

# Protection and Recovery Program for the Amami Woodcock (*Scolopax mira*)

August 31, 1999

Environment Agency

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

## I. Objectives of the Program

The Amami woodcock (*Scolopax mira*), a bird in the Scolopacidae family, is found in parts of the Nansei Islands. The species inhabits forests dominated by *Castanopsis sieboldii* and other species, but degradation of suitable environments and other factors have reduced both the distributional range and overall population of this species.

The objectives of this program is to ensure the stable survival of the bird in a natural state by clarifying and monitoring the status of the species; maintaining and improving the environments necessary for the species; and mitigating and removing factors that pose threats to the species.

## II. Program Areas

The distribution areas of this species in the Amami Island Group, Kagoshima Prefecture, and in Okinawa Prefecture

## III. Overview of the Program

### 1. Understanding the species status and monitoring, etc.

The following surveys will be undertaken to appropriately and effectively implement the program.

#### (1) Understanding the species status and monitoring

Based on automobile-based route censuses and other surveys undertaken in the range of this species during breeding season and non-breeding season, the program will continuously gather information on the status and trends of this species, including its distribution and breeding status. The program will also collect and organize reports of sightings.

#### (2) Clarifying the biological characteristics

Using banding, radio tracking, and other identification/tracking methods, the program will gather information on characteristics of the species' biology, including migration of individual birds, actual

dispersion status, and behavior and home range during breeding and non-breeding season. The program will also conduct research to elucidate breeding status based on fecal analysis, feeding habits, and the structure of ecosystems in which this species occurs, including current predation status.

### **(3) Understanding suitable environments and potential threats**

The results gained in (1) and (2) above will be used to clarify suitable environments for this species. Surveys will be implemented to better understand the factors that pose potential threats to the current population and countermeasures to remove those impacts.

## **2. Habitat maintenance and improvement**

The stable survival of this species in its natural state will require efforts to maintain the health of the entire ecosystem, including the forests that serve as the species' crucial breeding sites.

Based on the results of Item 1 above, the program will explore effective countermeasures against degradation of the habitats and population declines, thereby maintaining and improving environments suitable for the habitat and breeding.

When land use or business activity on species habitat arises, the program will seek to ensure the environmental conditions needed for the survival of the species.

## **3. Captive breeding**

Species conservation will focus on the maintenance and growth of wild populations in their habitats.

However, to safeguard against precipitous declines in the wild populations, the program will explore the possibility of captive breeding.

## **4. Patrol, etc. of the habitat**

To prevent human interactions that may adversely affect the populations, including illegal hunting and indiscreet entry into the habitats, the program will establish a patrolling system in the species habitats.

## **5. Promotion of education and awareness-raising activities**

To achieve effective progress with the program, understanding and cooperation is crucial on the part of the parties carrying out various business activities, relevant administrative organs, and citizens including community residents. The program will promote public awareness on the species status, the need for protection, and the progress of the protection and recovery program. These activities will help foster better understanding and cooperation in protecting the species. The program will also seek to facilitate the development of voluntary conservation activities of the community through efforts such as fostering a deeper understanding of the species in the concerned area.

To minimize population losses due to road kills, the program will investigate accident prevention measures in partnership with relevant organizations, including installing warning signs for motorists.

## **6. Consolidation of collaboration for effective promotion of the program**

When implementing the program, efforts will seek to facilitate cooperation and collaboration among the national government, Kagoshima Prefecture, Okinawa Prefecture and relevant municipalities, experts in ecology or other aspects of this species, and local residents.