

Designation Plan for Yambaru (Ada) National Wildlife Protection Area, Yambaru (Ada) Special Protection Zone (Excerpt)

November 1, 2009

The Ministry of the Environment

1. Outlines of the Special Protection Zone

(1) Name of the Special Protection Zone

Yambaru (Ada) Special Protection Zone

(2) Area comprising the Special Protection Zone

As shown in the figure 5-1-8 in the nomination documents

(3) Duration as the Special Protection Zone

From November 1, 2009 to October 31, 2029 (20 years)

(4) Designation category for the Special Protection Zone

Habitat for threatened wildlife

(5) Purpose for designation as the Special Protection Zone

Located 2.5 km northwest of the town of Ada Ward, Kunigami Village, Kunigami County, Okinawa Prefecture, this area includes Mt. Ibudake (elevation 353 m) to the southeast and abuts the Fungawa River to the west. It approaches the Gaji-Sate Forest Road to the north, the Kunigami Village forest to the east, and the trailhead for the Mt. Ibudake mountain trail to the south. Virtually the entire area is covered by forest composed of *Castanopsis sieboldii*. The slope of Mt. Ibudake halfway to the peak features a *Quercus miyagii* tree estimated to be 300 years in age.

Reflecting such natural environment, this region is home to various rare birds that are National Endangered Species, as defined under the Act on Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Act No. 75 of 1992), and listed on the Red List prepared by the Ministry of the Environment, including the Okinawa woodpecker (*Sapheopipo noguchii*; CR), the Okinawa rail (*Gallirallus okinawae*; CR), and the Ryukyu robin (*Luscinia komadori namiyei*; EN). This area is also home to several rare mammals, including

the Okinawa least horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus pumilus pumilus*; EN) and the Ryukyu long-haired rat (*Diplothrix legata*; EN).

As such, the area is an important habitat for threatened wildlife species, including the Okinawa rail, and is designated a Special Protection Zone, as defined under Article 28 (1) of the Wildlife Protection and Proper Hunting Act (Act No. 88 of 2002), for the purpose of protecting threatened wildlife species that occur here.

Offering ideal habitat for the Okinawa woodpecker and Okinawa rail, within the Yambaru (Ada) Wildlife Protection Area, this area is recognized particularly important for protection, and designated a Special Protection Zone as defined under Article 29 (1) of the Wildlife Protection and Proper Hunting Act, for the purpose of protecting threatened wildlife species that occur here.

2. Guidelines concerning protection in the Special Protection Zone

(1) Protection and management policies

(i) Gather information on the status of wildlife in the area concerned, based on bird and mammal monitoring surveys and on-site patrols.

(ii) Prevent inadvertent human activities that may threaten wildlife habitats and adverse effects of scattered waste that may impact bird species, through on-site patrols and coordinated action with relevant local governments, NPOs, and local residents, including public awareness activities.

(iii) Implement activities to control the Javan mongoose and other alien species that pose a threat to the survival of native species.

(2) The objectives of the conservation program

Concerns in the Yambaru (Ada) Wildlife Protection Area include rising rates of road kill incidents and emerging threats to the Okinawa rail and other species due to the presence of alien species such as the Javan mongoose, feral dogs, and feral cats.

The objectives of the program are to appropriately manage habitat environment, as well as to maintain and improve habitat for threatened wildlife species, including the Okinawa rail, for the continuing survival of such species.

(3) Areas covered by conservation program

Entire Yambaru (Ada) Special Protection Zone

(4) Description of the conservation program

The Ministry of the Environment will undertake necessary operations to maintain and restore natural habitats for the threatened wildlife species in this area, and consolidate the facilities required to implement these activities. These activities include installing facilities to prevent intrusion of the animals that may pose a threat to the protection of wildlife habitat. The Ministry will also monitor the status of the threatened wildlife species and evaluate progress toward the program objectives at periodic intervals.

The local government of Kunigami Village will implement, including maintaining and managing protective shelters for the Okinawa rail and public awareness campaigns targeting local residents, based on plans for “*The Home of the Okinawa Rail*” initiative, whose purpose is to ensure the harmonious coexistence of the Okinawa rail and local residents.

(5) Overview of environmental changes

Through predation and competition for habitats, alien species introduced to northern areas of Okinawa Island have significantly impacted native species in recent years.

Not found here in the 1960s when the area was first designated as the Ibudake Wildlife Protection Area by Okinawa Prefecture, the Javan mongoose has now been reported in this area and is degrading the habitat environment.

(6) Change in wildlife status

No significant changes have been observed in the status of the Okinawa rail in this Wildlife Protection Area. However, the range of the Okinawa rail has gradually shrunk towards the north as populations of Javan mongoose encroach upon its range. When first discovered in the 1980s, the Okinawa rail occurred close to the area from Shioya Bay in Ogimi Village to Taira in Higashi Village. In recent years, the southernmost limit of its range appears to have retreated north, closer to this Wildlife Protection Area, from the boundary of Kunigami Village and Ogimi Village to Takae in Higashi Village.

Reports indicate the Javan mongoose is now present within the Wildlife Protection Area itself, indicating habitat decline for the Okinawa rail.

Mortality due to road kills has been another major issue in recent years in the north of Okinawa Island, including in this Wildlife Protection Area.

3. The land (by land-use) and water surface area of the Special Protection Zone

Total area: 220 ha

Breakdown

A. Breakdown according to land-use type

Forest: 220 ha

Agricultural land: - ha

Water surface: - ha

Other: - ha