



Hiroshima Office for Asia and the Pacific (HOAP)

Training Series on Biodiversity



Executive Summary and Next Steps

September 2006

Acknowledgements

UNITAR would like to express its deepest gratitude to:

The Government of Japan, for its support to the Series since 1998;

The City of Kushiro and Kushiro International Wetland Centre (KIWC), co-organisers of the Series;

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, its main partners;

and

Hokkaido University, the Akan Town Office and the people of Kushiro who provided resource persons, inspiring study tours and cultural activities;

Our special thanks to the resource persons and participants who contributed their time and expertise so graciously to the workshop, and finally to the many friends of UNITAR in Japan and around the world whose cooperation was indispensable for the successful facilitation of this workshop.



Introduction

The UNITAR Series on Biodiversity began in 1998 with financial support from the Government of Japan and cooperation from the City of Kushiro and Kushiro International Wetland Centre (KIWC). The Series constitutes one of the six main programme pillars of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office for Asia and the Pacific (HOAP) and aims to contribute towards national policy planning related to biodiversity conservation and management in the region. It now counts over 180 alumni and is thus becoming one of the most long-standing projects of UNITAR/HOAP.

Since its 2004 session, UNITAR and its partners have kept the main emphasis on **water as an important component of ecosystem-based management of biodiversity**. This has focused specifically on wetlands, cradle for rich and diverse biological resources, and which are considered to provide prominent models for the ecosystem approach. Due to its possession of two wetlands – the Kushiro Wetland, Japan’s first Ramsar site, and Lake Akan, its most recent, and due to its longstanding and competent partnership in the region, Kushiro has been deemed the most suitable location for UNITAR’s training.

The 2006 training workshop was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- introduce the workshop participants to up-to-date information and diverse experiences, highlighting priority topics in the field;
- develop the professional knowledge and personal training skills of participants;
- equip participants with techniques to put the information/knowledge acquired into practice; and
- create a forum for capacity-building and the exchange of experiences.

2006 Training Workshop

The 2006 Training Workshop once again benefited from the strong network created since 1998 and from the return of partners and resource persons involved in previous workshops. Since the beginning of the year, resource persons were involved in discussions relating to the mechanics and substantive content of the workshop by means of an internet forum. Former participants (UNITAR alumni) also assisted in the process of selection of suitable candidates, leading to the largest number to date of high-level applications being received.

The workshop was attended by some 44 participants, resource persons and staff, representing 27 countries from Asia, Europe and North America.

The workshop employed four main training methodologies:

- 1) Interactive presentations and lectures;
- 2) Study tours and debriefings;
- 3) Practical exercise;
- 4) Sessions on specific training methodologies.

- **Shuji IKUSHIMA**, Secretary General of KIWC officially opened the session and welcomed the participants and resource persons to Kushiro.
- **Nassrine AZIMI**, Director of UNITAR Hiroshima Office in her opening remarks referred to the participants' case studies and noted that conservation and development were not opposite concepts. Similarly, traditional knowledge of respect for nature and new methodologies for conservation should both be enhanced. She challenged participants to take the knowledge gained during this workshop to their respective countries for field application and for training others.



Shunji Ikushima, KIWC

1) **Interactive presentations and lectures** followed by Q and A sessions, included the following:

- **Hisashi SHINSHO**, Senior Technical Manager of KIWC provided an introductory briefing to the participants upon their arrival. In this short briefing, Mr. Shinsho introduced special geographical and ecological features of Hokkaido Island (in North Japan) and of Kushiro City; this included a presentation of the fauna and flora that are unique to the region. Mr. Shinsho then presented the nature of Kushiro Wetland, the largest in Japan, and the initial research carried out by local scientists, which led to the place's designation as a National Park and later to its inscription as a Ramsar site.



