wildlife Protection and Hunting Law, and the Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

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>)

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

(5) Wildlife Conservation and Management in Japan 5-1) Basic Policy and Strategy of Wildlife Conservation



(5) Wildlife Conservation and Management in Japan

5-2) Hunting Systems

a) Introduction

In many countries, the first category of wildlife to be given protected species has usually been the birds and mammals because of their position at the top of the food chain in local ecosystems, as well as for importance as a hunting resource for people. In Japan, the basis for the wildlife conservation systems is the Wildlife Protection and Hunting Law, established for regulation of hunting and conservation of the animals' habitat. At present, all wild bird and most species of mammals inhabiting the country are covered under this comprehensive law.

b) Outlines of Wildlife Protection Systems

The Wildlife Protection and Hunting Law has three objectives: protection of birds and mammals, prevention of damage caused by birds and mammals and prevention of hunting hazards. Through such measures as by regulating the capture, transfer, breeding and export/import of these animals and development activities in their habitats.

c) Regulation of Capturing

1) Birds and mammals for hunting

Under the Wildlife Protection and Hunting Law, birds and mammals living in the country are classified into two categories: game species, for hunting; and protected species, of which the capture, injuring and killing are prohibited. At present, there are 30 bird species and 17 mammal species designated as game animals. Those species are basically as follows:

- The species' habitat is intact and the population can withstand hunting pressure reasonably well.
- Species considered harmful to agriculture and forestry.
- Species whose fur, meat and other derivatives has usage value.

2) Hunting licences

There is a wide range of regulations covering hunting activities designed to prevent overhunting and hunting accidents. Anyone wishing to hunt is required to obtain a hunting licence through an examination process undertaken by the Prefecture concerned. There are three classes of the hunting licences: for nets/traps, shotguns/rifles and airguns respectively. At present, about 76,000 are in possession of a hunting licence, of which 87% are for shotguns/rifles.

3) Hunting season

Hunting is allowed only in the hunting season, based not only on the breeding and migrating

seasonal considerations of the birds but agriculture, forestry and outdoor recreation seasons as well. The hunting season is principally from 1st October to 31st January in Hokkaido and from 15th November to 15th February in the rest of the country.

4) Hunting areas

Wildlife Protection Areas

As mentioned above (see 4-5: Wildlife Protection Areas).

Hunting prohibited areas

Areas in which hunting is prohibited are Wildlife Protection Areas, National/Quasi-national Parks (Special Protection Zone), Wilderness Areas, Gun-hunting Prohibited Areas in urban vicinities and recreation areas, and Temporary Wildlife Protection Areas with a maximum limitation period of three years

5) Changes in the pattern of hunting

In 1992, 2.93 million birds and 330,000 mammals were hunted. The number has been declining each year as the number of hunters declines.

6) Special permission for capture

Exceptions are made for certain specific cases, such as for academic studies and control of species considered harmful, and the Director General of the Environment Agency or the Prefectural Governors grants a permit for the capture of birds.

