

Symposium Introducing Wildlife Conservation Efforts by JAZA and the Ministry of the Environment

The Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums (JAZA), the Ministry of the Environment, and the Tokyo Zoological Park Society jointly hosted a symposium on February 16, 2025.

In 2014, JAZA and the Ministry of the Environment signed the "Basic Agreement on the Promotion of Biodiversity Conservation." Since the signing of this agreement, JAZA member institutions have made significant achievements in ex-situ conservation efforts targeting species such as the Tsushima Leopard Cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis euptilurus*), Japanese Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta japonica*), Miyako Grass Lizard (*Takydromus toyamai*), Amami Spiny Rat (*Tokudaia osimensis*), striped loach species (*Cobitis spp.*), and Land Snails of the Ogasawara Islands (*Various species*). These achievements include advancements in breeding techniques under managed care and the accumulation of scientific knowledge.

This symposium marked the 10th anniversary of the "Basic Agreement on the Promotion of Biodiversity Conservation," providing an opportunity to reflect on past wildlife conservation efforts. Additionally, a panel discussion was held to explore what zoos, aquariums, and the Ministry of the Environment should focus on moving forward.

Event Overview

- Title: 10 Years of Biodiversity Conservation: Challenges and Future Prospects for Zoos and Aquariums
- Date: Sunday, February 16, 2025, 12:30 PM – 4:30 PM
- Venue: Tokyo National Museum, Heiseikan Auditorium
- Participants: 339 applicants, 265 attendees (attendance rate: 78%)
- Admission: Free

Program

Lecture 1: Conservation Efforts for Endangered Species by the Ministry of the Environment

- Speaker: Seiko Fukushima, Assistant Director, Rare Species Conservation Promotion Office, Wildlife Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of the Environment

Lecture 2: Achievements and Future Prospects of Wildlife Conservation Efforts by Zoos and Aquariums

- **(1) Tsushima Leopard Cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis euptilurus*)**
 - Speaker: Rieko Yamasaki, Section Chief, Fukuoka City Zoological Garden
- **(2) Japanese Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta japonica*)**
 - Speaker: Yuki Akiba, Deputy Section Chief, Animal Care and Exhibit Division 2, Toyama Manicipal Family park Zoo
- **(3) Hakata Striped Loach (*Cobitis striata hakataensis*)**
 - Speaker: Yasunari Suzuki, Assistant Manager, Fish Division, Marine World Uminonakamichi
- **(4) Amami Spiny Rat (*Tokudaia osimensis*)**
 - Speaker: Shuta Tanaka, Deputy Manager, Animal Management Division, Kobe Animal Kingdom
- **(5) Miyako Grass Lizard (*Takydromus toyamai*)**
 - Speaker: Naoya Honda, Visiting Researcher, Sapporo Maruyama Zoo
- **(6) Land Snails of the Ogasawara Islands (*Various species*)**
 - Speaker: Hiroshi Nakamura, Assistant Manager, Animal Care and Exhibit Division, Tokyo Sea Life Park



(1) Tsushima Leopard Cat



(2) Japanese Rock Ptarmigan



(3) Hakata Striped Loach



(4) Amami Spiny Rat



(5) Miyako Grass Lizard



(6) Land Snails of the
Ogasawara Islands
(*Mandarinia hirasei*)

Photo:(3) ©Marine World Uminonakamichi,
(1)(2)(4)(5)(6) ©Tokyo Zoological Park Society

Lecture 3: Various Efforts by Tokyo Metropolitan Zoos and Aquariums

- Speaker: Kaori Ito, Research Coordinator, Wildlife Conservation Center, Tokyo Zoological Park Society

Panel Discussion

- Theme: Achievements, Challenges, and Future Directions Over the Past 10 Years
- Panelists:
 - Hiroto Kawabata (Author)
 - Marisa Aramaki (Director, Rare Species Conservation Promotion Office, Wildlife Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of the Environment)
 - Hidemasa Hori (Vice Chair, JAZA Biodiversity Committee)

- Coordinator:
 - Hirofumi Watabe (Director, Tama Zoological Park and Director, Wildlife Conservation Center, Tokyo Zoological Park Society)

Survey Results (70 Responses)

- Age of Participants:
 - 7.1% in their 20s
 - 4.3% in their 30s
- Satisfaction:
 - 92.9% of participants rated the symposium as "very satisfactory" or "somewhat satisfactory" on a four-point scale.
- Awareness of Conservation Efforts:
 - High recognition rates for the Tsushima Leopard Cat 77.1% and Japanese Rock Ptarmigan 85.7%).
 - Lower recognition rates for the Amami Spiny Rat, Miyako Grass Lizard, and Ogasawara Land Snails, around 25%.
 - The Hakata Striped Loach had the lowest recognition at 1.4%.
 - Strengthening public awareness efforts was identified as a priority.

Participant Feedback:

- "I gained a deep understanding of the significant efforts required for breeding through the presentations by zoo and aquarium staff."
 - "Hearing from Ministry of the Environment staff and experts during the panel discussion provided valuable insights not typically accessible."
 - "Comparing the conservation efforts for multiple species helped deepen my understanding."
 - "It was beneficial to hear a summary of the past 10 years of conservation efforts rather than fragmented information. It reinforced the importance of zoos as institutions equipped with the necessary facilities and expertise for conservation."
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Additional Notes



View of the audience and stage at the symposium venue. ©Tokyo Zoological Park Society



Reports on local conservation efforts by staff from the Ministry of the Environment's regional offices were presented for each species discussed in Lecture 2. ©Tokyo Zoological Park Society



The panel discussion reflected on the past efforts of zoos and aquariums and explored what actions should be taken in the future. ©Tokyo Zoological Park Society