Nassrine Azimi, UNITAR HOAP

- **Introductory Remarks: Ecosystem, Water and Biodiversity by Jobaid KABIR** (Manager, Corporate Environmental Compliance, Lower Colorado River Authority). Dr. Kabir alerted the participants to the various challenges facing different rivers and water systems in the Asia-Pacific region; this included discussion of drying rivers, disappearing lakes and shrinking seas. He emphasized on the importance of actions needed now for protecting water resources in the Asia-Pacific region to meet the need of ever increasing population. He then referred to the great unknown, climate change and its impact on global water resources. Participants were invited to reflect on the interrelationship between human activities, ecosystems and biodiversity, taking into account the damage that has already been done and the speed of developments in science and climate change.



Hisashi Shinsho, KIWC

- **The Ecosystem approach and its principles by David COATES** (Environmental Affairs Officer, Secretariat Convention on Biological Diversity). Dr. Coates first explained about the goods and services that are provided by biodiversity and the main challenges facing their protection, i.e., human impact. He explained the framework of actions Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) provides to conserve and use these resources in a sustainable manner and share the benefits arising from their utilization. He emphasised that the key to achieving these objectives was a focus on ecosystem services and wise use of water and wetlands.



Jobaid Kabir, Lower Colorado River Authority

- **Wetlands and its ecosystem functions, by LEI Guangchun** (Senior Advisor for Asia/Pacific, Ramsar Convention Secretariat). Dr. Lei first explained the concept of 'ecosystem', which includes living communities and the non-living environment interacting with each other and providing ecosystem services to people. He presented ecosystem functions and services as well as their assessment framework, as provided by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA); focusing on these components will further enhance the wise use of wetlands. The participants asked questions regarding the restoration of wetlands.



David Coates, CBD Secretariat

- **Water management as a tool for the ecosystem approach by Jobaid KABIR.** Dr. Kabir presented step by step procedure for developing a successful water management plan while protecting environment. He emphasised that a water management plans should be flexible and adjusted to current situations and needs. Inherently subject to disputes, water management requires taking into consideration the views of all stakeholders. The ecosystem should be part of a water management plan at the same time as water management should be woven into a holistic ecosystem management. Dr. Kabir took the Lower Colorado basin as a model for water management in order to provide practical suggestions for other water managers.



Lei Guangchun, Ramsar Convention Secretariat

- **Future challenges to ecosystems due to global warming by Jobaid KABIR.** Dr. Kabir addressed the alarming questions which related to climate change and global warming. He discussed the actual mechanism of the warming of the planet and its many consequences such as the increased occurrence of droughts, heat waves and rises in sea level. He emphasised that the secondary consequences of global warming - meteorological, geographical, health and finally ecological - are enormous and therefore water management or any other major policies should take climate change into consideration.



David Bourn, FAO Philippines

- **The Kushiro watershed management model by Futoshi NAKAMURA** (Professor, Hokkaido University). Prof. Nakamura presented to the participants an ongoing project of water basin restoration. He explained the series of restoration steps proceeding from the identification of the problem to the setting up of targets, the formulation of a management plan and the subsequent monitoring process. He provided practical information on matters relating to river canalization and catchments control, as well as increased global restoration involving local communities. He concluded his presentation by asserting that ecosystem management requires the creation of harmony between social, ecological and economical health factors.



Futoshi Nakamura, Hokkaido University

2) **Study tours** to the two Ramsar Sites, Kushiro Wetland and Lake Akan, were organized.

After a comprehensive introduction to the study tour, **Mr. Hisashi SHINSHO and the KIWC staff**, guided the participants to the magnificent Kushiro Wetland, the first Ramsar site of Japan. The participants enjoyed a board walk and observed a variety of rare and unique wildlife species. Mr. Shinsho and his colleagues gave detailed explanations about habitat conditions, the fauna and flora and the activities conducted by local people directed towards monitoring and protecting them. During the field trip, participants learnt various ecosystem services offered by the Kushiro wetland to the local people.



Board Walk on Kushiro Wetland

Reaching the Akan Lake, (the second Ramsar site in Kushiro and Japan’s latest inscription on the list), a debriefing was held where the participants discussed what had been observed and learned during the field trip at the Kushiro Wetland; (notes from the debriefing are included further below in this summary).

