

Japan's Submission on its Views and Experiences for the In-depth Review of Work on Invasive Alien Species

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Ministry of the Environment, Japan

1. Legislative Measures and National Policies

In the Second National Biodiversity Strategy of Japan, decided by the government in March 2002, Japan placed the issue of alien species as one of the country's three crises in biodiversity. The strategy stated: "We need to recognize that as an island nation with a unique ecosystem, Japan has a large number of animals and plants that could be threatened with extinction by invasive species (alien species) and their impact on the biodiversity is enormous". This policy was carried on into the Third National Biodiversity Strategy of Japan decided in November 2007.

In response to this policy, the Invasive Alien Species Act (IAS Act) was adopted in June 2004, and put into force from June 2005, with the aim of preventing the adverse effects of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) on ecosystems, human safety, agriculture, forestry or fisheries.

The IAS Act designated alien species that are recognized or feared to cause adverse effects on ecosystems, human safety, agriculture, forestry or fisheries as "Invasive Alien Species" and restricts their importing, raising, and transferring within the country.

(1) Designation of IAS

The IAS Act stipulates that among the organisms that were introduced into Japan roughly after the Meiji era began (1868), the species which have significant adverse effects on ecosystems, human safety, agriculture, forestry or fisheries shall be designated as IAS.

For the determination of adverse effects, "Expert Meeting on IAS", consists of academic experts specializing in properties of living organisms, and "Expert Group Meetings" for each of the taxonomic groups were established, and they are making review based on scientific knowledge.

As of January 2008, 96 species, including the raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) and the largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), have been designated as IAS.

(2) Outline of the regulations for IAS

Importing, raising, planting, storing or carrying of organisms designated as IAS without permission from the national government shall be prohibited. Permission will be given to the cases where the said activities are undertaken for the purposes of scientific research, exhibition and education, upon the examination of the existence of facilities that can prevent the escape of the IAS. Their release into the wild is prohibited without exception.

(3) Uncategorized Alien Species

Species that are not designated as IAS, but are suspected to cause adverse effects on ecosystems, human safety, agriculture, forestry or fisheries are designated as “Uncategorized Alien Species (UAS)”. Their import is prohibited until decision is made on the possibility of causing any damages. Notification is required before importing UAS. Upon notification, the competent ministers will decide on their risk of damage within six months. If the ministers decide that there is no risk of damage, the ban on their import will be lifted. If it is decided that the species has possibility of causing any damage, their import will not be allowed.

(4) Living organisms required to have a certificate attached during their importation in order to verify their types

To carry out the effective control of import based on the IAS Act, for species that are not easy to distinguish by their appearance whether they fall under the category of IAS or UAS, a certificate issued by foreign government agencies or other relevant institutions is required to be attached when they are imported in order to verify their types.

2. Management

○Mitigation of IAS

In case adverse effects on ecosystems, human safety, agriculture, forestry or fisheries by IAS occur or are likely to occur, mitigation measures are undertaken. The Ministry of the Environment allocates an annual budget of approximately 350 million yen (3 million US dollars) for the mitigation projects. The projects include control operation of the small Asian mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*) on Amami-Oshima Island and in the northern part of the Okinawa Main Island where endemic and threatened species such as Amami rabbits (*Pentalagus furnessi*) or Okinawa rail (*Rallus okinawae*) live, and the control program of

green anole (*Anolis carolinensis*) on the Ogasawara Islands (the Bonin Islands) where endemic and threatened butterflies and dragonflies inhabit. In addition, local governments and civil society undertake mitigation activities in various regions in an effort to maintain and restore the original natural environment of their respective regions.

3. Communication, Education and Public Awareness

(1) Promotion of public understanding

In order to disseminate information of invasive alien species to the public, the Ministry of the Environment has set up a web-site (<http://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/as.html>) on the IAS Act, where the Ministry provides information on basic problems concerning IAS and their characteristics, explanations of the damage they cause, and on the proper handling of alien species. They also distribute leaflets to the shops that sell alien species for the purpose of communication and education on the right way of raising alien species.

(2) Alien Species Alert list

In order to strengthen the understanding and cooperation of individuals and businesses involved in the use of alien species to ensure proper handling, the “Alien Species Alert list” was published as a list of alien species that have no controls placed on their handling such as raising based on the IAS Act, but have potential to cause adverse effects on ecosystems. As of January 2008, 148 species are listed on the Alien Species Alert list.