

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION

NEWSLETTER

Vol.10-3 No.3

Sep 2002

Published by Society for Wildlife and Nature



Taiwan Participates in the 2002 World Summit

A delegation from the ROC government of more than 30 people lead by Executive Yuan minister Yeh Jun-rong and more than 20 representatives from local NGOs around Taiwan took part in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) from 26 August to September 3. Minister Yeh and the Administrator of the Executive Yuan's Environmental Protection Administration, Hau Lung-Bin, took part in many meetings and made progress in cooperation with relevant countries. The Council of Agriculture (COA) of the Executive Yuan offered copies of Taiwan's Bio-Diversity Action plan to all participating countries, expressing Taiwan's effort as a member of the global village.

Members of the Taiwan Action Non-Governmental Organisations, (TANGOs),

an alliance of Taiwan NGOs attending the World Summit, also took part in a whole range of activities outside the summit under the leadership of professor Wang Jun-hsiu.

The six main topics TANGOs focused on, included: chemical degradation of environment, women and the environment, No-Nukes, land and water resources, injury in the workplace, indigenous peoples, and bio-diversity. One of the many activities TANGOs hosted was a speech given by an environmental protection coalition from Tainan city and county to talk about the protection of the black-faced spoonbill in the Chigu Wetland, which received a positive response from international delegates.

The main results of TANGOs participation were as follows:

1. Butterfly Taiwan show: Five days of exhibition with a different theme every day. This obtained support from thousands of people & associations for Taiwan's admission into the international realm and

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

participation in agreements on many types of environmental accords.

2. Network banners: More than 20 delegations with separate banners took part in ten audio visual presentations and discussions, offering reports and papers from Taiwan; hold five one to one discussions with Tibet, Germany, Hong Kong, mainland China, Korea; became members of a global environmental alliance; joined the African coalition against dams; and participated in the long-established Chinese peoples' global sustainable development lecture.
3. Cultural activities: Performers from the Chu-bin Bunun tribe's eight-part singing with traditional dance, performance from

INSIDE

- **Taiwan Participates in the 2002 World Summit**
- **The Volume of Import of Medicine Plants to Taiwan Continues to Rise**
- **The Penghu Green Turtle Conservation Center**
- **The recreation Industry and Eco-Tourism Symposium**
- **Introduction to Taiwan Nature Reserve**

International Conservation Newsletter is free of charge. To be put on the mailing list, please send your complete address to SWAN International.

北市局版誌字第貳捌陸號

the Taichimen group and other NGOs during the summit were appreciated by the international delegates.

The TANGOs and other associations decided to mark 2003 as "Year One of Sustainable Taiwan" and every year to hold an assessment meeting "Joburg + (1,2,3,4 etc.)" to supervise governmental safeguard of the environment and society, to strengthen NGO networks and take part in partner association activities with a view to mutual support and getting more work done. Other activities would include giving voice to the Executive Yuan's National Council of Sustainable Development council partners, promoting the Legislative Yuan's "sustainable development scheme", and holding a youth parliament; as well as encouraging private insurance and capital banking companies to implement sustainable development business policies; thus assisting domestic 'green' policies and foreign diplomacy so that Taiwan can take its place as a member of the global community.

♣

The Volume of Import of Medicinal Plants to Taiwan Continues to Rise

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

In July of this year, TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei published a report, "Current Survey of Chinese Medicine in Taiwan and the Import of Medicinal Plants". This report noted that Taiwan is number five in the largest medicinal plant importers worldwide, the first four being Hong Kong, Japan, America and Germany. Among the plants which Taiwan imports, mainly *Aquilaria malaccensis*, and *Dendrobium spp.* but also other medicinal plants, are those gathered from the wild in Southeast Asia and mainland China and which face serious threats to their continued existence.

Although Western medicine is widely accepted in Taiwan, people feel that there are fewer side effects from Chinese medicinal preparations, added to this Chinese medicine will soon come under the national health insurance scheme, and research in Chinese medicine has made great strides recently. For all these reasons the popularity of Chinese medicine has continued to rise steadily and there has been a corresponding rising trend in Taiwan's domestic and foreign trade in Chinese medicinal ingredients.

According to the survey, Taiwan uses over 600 types of Chinese medicinal ingredients, of these 79.2% are plant ingredients. 70% of these plant ingredients are used in food products, 20%

are used medicinally, and 10% are used as supplements. Among Chinese medicine ingredients found in Taiwan, some are listed in the CITES appendix, of these *Aquilaria malaccensis*, *Bletilla spp.*, *Dendrobium spp.*, *Cibotium barometz*, *Nardostachys grandiflora*, *Gastrodia elata* are mostly cultivated. Others such as *Picrorhiza kurroa* need more research to determine their origins, and whether they should be CITES listed.