The second day of the study tour began with a visit to the Akan Lake Eco Museum Centre where the participants received a lecture about *marimo*, an algal species found in the lake. **Dr. LEI Guangchun** then introduced the participants to the Ramsar nomination procedure and its nine specific criteria. The participants were given the following questions to consider during the study tour: what were the ecosystem functions and services provided at Akan Lake?



Monitoring of trees

After following the Bokke natural trail, the group boarded a boat which navigated across the lake to the *marimo* habitat at the Churui Island.

On the way back to Kushiro, the group visited the Tancho Crane Natural Park to learn how Japanese crane habitat is created to help increase its population in the region.



Akan Lake

The study tours were followed by **debriefings**, lead by **Dr. David COATES** after the 1st day **and Dr. LEI Guangchun** after the 2nd day. The participants were presented with a set of questions prior to the study visits, and held group discussions afterwards. Written below are some of the lessons learned by the participants from the study tours. These debriefings form part of UNITAR Hiroshima’s specific training methodology the “After-Action-Review (AAR)”, which is an attempt to transform what has been seen, heard and experienced into tangible learning.

1st day – Kushiro Wetland view point and board walk

- Good management plan;
- Business plan for eco-tourism needed;
- Invasive species plan needed;
- Need for good (English) display;
- Community participation through volunteers realized;
- Inter-sectoral collaboration necessary;
- Agro-tourism to be developed;
- Well managed wetland - eco-tourism and board walk are arranged without any problem with regard to safety;
- Community benefit not highlighted (financial benefit could be generated through collecting entrance fees?);
- Enriched floral species and fauna species;
- Integration of other (animal) species into protected zone area?
- Good management style relations between central government, local government and community;
- Experience with international community, leveraging Ramsar;
- No members of local community met during the study tour;
- Eco-tourism - could do a better job;
- Public awareness plan to be developed;
- The more you conserve, the more you are motivated to conserve further;
- Eco-friendly use of boardwalk material;
- Good balance of model facilities;
- Hospitality of Japanese people;
- 98% of visitors are Japanese;
- Remote from Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka;
- It is a place of international importance;
- Programmes exist to study footprints of scarce species of mammal;
- Government should get agreement with stakeholders (for the designation as a national park); and
- Before designation as a Ramsar site, awareness building is required.

2nd day – Akan Lake and Tancho Crane Natural Park – especially focusing on ecosystem functions and services

- Preservation of indigenous habitats of wildlife species;
- Sense of ownership;
- Promotion of tourism;
- Protection of watershed;
- Hydropower and drinking water supply;
- Cultural value;
- Supply of hot water and potential thermal power service (warming up houses);
- Ramsar designation as advertisement to attract more people – potential risk of excessive tourism;
- Water and habitat for biodiversity;
- Akan Lake is a source of livelihood – unique site;
- Establishment of crane centre was good, conservation was unique – but cranes are exposed to the airport – pollution?
- Many boats and navigation for eco-tourists could destroy ecosystem;
- Natural sedimentation due to volcano;
- Good ecotourism service;
- Recreation and harbour for boats;
- Opportunity for employment and income generation for local people and community (hotel etc.);
- Breeding centre for cranes;
- Tancho Centre – tourists could disturb the birds;
- Information centre for *marimo* could also have some documentation on brown bears;
- Required information on counting of brown bears;
- In situ (*marimo*) and ex situ (crane) conservation;
- Surrounding wildlife dependent on water;
- Educational function - research and exchange of material on *marimo* at international level and presentation of Ainu traditional culture;
- Brown bears and other animals could be signature species;
- Local people seem to understand the ecosystem service (protection of crickets);
- Lack of planning for Akan Town;
- Food production associated with the lake (trout farm), deer harvesting;
- Recreational fishing; and
- Medicinal properties.

3) The practical exercise represented a vital element of the workshop, which employed case-study analysis that was carried out by working teams. Four (4) teams were formed, each assisted by a resource person. Teams were given approximately one day to formulate policy/project document for a given real (existing) site or case and to then present it in plenary. A variety of learning and training methodologies including “Peer Review” were adapted by UNITAR and included in the exercise.