7) Control of harmful animals

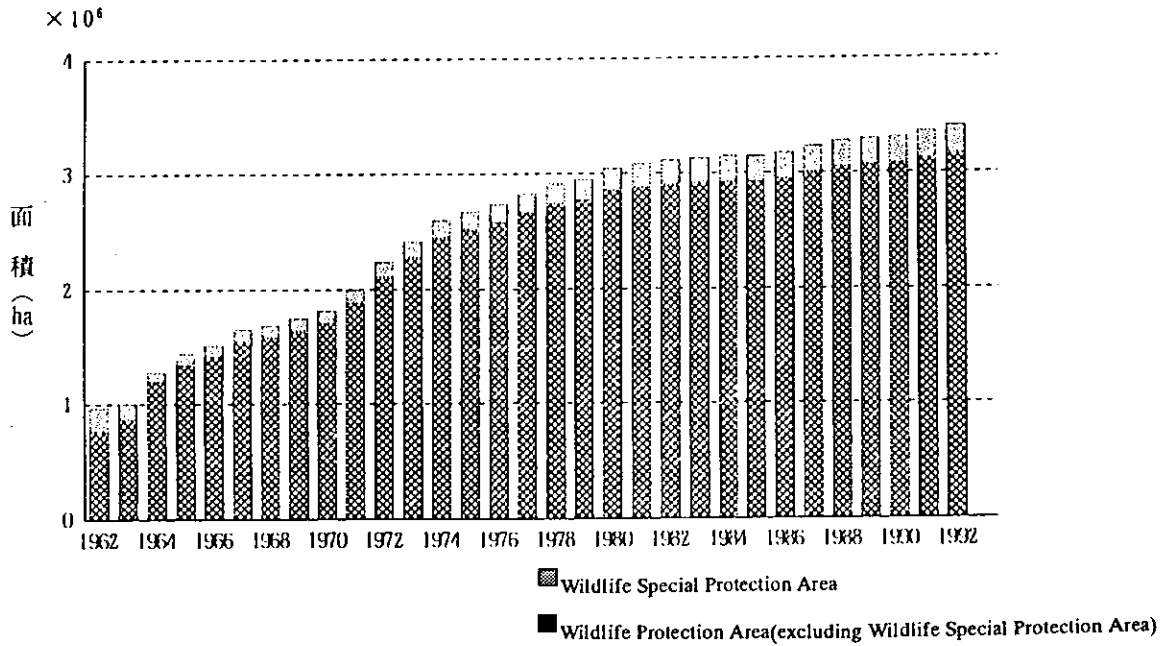
Damage to agricultural crops, forestry resources or even harm to people can sometimes be caused by wild animals, and in these cases pest control measures are one of the measures taken. This control is implemented regardless the hunting regulations, such as the issue of special hunting permission, season and areas. This form of control however is necessarily managed under security guidelines that ensure that the species is not overhunted or hunted within the boundaries of a Wildlife Protection Area.

8) Current changes

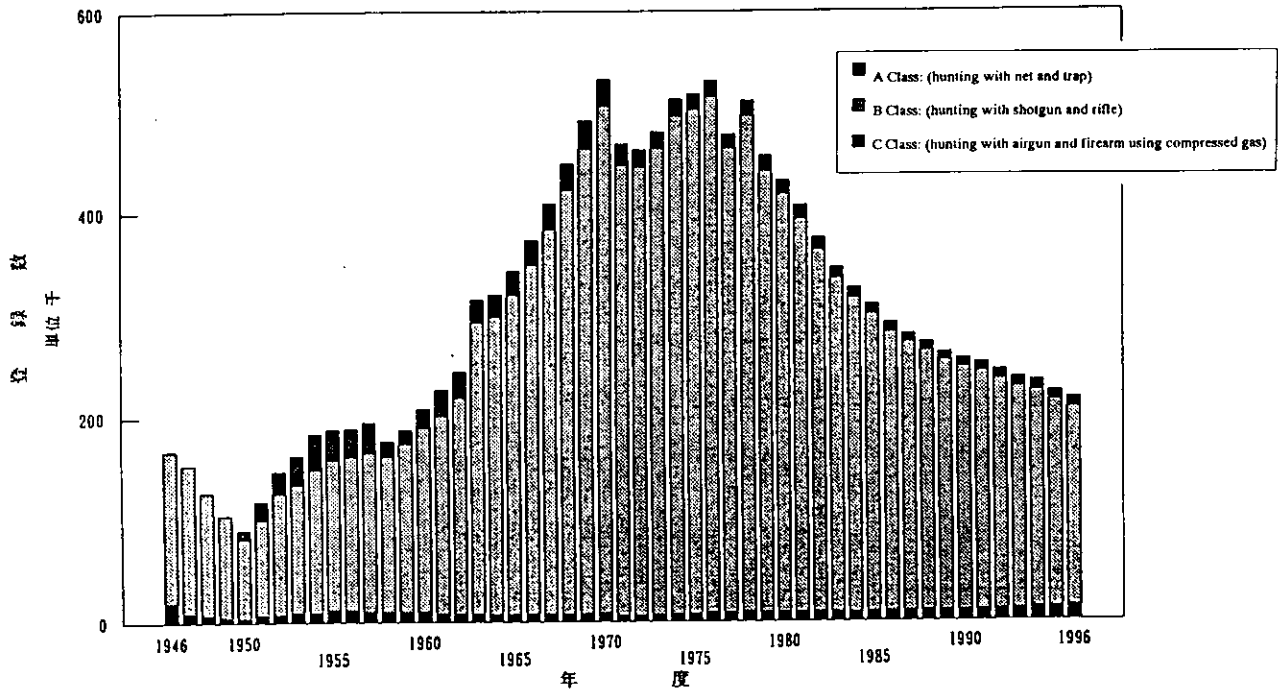
In 1992, the number of animals controlled was 1.28 million birds and 100,000 mammals. The number has since been increasing due to a rise in incidence damages to agriculture crops and forestry products specifically by deer, wild boars, monkeys and crows.