Most at risk among the medicinal plants listed by CITES is *Dendrobium spp.* Before 1970, it grew wild in Taiwan, but due to heavy gathering of wild stocks is now almost gone and is mainly imported from mainland China, also from wild sources. In both Taiwan and China, the clock ticking toward extinction can still be turned back for *Dendrobium spp.*, so the survey recommends that the countries involved should take control of gathering of wild stock as soon as possible. Importers of the plant should closely monitor the volume and origin of imports. The survey recommends that Taiwan considers large-scale cultivation and processing of *Dendrobium* for the market, to lessen demand for wild stocks of *Dendrobium*, a course which would have beneficial effects both commercially and in conservation terms. 90% of *Aquilaria malaccensis* is imported into Taiwan as

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

medicinal ingredients, and in the past six years most of this has come from Indonesia. It has many uses, apart from medicine, it can be used in the manufacture of incense, alcoholic beverages, even art objects. *Aquilaria malaccensis* is listed in the CITES appendix and the amount traded needs to be furthered monitored.

TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei also call for the Chinese Medicine community and relevant government departments to formulate a comprehensive policy on the origins of Chinese medicinal plant material and to make progress on tracking and recording imports, so that the volume of consumption and use can be understood in relation to preserving medicinal plants as a sustainable resource.



The Penghu Green Turtle Conservation Center

The administration of Penghu National Scenic Area established Taiwan's first green turtle conservation center on Wang-An island in September. Wang-An is situated in Penghu county on a north south axis, at 23.33° north, 119.30° east, in the subtropics and covering an area of around 7.2 km². Waters around the sandy beaches of the island are traversed by the green turtles on their way to lay eggs. Six particular

beaches on the west and south coasts where turtles laid eggs were designated as wildlife refuge since 1995. When the turtles became the focus of public attention, this created a conflict between tourism and conservation .

The green turtle conservation center is to the north of Tan - Men Harbour. The exhibition space of the center not only contains information on the green backed turtle, but also on the rich seabird life of the Penghu archipelago, species earmarked for conservation in the southern Penghu archipelago and the unique geological and mineral formations of southern Penghu islands. These together with other travel information on the southern archipelago offer visitors a balance of tourist information and conservation awareness.

The green turtle appears in tropic and subtropical oceans, and in scattered areas of the tropical pacific and the Indian ocean. Mature turtles return to the waters near their hatching site to mate. After mating, female turtles remain in those waters awaiting their eggs to mature and then ascend the beaches to lay. Egg laying takes place in continental and island coastal beaches in subtropical to tropical regions with a temperature of around 25 °C . The average annual temperature on Wang-An is 23.4°C and on the western and southern coasts of the island,

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

the beaches are wide and conducive to females laying in the grass banks on the edge of the beaches. However, every year, some nests are made on the wide beaches themselves and are washed away by the tides, so that now they are moved by conservation workers to protect more young turtles.

From May to October is the egg laying season and the female turtles come to the beaches at high tide taking around 15 minutes to lay their clutch. When they have finished laying they bury the eggs and crawl back to the sea. The whole process takes a couple of hours. Each female turtle can lay anything from 1 to 9 clutches of eggs in a season, each clutch about a fortnight apart, and each clutch containing 64-172 eggs. A female green turtle will on average come to lay eggs once every 2 to 4 years. The eggs hatch in 46-55 days and the little turtles leave the nest after dusk in groups and follow the direction of light to reach the sea.

Penghu's green turtles face threats from nearby spread nets and other fishing equipment which often trap turtles and injure or drown them. Another major cause of turtle death is the propellers of fishing boats. The breeding season is also when the turtles are most persecuted by humans. There have been reports of people catching the turtles and digging out their eggs;

even just the use of deserted beaches by tourists for activities at night disrupts egg laying for the turtles. Wang-An county has planned a large-scale exercise to raise conservation awareness among residents, to forbid them from catching turtles and there is somewhat less digging up of turtle eggs than previously. Nighttime control measures is also adopted to prevent tourists from entering the wildlife refuge during the breeding season. Establishment of the Wang-An conservation center will help local residents join in conservation and by attracting developments in the tourist industry should safeguard the marine resources in the long term.



The Recreation Industry and Eco-Tourism Symposium

Due to the changes in ROC tourism policy and as 2002 is internationally dubbed 'Eco-Tourism Year', SWAN International held a symposium on the Recreation Industry and Eco-Tourism at Taiwan Normal University on July 13. The main themes of the symposium were recreational fishing, forest recreation, the place of agricultural products in recreational activities, regulations for butterfly appreciation, development and regulation of whale watching,

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

Taiwan's Eco-Tourism, new directions in the ROC's tourism policy, and ideals and methods for conservation of scenic spots. The symposium aimed to give commercial managers from every sector --conservation NGO's, academia, agriculture, fishery, forestry-- information on the situation of, and current thinking on, Eco-Tourism and the sort of problems faced by this type of enterprise. It was also an opportunity to make suggestions and to enter a two-way dialogue with policy makers from the Tourism Bureau.