Mekong River Basin

Resource Person (RP) David Coates
Hoang Dinh (Vietnam)
Liu Yan (China)
Kheng Long (Cambodia)
Do Thi Thanh Binh (Vietnam)
Pataraporn Somanus (Thailand)
Saleumsack Xayyamoh (Laos)



Himalayan Conservation Area

RP Lei Guangchun
Wan Ming James Terence Gan (Singapore)
Cyril Pallegedara (Sri Lanka)
Goutam Kumar Sanyal (Bangladesh)
Fleming Umiich Sengebau (Palau)
Iswar Singh Thapa (Nepal)
V.P. Unyal (India)
Tandin Wangdi (Bhutan)



Migration Waterbirds/ Cranes Project

RP David Bourn
Vera Inyutina (Kazakhstan)
Dinara Kemelova (Kyrgyzstan)
Sivakumar Kuppusamy (India)
Ghulam Mohd Malikyar (Afghanistan)
Ayatan Poladova (Azerbaijan)
Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan (Iran)



Amur River Basin

RP Jobaid Kabir
Indra Darmawan (Indonesia)
Jim Onga (Papua New Guinea)
Farzana Altaf Shah (Pakistan)
Chenghua Sim (Malaysia)
Purevdorj Surenkhorloo (Mongolia)
Mingxiang Zhang (China)



(4) UNITAR “Training of Trainers” (ToT) Initiative and Training Methodologies

During the workshop, special sessions were organized to share UNITAR’s experiences in improving training methodologies and Training of Trainers (ToT). **Dr. Jobaid KABIR** delivered two lectures on training methodologies and ToT.

The first lecture related to the principles and methodologies of adult learning as compared to education for children. He discussed topics relating to the functioning of the adult mind and the creation of learning incentives and also demonstrated specific tools and methods that have been designed to improve learning.

The second session was devoted to training plan development. Various issues were discussed relating to specific developmental steps: from the identification of needs to the setting of objectives, wrap up and the evaluation process.

As a training institute of the United Nations, UNITAR gives primary importance to the development of training methodologies which will facilitate the acquisition of ready-to-use knowledge in a limited time (less than one week) among its participants, who are commonly mid to high level government officials. Various methodologies are thus applied, including After-Action-Review (AAR) and Peer Review, and are refined at each of its training sessions.



Taiko (Japanese drums) performance by Kushiro citizens



Ikebana (flower arrangement) demonstration



Workshop evaluation and next steps

The workshop was concluded by the lead resource person, **Dr. Jobaid KABIR**, and next steps were explained by **Ms. Hiroko NAKAYAMA** (UNITAR). **Mr. Takahiro YAMAMOTO** of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the main donor for the Series addressed to the participants and explained Japan's commitment in the Series. **Mr. Koichi ITO** of KIWC made closing remarks, congratulated the participants for a fruitful workshop and thanked them for their hard work.

Following the conclusion of the workshop, each participant was requested to fill in an evaluation form. A summary of the evaluations submitted by the participants is attached to the present document. The City of Kushiro with its two world-famous wetlands was considered a most appropriate site for biodiversity training. The excellent cultural demonstrations organized by the people of Kushiro were deeply appreciated and recognized as an important aspect of international cultural exchange. The knowledge and expertise of the people of Kushiro with regard to nature conservation have provided valuable practical lessons and tips for the participants.

The majority of participants found the workshop useful in light of their professional responsibilities. The focus of the workshop, namely water resource management, was deemed appropriate. Resource persons were commended for not only being highly knowledgeable in their own particular fields but also for being proficient mentors. The study tours were considered the most useful of the workshop's activities, followed by the practical exercise and the lectures.

There are at least three significant outputs of the 2006 training workshop:

- Training modules containing all of the presentations and documents to be made available on the UNITAR Hiroshima website and in a CD distributed to all the participants;
- Case studies prepared by the four working teams;
- Future trainers identified and partnership requirements shared through guidelines prepared by UNITAR.

