

**Minutes of the 11th Nature Conservation Review Committee Meeting Focusing on Birds of Prey and Forests Concerning New Test Course Development by Honda Motor Co., Ltd.**

1 Date and Time

17:00 – 19:00                      February 24, 2009 Tuesday

2 Venue

New Mikura      Conference Room 306

3 Attendees

*5 committee members:*

Chair, Tatsuhiro Ohkubo	—	Professor of Faculty of Agriculture, Utsunomiya University
Member, Koichi Endo	—	Assistant District Leader of Tochigi Branch of the Wild Bird Society of Japan
Member, Kazumi Suemoto	—	Researcher, Natural History Research
Member, Mitsutake Hayashi	—	Chief Researcher, Tochigi Prefectural Museum
Member, Takashi Matsuda	—	Vice President, Nature Conservation Group of Ujiie

13 organizing member

4 other attendees

4 Agenda

1. Confirmation of the previous meeting minutes and follow-up on members' input
2. How to proceed with the construction of the new test course (reported, discussed)
3. New R&D Center plan
  - 3-1 Second mid-construction monitoring and survey plan (draft) (confirmed)
  - 3-2 Biotope Sign Plan (confirmed)
4. New test course plan
  - 4-1 First mid-construction monitoring and survey plan (draft) (discussed)
  - 4-2 The biotope plan and the results of the local survey (reported)
5. Wide area nature conservation
  - 5-1 Progress of implementing nature conservation activities (reported)
  - 5-2 Wide area birds of prey monitoring survey plan (draft)
6. Other

### Agenda

#### 1. Confirmation of the previous meeting minutes and follow-up on members' input (reported)

The organizer reported on the minutes of the 10th meeting, which were confirmed.

#### 2. How to proceed with the construction of the new test course (reported, discussed)

The organizer explained how to proceed with the construction of the new test course. Members exchanged views which are summarized as follows:

- Fifteen spots are set for the survey of vegetation around the test course. Are same spots chosen each year? It is recommended that the same spots be used if possible.
  - The organizer thinks that they are fixed, in general.
- Part of the undeveloped area has been set aside a feeding station for birds of prey. In such a place, grass needs to be cut and maintained low on a regular basis. What do you think of weeding?
  - The organizer responded by saying that they'd like to control the height of some grass after this summer and that they will make a plan that maintains consistency with the construction plan.
- The remaining woods can be used as a feeding station for goshawks as long as the height of the surrounding grass is maintained relatively low. While for buzzard-eagles, feeding station does not need to be the area surrounding the woods. A relatively wide area where grass is cut can be used as their feeding station. These two items should be reviewed as one matter. What is hoped for is to use the grass areas as feeding stations.
  - The organizer thinks that they would like to review based on these ideas.
- What type of environment is conserved for the "Farm Preservation Area"?
  - The organizer responded by saying that mainly bottom grass is cut and that tractors are used for soil cultivation. The area may be used for farming in the future.
- It is hoped that goshawks in a wide area will be observed until they become fledglings because some may leave the nest in July.
  - The organizer responded by saying that goshawks are observed until they become fledglings.

- Wide area surveys of buzzard-eagles can be conducted at the same time as the survey of goshawks.
- Therefore it is suggested that the surveys start in April.
  - The organizer responded by saying that the schedule will be readjusted.

### 3. New R&D Center plan

The organizer explained the nature conservation measures and their progress in the New R&D Center plan, as well as mid-construction monitoring and the biotope sign plan. Members exchanged views which are summarized as follows:

#### 3-1 Second mid-construction monitoring and survey plan (draft) (confirmed)

- In terms of insects, it is hoped that the reason for distinguishing the notable species to be preserved will be stated.
- It is suggested that this matter be expressed so that the applied standards will be understood.
  - The organizer responded by saying that, among notable species which were identified during the local survey, those which could be greatly affected by possible changes in the planned area were set aside as species to be preserved.
- The line census mentions observation of owls at fixed locations during the night. Where are these observation points set and when will such a survey be conducted? Also, if their “hoots” need to be confirmed, the observation should be conducted sooner because the birds respond easily.
  - The organizer responded by saying that owls are observed at fixed points during the night separately from line census. Also, a separate survey will be conducted if there are signs of breeding.

#### 3-2 Biotope Sign Plan (confirmed)

- Regarding insects, instead of focusing on rare species, the species which are certain to be inhabiting the area should be dealt with. It would also be wise to replace their description plates in the future. It would also be good to display the adult stages of each type of insect.
- The type of description changes depending on whether the descriptions are for teaching local school kids or for people interested in nature conservation. The policy should be made clear and conveyed to those who come to see the biotope.

→ The organizer responded by saying that this input may be used for adjustment.

#### 4. New test course plan

The organizer explained and reported on the first mid-construction monitoring survey plan, the biotope plan, and what was found in the area. Members exchanged views which are summarized as follows:

##### 4-1 First mid-construction monitoring and survey plan (draft, discussed)

- Is there any possibility that rare species may be present in the marsh at center of the project area? If there is such a possibility for this environment, it is hoped that they will be caught and relocated.

→ The organizer responded by saying that the marsh has been undergoing tree trimming and cutting but not land development. This matter will be checked for during the survey and, if any such species are found, they will be caught and relocated.

- Conservation measures should be taken according to the results of the goshawk survey and analysis.

→ The organizer responded by saying that full use will be made of the analysis.

- The best survey method for now is to capture an adult male bird and then track it. If it is absolutely impossible to capture any, there is a need to be flexible and switch to fixed point observation or other methods.

→ The organizer responded by saying that observations will be made and then dealt with in a flexible manner.

##### 4-2 The biotope plan and the results of the local survey (reported)

- It is suggested that the biotope, like the R&D center, be made accessible to the general public for observation. Since the roads around the facility are well developed, it is really a waste if the facility is made off-limits.

→ The organizer responded by saying that, after an application is filed, adjustment will be made to make the facility accessible to the general public.

## 5. Wide area nature conservation

The organizer reported on and explained the progress for the implementation of wide area nature conservation measures and the plan for monitoring and surveying birds of prey over the wide area.

Members exchanged views which are summarized as follows:

### 5-1 Progress of implementing nature conservation activities (reported)

- Conservation objectives, processes, zoning, monitoring plans, and evaluation should be organized by each area and work should proceed accordingly.
- For the monitoring survey, it is hoped that a framework of cooperation with Sakura City will be developed soon to move ahead on specific tasks.
- What about the progress in areas other than Kamikodo? It is not good to implement wide area nature conservation at a slow pace. It is hoped that some deadline will be set. Also some opportunity should be provided for hearing from the organizer before moving forward.
  - The organizer responded by saying that Harayama and the Kanokohata are being surveyed and that activities will proceed by cooperating with Sakura City as soon as possible.

### 5-2 Wide area birds of prey monitoring survey plan (draft, discussed)

- Are we right to understand that a survey of buzzard-eagles will be held in April?
- As the beginning day of the breeding stage is different for each pair up to half a month, it is hoped that their breeding can be surveyed with keen attention to detail.
  - The organizer responded by saying that the survey of buzzard-eagles will begin in April and that the survey will be conducted with keen attention to detail.

## 6. Other

Schedule for the next review meeting

- The date for the next meeting was provisionally decided. (later changed to Aug. 25).
- On-site observation of the new test course biotope (it was agreed to conduct such observation on the morning of Mar. 5).
- Schedules have been adjusted for surveys including those conducted by “Green Trust Utsunomiya” in mid April (the date was later set for May 14).