

Ogasawara Islands World Natural Heritage Scientific Council Meeting, FY2015 Summary of Results (Advice from the Scientific Council)

The following advice was given to the management authorities in the meeting of the Ogasawara Islands World Natural Heritage Scientific Council for the Fiscal Year 2015, which was held on 15 December 2015.

Agenda Item 1: Addressing the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

- The Scientific Council received reports from the secretariat on each item addressing the decision of the World Heritage Committee, and it gave the following advice and requests.

(1) Request (a): Efforts to address invasive alien species

i. Measures to deal with green anoles (*Anolis carolinensis*) on Anijima Island

- The initially anticipated significant impacts on the insect fauna have been effectively suppressed at this stage, and the Council acclaims the successful implementation of the control project so far.
Based on the roadmap for dealing with the green anole which was presented in this meeting, the control project should be promoted in a continual and planned manner.

ii. Consideration of measures to prevent the invasion and spread of new alien species

- It has been confirmed that seedlings with soil attached for agriculture are delivered directly from Okinawa to Hahajima Island, posing a very high risk of the invasion of alien species. It is necessary to start early the consideration and implementation of measures to prevent the invasion of alien species at the entry points, including a hot-water treatment, the method of which has already been established, not only from the standpoint of preventing adverse impact on the ecosystems but also from the standpoint of preventing agricultural damage.
- The Council has approved that the organization of the working group for the prevention of the invasion and spread of new alien species as a subsidiary body of the Scientific Council will be suspended at the end of this fiscal year with a view to restarting it with improved capacities after fiscal year 2017 and that the working group for the prevention of the invasion and spread of new alien species as a subsidiary body of the Regional Liaison Committee will take over the role of identifying concrete measures based on the outcomes of this working group and implementing them.
- Big-headed ant (*Pheidole megacephala*), which has entered Hahajima Island, should be dealt with promptly. In particular, measures should be taken within a few years in areas where its distribution is still limited.

iii. Consideration of the conservation and management measures for forest ecosystems

- Provision of obtained data and findings to other projects should be continued, as well as the consideration of the conservation and management measures for forest ecosystems.

iv. Consideration of the conservation of land snails

- In response to the expansion of the distribution of the planarian (*Platydemus*

manokwari) on Chichijima Island, it is necessary to start developing the method of eliminating the planarian in addition to the conservation measures for land snails that have been taken so far.

- The Council has approved that the “advisory committee for the conservation of land snails and the elimination of the planarian” will be dismantled and re-organized into a working group as a subsidiary body of the Scientific Council as a forum for discussion of the conservation of land snails, which are an important part of the property that attests to the value of the World Heritage, in light of the critical condition of their inhabitation on the whole Ogasawara Islands.

v. Measures to deal with feral goats on Chichijima Island

- Elimination of feral goats should be carefully conducted while protecting the ecosystems to be conserved, based on thorough analysis of the experience of the past feral goat elimination on isolated islands, keeping in mind foreseeable future scenarios that would take place after the elimination of feral goats on Chichijima Island.

It should be considered by both specialists in feral goat management and those in alien plant management, especially focusing on the expansion of alien plant species after the elimination of feral goats.

vi. Measures to deal with alien rats

- For the implementation of measures to deal with rats, the feedback of villagers’ opinions should be included in the process.
- Monitoring of rats in the whole Ogasawara Islands should be carried out, with a view to accumulating data.
- The method for estimating the population dynamics of rats should be developed by mobilizing all the intelligence available.

vii. Measures to deal with feral cats

- The Scientific Council received reports from the management authority without giving particular advice.

(2) Request (b): Environmental impact assessment

- The Scientific Council received reports from the management authority without giving particular advice.

(3) Recommendations from (a) through (d)

- The Scientific Council received reports from each management authority without giving particular advice.

Agenda Item 2: Discussion topics presented by the Regional Liaison Committee

- The Regional Liaison Committee asked for advice on Bonin flying fox (*Pteropus pselaphon*), in response to which the Scientific Council offered the following advice.
 - An advisory committee should be set up with the participation of megabat experts and local residents; the discussion should be started as soon as possible.
- As for the measures to promote the participation of villagers, the Scientific Council gave the following advice.
 - More opportunities should be provided to facilitate the development of common understanding among local residents in the process of implementing many projects. In relation to this, the achievements resulting from the past conservation regulations

and mechanisms for the World Natural Heritage should be compiled.

Agenda Item 3: Future Plans

- As for the matters listed below, the Scientific Council gave the following advice.
 - The Council has approved that the work for the revision of the management plan and the action plan will be started next fiscal year in coordination with the Regional Liaison Committee.
 - An appropriate system for discussion should be put in place for the revision of the management plan and the review of the national park in order to ensure coordination between them.
 - The Scientific Council meeting for next fiscal year and the subsequent years should also be held in Ogasawara.

Agenda Item 4: Other Matters

- In light of the need for an expert on sociology in the discussions of the Scientific Council, the Council has approved and welcomed Professor Akemi ORI (Sophia University Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies) as a new member of the Council.
- With regard to the eruption of Nishinoshima Island and the resulting expansion of its land area, the Council proposes that the possibilities of the eventual re-nomination for the extension of the property on the World Heritage List, instead of just a minor boundary modification, should be explored, in light of the need for strict management in the future, possible expansion of the marine park zones, and the due recognition of its contribution to the Outstanding Universal Value in terms of geology.