(5) Wildlife Conservation and Management in Japan 5-2) Hunting Systems

a) Changes of the Area for Wildlife Protection Area and Wildlife Special Protection Area



b) Changes of the Number of Registered Person for Hunting



水谷 知生 (1996) : 野生動物の保護制度に関する一考察、ワイルドライフ・フォーラム 2 (3)、野生生物保護学会

高橋 正浩 (1998) : 狩猟鳥獣の捕獲を禁止、制限する件の変更について、野生生物保護行政、野生生物保護行研究会

(5) Wildlife Conservation and Management in Japan

5-3) Conservation of Endangered Species (Law for Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)

a) Law for Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

Recognising the importance of species of wild fauna and flora, as well as having essential value for humanity, the Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora aims to ensure the conservation of endangered species of wild fauna and flora, and contribute to the conservation of natural surrounding for present and future generations.

b) Definition

Endangered species known to exist in Japan are designated as National Endangered Species (NES) and the species that are listed in CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) Appendix 1 or in Japan's bilateral convention or agreement with neighbour countries are designated as International Endangered Species (IES).

c) Prohibition on Acquisition and Transfer of Endangered species

Hunting, gathering, killing or damaging of live NES is prohibited unless the Director General of the Environment Agency permits for the specific purposes. And transfer of organisms of Endangered Species including processed intact organisms, parts and processed parts either on a commercial or non-commercial basis, is prohibited except when the Director General of the Environment Agency permits transfer for the specific purposes.

International trading of organisms and others of NES is prohibited either on a commercial as well as non-commercial basis except in the case that conditions adopted by the Government have been fulfilled.

d) Regulation on Transfer of Parts IES (International Endangered Species)

Those who intend to transfer non-processed parts of designated parts in Japan must first register the parts. Registration can be made, if

the parts have been produced from domesticated or cultivated animals or plants or obtained before CITES measures were imposed.

Without registration, transfer is allowed only if the Director General of the Environment Agency permits the transfer for the specific purpose.

e) Habitat Conservation

The natural habitats of NES are designated by the Director General of the Environment

