

1

Article :**EDITORIAL | Japan Islands Eyed as World Heritage Site Offer Insights into Biodiversity**

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

An advisory panel of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recommended that Amami Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, the northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island be added to the list of natural World Heritage sites. Official approval is expected in July.

The four sites stretch over Kagoshima and Okinawa prefectures.

Together they would become the fifth natural World Heritage site to be registered in Japan, and the first in 10 years since Ogasawara Islands (part of Tokyo) were added to the list.

With the influence of the Kuroshio Current (also known as the Japan Current and Black Current) and given their latitude, these islands have a warm and humid subtropical climate, with lush evergreen forests that are home to their own native plants and animals. The Amami rabbit, the Iriomote cat, the Lidth's jay, and the Okinawa rail are among them. Nurtured by the natural environment of the South Seas, the region that includes the four islands is an "evolutionary jewel box."

We hope that the UNESCO natural World Heritage site registration of the region, which is part of the Ryukyu arc, will raise awareness for the need to conserve the natural environment and the delicate ecosystems of plants and animals.

Planet Earth has been under enormous stress with the rapid expansion of human activities, especially since the 20th century. This is manifested in concerns for the negative impact on the climate from increased concentrations of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere, and the issue of marine plastic waste that is beginning to exceed the volume of fish.

Despite its even greater importance than these two major environmental issues, the problem of "biodiversity" is something that people do not easily recognize. Even according to a survey conducted by the Ministry of the Environment, public understanding of the significance of biodiversity remains stagnant.

Reducing carbon dioxide and plastic debris are also important measures to protect biodiversity.

Source: EDITORIAL | Japan Islands Eyed as World Heritage Site Offer Insights into Biodiversity
<https://japan-forward.com/editorial-japan-islands-eyed-as-world-heritage-site-offer-insights-into-biodiversity/>

1

Article :**EDITORIAL | Japan Islands Eyed as World Heritage Site Offer Insights into Biodiversity**

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

In fact, biodiversity is essential to the survival of human beings.

Phytoplankton and terrestrial plants grow by receiving solar energy that shines on the Earth. As fish, shellfish, and herbivores feed on them, carnivores, in turn, prey on them.

The dynamic stability of the biological world is supported by the existence of a diversity of species. Throughout this natural heritage region in particular, there are many rare species that attract people's attention. They provide us a great opportunity to ponder the meaning of biodiversity.

When the COVID-19 pandemic comes to an end, there will probably be an increase in the number of tourists visiting these southern islands that are to be registered as natural heritage sites. Introducing ecotourism will help give people a chance to experience the magnificence of these wild and natural sites without placing stress on them, while also helping boost the local economy.

Its effect will lead to passing on the richness of nature to the next generation.

Source: EDITORIAL | Japan Islands Eyed as World Heritage Site Offer Insights into Biodiversity
<https://japan-forward.com/editorial-japan-islands-eyed-as-world-heritage-site-offer-insights-into-biodiversity/>

2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. approval (正式な)認可・免許、承認、賛同

You must request and receive approval from them before you apply for a new driver license.

2. native (動植物がある地域に)固有の、土着の、出身の、生来の

Indigenous means any group of people native to a specific region.

3. raise awareness of ～～への認識・関心・問題意識を高める

Please join us in raising awareness of the challenges of living with this rare disease.

4. under stress ストレスを受けて、ストレスにさらされて、必要に迫られて

I've been under a lot of stress at work recently.

5. attract attention 注目を浴びる、関心を集める、注意を引く

We need to create a unique promotional video that attracts a lot of attention to our business.

3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. How many natural World Heritage will Japan have after the four sites are officially approved?

2. What are the factors that influence the subtropical climate on these islands?

3. According to the article, what other issue should be recognized besides carbon dioxide and marine plastic waste?

4. How do you think can ecotourism affect the environment?

4

日本語関連記事：

【主張】奄美など世界遺産 生物多様性を知る好機だ

鹿児島、沖縄の両県にわたる「奄美大島、徳之島、沖縄島北部および西表島」の4島の世界自然遺産への登録が、国連教育科学文化機関（ユネスコ）の諮問機関によって勧告された。正式決定は7月の見通しだ。

日本では、「小笠原諸島」（東京）から10年ぶりの自然遺産登録で、5件目となる。

黒潮と緯度の影響で温暖・多湿な亜熱帯性気候の下にある、これらの島々には常緑樹林が繁茂し、固有の動植物が分布する。アマミノクロウサギやイリオモテヤマネコ、ルリカケス、ヤンバルクイナなどがその顔ぶれだ。4島を含む一帯は南海の自然風土が育んだ「進化の宝石箱」である。

琉球弧の一部を成すこの地域のユネスコの自然遺産登録を機に、自然環境と動植物が織りなす精緻な生態系の保全につながる一層の意識の高まりを期待したい。

20世紀以降に顕著となった人間活動の急速な拡大に伴い、地球には、多くのストレスがかかっている。その表れが、大気中の二酸化炭素濃度の上昇がもたらす気候への悪影響の危惧であり、魚類の量より多くなろうとしている海洋プラスチックの問題である。

この2大環境問題以上の重要性があるにもかかわらず、人々に認識されにくいのが「生物多様性」の問題だ。環境省の調査でも生物多様性の意義に関する理解は低迷傾向が続く。

二酸化炭素とプラスチックごみの削減も、ともに生物多様性を損なわないための手段である。人類が生存できるのも生物多様性があってのことだ。

地球に注ぐ太陽エネルギーを植物プランクトンや陸上植物が受け止めて生育し、それを魚介類や草食動物が摂食し、さらには肉食動物が捕食する。

生物界の動的安定性は、多種多様の生物種が存在することで支えられている。今回の自然遺産エリアには人々の関心を引く希少種も多い。生物多様性が持つ意味をじっくり考える好機であろう。

コロナ禍が終息すれば、自然遺産に登録された南の島々への観光客も増えるだろう。自然と野生に負荷をかけることなく、素晴らしさを体感するエコツーリズムの導入で、地域の経済振興にも役立ててもらいたい。

その効果は、次世代への豊かな自然の継承につながる。

出典：【主張】奄美など世界遺産 生物多様性を知る好機だ

<https://japan-forward.com/japanese/%e3%80%90%e4%b8%bb%e5%bc%b5%e3%80%91%e5%a5%84%e7%be%8e%e3%81%aa%e3%81%a9%e4%b8%96%e7%95%8c%e9%81%ba%e7%94%a3%e3%80%80%e7%94%9f%e7%89%a9%e5%a4%9a%e6%a7%98%e6%80%a7%e7%9f%a5%e3%82%8b%e5%a5%bd%e6%a9%9f/>