

Protection and Recovery Program for the Okinawa woodpecker

(Sapheopipo noguchii)

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Environment Agency

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

I. Objectives of the Program

The Okinawa woodpecker (*Sapheopipo noguchii*) is a monospecific species of medium-sized woodpecker occurring only in the northern part of Okinawa Island. This species lives in forest 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 Area

The distribution area of this species in the northern part of Okinawa Prefecture

III. Overview of the Program

1. Understanding the species status and monitoring

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

(1) Understanding the species status and monitoring

Through surveys of the distribution of nesting trees and breeding status, the program will continuously gather information on the status and trends of this species.

(2) Clarifying the biological characteristics

Using marking, radio tracking, and other identification/tracking methods, the program will gather information on migration of individual animals, population dispersal, behavior during breeding and non-breeding seasons, and home range.

The program will also conduct research to better understand feeding habits and other aspects of the ecosystems in which this species occurs.

(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 their impact.

2. Habitat maintenance and improvement

The stable survival of this species in its natural state will require efforts to maintain the health of the overall ecosystem, including the large-diameter *Castanopsis sieboldii* trees used for nesting and plants and animals used for forage.

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 habitat and breeding conditions.

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 population in their habitats. However, to safeguard against precipitous declines in the wild population, the program will explore the possibility of captive breeding and will seek to establish captive breeding techniques.

4. Patrol, etc. of the habitat

To prevent human interactions that may adversely affect the population including 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.

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, local governments of Okinawa Prefecture and relevant municipalities, experts in ecology or other aspects of this species, and local residents.