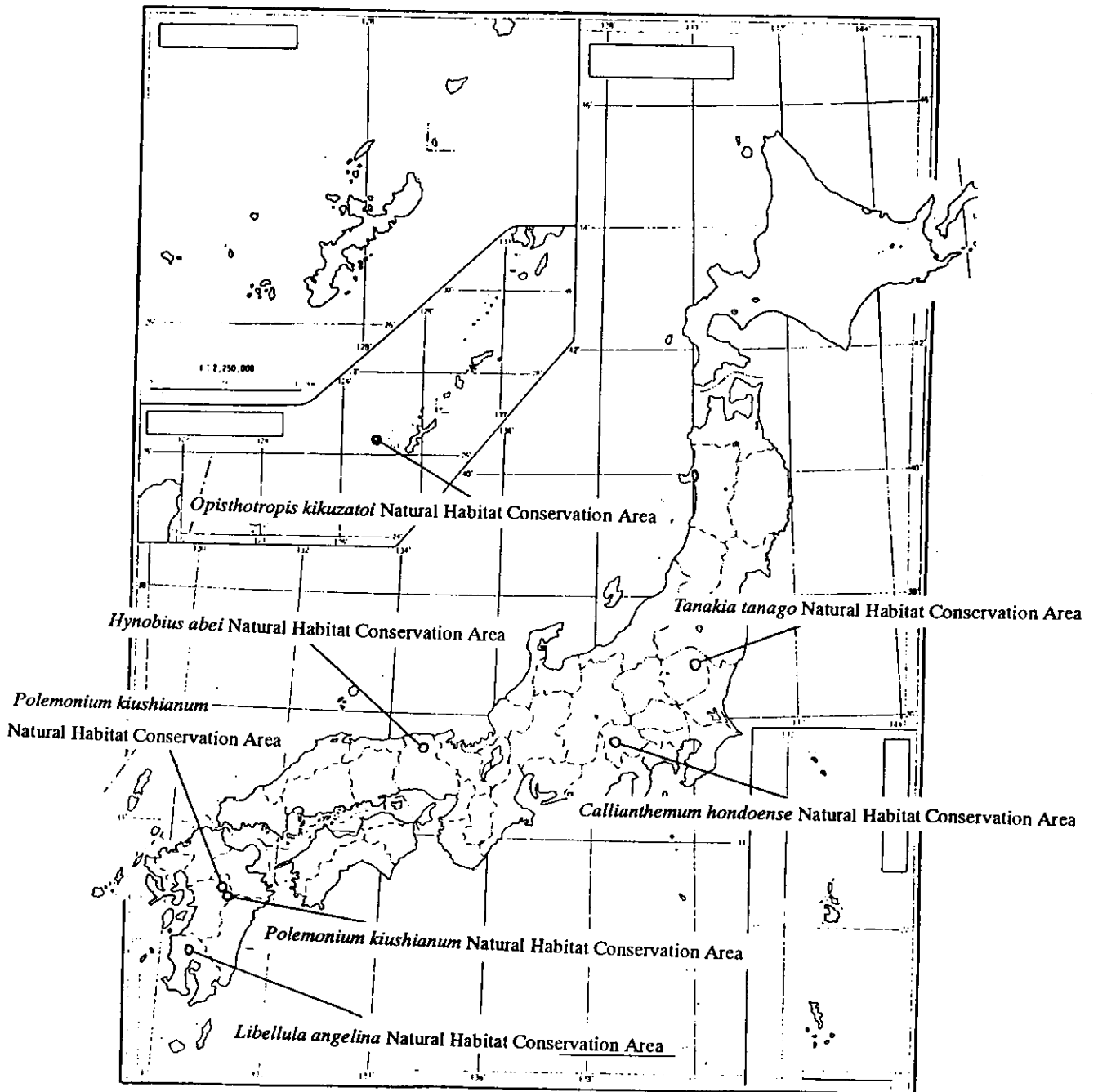
Agency as Natural Habitat Conservation Areas. This area is classified into two types of zones. One type is a Protection zone. In this zone, certain activities such as construction or cutting trees are regulated by the Director General of the Environment Agency. Another type is a monitoring zone, which functions as a buffer zone.

f) Rehabilitation of Natural Habitats and Recovery of a Viable Population

Since the stable survival of Endangered Species may not be achieved by the regulations on acquisition and transfer of each organism and human activities in their natural habitat alone, the Government may promote the rehabilitation of natural habitats and the recovery of viable populations of National Endangered Species. The Environment Agency will establish a programme promoting the rehabilitation of natural habitats and maintenance of viable populations in cooperation with other Ministries and Agencies. The programme may be implemented by the Environment Agency or other Ministries or Agencies, Local Government and NGOs if appropriate.

(5) Wildlife Conservation and Management in Japan 5-3) Conservation of Endangered Species (Law for Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)

Location of Natural Habitat Conservation Area



柴田 泰邦 (1998) :生息地等保護区の指定について、野生生物保護行政、野生生物保護行政研究会