The Deputy Director of the Forestry Department, COA , Tang Hsiao-Yu delivered talks on the two main strands of promoting eco-tourism in Taiwan. The first was "Strengthening and promoting Eco-Tourism" and the second was "Regulations for business and recreation in areas of Eco-Tourism." 'Eco-Tourism areas' are currently those designated by the EPA including National Parks, National Scenic Areas, recreational farms etc. Many participants at the symposium emphasised that the government needed to place clearer guidelines on the designation and management of Eco-Tourism areas. As an example, the conservation NGOs commented on the necessity of the "No watching Pheasant-tailed Jacana for three years" method, controlling numbers of

people bird-watching to avoid unnecessary disturbance to the Pheasant-tailed Jacana. Representatives from government departments pointed out that in administering Eco-Tourism, there was a question of commercial management rights belonging to either conservation NGOs or tourism departments; and these needed to be made clear at the time of policy formulation.

Since the start of whale watching in 1997, up to 2001 around 500,000 people have been to watch whales. The acceleration in numbers was startling, and has been very beneficial to the tourism market and to local industries, but has also had a profound influence on marine ecosystem. Professor Chou Lien-Siang of Taiwan University's Zoology department called for appropriate regulation of whale watching activities to protect the environment of Taiwan's coastal waters and thus protect the natural resource of whales and dolphins. Although there are the COA's "Guidelines for Whale Watching Businesses", these are without a legal basis and as such are without effect, instead each county and city government relies on a 'self-governing contract' to regulate the situation.

With regard to recreational farms, representatives from the agricultural, forestry and fishery sectors remarked on the challenges they face since changes in Taiwan society

stemming from changes in Taiwan industry and the government policy of recreation culture, plus Taiwan's entry to the WTO. They remarked on the necessity over the last decade for forestry, agriculture and fishing industries to merge with the recreation industry. Members of the Fisheries Associations proposed to establish the Tactical Alliance of Fishery Associations, and bring all areas with tourist fishing resources under its jurisdiction for active promotion and development of recreational fishing in each area. These will be linked with land-based agricultural and fishing recreation to offer a series of land and sea-based recreation resources. With regard to forestry, the Forestry Bureau is currently undertaking a detailed survey of forest environment with a view to establishing a network of nationwide forest trails. These would answer many needs by offering hiking, a physical challenge, experience and appreciation of nature, ecological study, research opportunities and so on.

Offering an overall view, SWAN International's deputy director Ou Rui-Yao noted that the recreation industry was turning more to Eco-Tourism and hoped that industry management practices would then take this to a higher level by taking their lead from the principles of sustainable resource management.



Taiwan Pleione Nature Reserve

Introduction to Taiwan's Nature Reserves

The Taiwan Pleione (*Pleione bulbocodioides* (Franch.) Rolfe) is an internationally-famous wild orchid, found in damp, misty mountain areas of cedar forest or deciduous forest. It grows on shale outcrops in or outside forest areas and is often accompanied by lichen. Where the forest railway runs through the Minyueh valley in Alishan at an altitude of 2,300 m, there is a large area of this wild orchid on both sides of the bank. Since the orchid is difficult to raise from cuttings, but loved by gardeners, and has a large export market, there was serious exploitation of the area, to the point where its very existence was in danger. Thus, the COA designated the area as the Taiwan Pleione Nature Reserve to conserve the pool of wild orchid genes in 1992, and at the same time, designated the Minyueh Shihou area as a tourist attraction, for appreciation only.

The Taiwan Pleione Nature Reserve is situated in Alishan, in south central Taiwan's Chiayi county. It is at an altitude of 1,800 to 2,500 m, covering an area of 51.89 hectares. The climate in this area is rainy, warm and damp, especially on summer afternoons when it is often

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

covered in cloud mist. The average annual temperature is 11.5 to 15.9 °C. The Taiwan Pleione is a long-lived, multi-stalked annual orchid. The plant is composed of a bulb and leaves and the flower is vivid. New plants have both male and female flowers and can produce shoots, the bulbs are also capable of producing new plant shoots in asexual reproduction.

The Taiwan Pleione is a primitive alpine plant species, when other plant species became numerous within its growth area, it declines and almost disappears. To grow and develop, the Taiwan Pleione needs plentiful sunlight. If the reproduction area of male plants is not suitably clear and open, they will be supplanted by other plant species. The nature reserve is currently being monitored with a sample area being examined monthly and reproductive growth recorded, by conservation personnel. This long term monitoring should guarantee the continued existence of the Taiwan Pleione.



International Conservation Newsletter

Publisher: Ping-shi Yang

Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Ling-ling Lee

Editors: Chen Chien-Chih

Clear Lear

Publisher & Editorial Office:

Society for Wildlife and Nature
(SWAN)

Add.: 1F, No. 35, Lane 175, HoPing E. Road,
Taipei 116, Taiwan, ROC

Tel: +(886-2) 2709-8160

Fax: +(886-2) 2709-8160

Email: swanint@eagle.seed.net.tw

Website: <http://swan.zo.ntu.edu.tw>

Printed by: Cheng-fong Art Printing Co., Ltd.

Add.: No. 28, Alley 1, Lane 458, Yungho Rd.,
Chungho City, Taipei Hsien, Taiwan,
ROC.