

Biological Diversity Policy and Consideration of Marine Protected Areas on Small Island Coasts -Tsushima Island and the Goto Islands

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The 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD/COP10) in 2010 was held in Japan. The light shed by these international discussions provided an opportunity for some new thinking and developments in the fields of fisheries environment and coastal environmental policy. Biodiversity protection, sustainable use and natural resource management in the vicinity of outlying islands in particular are being seriously considered, and ways of promoting improvements on outlying islands are being reconsidered on the local policy level as well. Consequently, policy readjustment that links the local and international communities in the field of protecting fishery environments will be crucial.

Marine protected areas were a much-discussed issue at COP10, and in response field surveys and interview surveys regarding drift trash were conducted along the coasts of Nagasaki prefecture's Goto Islands with reference to the national park area in Tsushima City being promoted by local governments. On Tsushima Island, survey members participated in the process of drawing up local policy.

In September 2010, a "Marine Protected Area Promotion Committee" was launched, and with a fisherman acting as chair, a concentrated effort has begun to create policy that will promote both sustainable fisheries and nature conservation. In the Goto Islands (Fukue Is.) regular surveys of drift trash on ocean beaches are continuing on the local level, and mechanisms for citizen participation in national park management are being created. The physical conditions of topography and currents support a unique habitat that gives rise to rich fishing grounds. The other side of the coin is that these same conditions render the area vulnerable to damage from drift trash. The former process of negotiations between countries on the trans-boundary issue of marine trash has slowed down progress, but a process under the international convention may show new promise. Japan's Ministry of the Environment has a national strategy for marine biodiversity, but policy harmonization between this ministry and the national administration for fisheries will be needed to deal with fishery environments. Especially needed for outlying islands is a locally based comprehensive marine & coastal environment policy that is adapted to their natural and social conditions.

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