UNITAR and its Faculty will provide assistance to those participants planning to conduct national or sub-regional level training activities.

In order to stabilize the Series, UNITAR, CBD and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat aim at concluding an agreement for this regional training series.

It has been agreed that the relevance of the workshop is enhanced by its being held during the summer. The 2007 regional workshop for Asia and the Pacific is thus tentatively scheduled for September 2007 in Kushiro, Japan.





Summary of Evaluations from Participants

The following is a brief summary of the responses submitted by participants to our evaluation questionnaire. An attempt has been made to synthesize the responses into key points in order to have a clear understanding of the analysis, impressions and suggestions of the participants for future improvements.

Length of workshop, structure and resource persons

- The structure of the workshop was considered to be good to excellent (84%);
- 15 (60%) participant out of 25 explicitly noted that resource persons were very knowledgeable, helpful and considered to have high expertise in their fields;
- Almost half of the participants (44%) considered the duration of the training (5 days) too short. They suggested longer duration and not so intensive (40%).

Workshop Content

- Majority of participants (72%) reported that the workshop was valuable in deepening their understanding of various aspects of biodiversity.
- Some participants (64%) explicitly noted that they found the workshop useful in light of their professional responsibilities;
- Of all the topics, majority of participants (88%, 22 participants) enjoyed and noted that the study tours were useful and valuable; for 40% (10 participants) group discussions provided the opportunity to exchange views and share experiences with other participants; 28% (7 participants) mentioned that case studies allowed them to learn from each other.

Suggestions for improving content, resource persons and structure

- Focus on specific thematic issues and sub-regional priorities: an indicative plan of key issues to be addressed by a series of workshops over the next 3-5 years should be prepared to focus attention, identify key stakeholders and facilitate continuity of funding;
- Geographical stratification of workshop topics contrasting levels of economic development and variable institutional capacity would seem appropriate;
- Preparatory national workshops on specific issues and training needs culminating in an annual regional workshop;
- Spend more time on the actual practical mechanisms for doing/achieving the principles learned (ex. involvement of stakeholders);
- How exactly to involve stakeholders and how to address conflicts;

- Develop community based management methodologies;
- More focus on outside the wetland/protected area (buffer zones etc.);
- Re-consider target participants (those who do not understand the importance of wetlands?);
- Provide actual cases of water management plan;
- Explain the structure of binder and materials during the introductory briefing;
- Inform participants in advance to prepare data for case studies;
- Involve resource persons (RPs) from the Asia-Pacific region (developing countries) and identify more case studies from developing countries, to be distributed before the workshop;
- RPs should be familiar with wetland and biodiversity management in developing countries;
- Case studies should be related to the Asia-Pacific region;
- Workshop venue is too large;
- Give time to more participants to make short presentations;
- Visit protected areas which may have been destroyed but were successfully restored.

Suggestions for additional topics

- Ecotourism development;
- Trans-boundary resource management;
- Global warming and sea-level rise;
- Catchments management and conflict resolution;
- Wetlands as refuges for biodiversity and stepping stones for disease spread;
- Ecosystem services, including case studies to illustrate the importance and variety of ecosystem services provided by specific ecosystems;
- Regional development reviews with historical and future perspectives;
- Community based natural resource management;
- Traditional knowledge in conservation;
- Protected area management and nature resource management;
- How to create effective conservation plan and monitoring?
- Skill and methodology of ToT;
- Biodiversity management;
- Economic evaluation and how to conduct public conservation effectively;
- How to assess biologically diverse sites;
- Sustainable financing of protected areas;
- Balancing sustainable biological conservation;
- Categorization of water information;
- Water surface management;
- Ground water management and forest ecosystem;
- Watershed management and development of human activities;



- How to organize stakeholders' participation efficiently;
- Migratory birds and their trans-boundary flyways;
- Economic aspects of biodiversity management;
- Wildlife surveys and management;
- Communication and conflict management;
- Basics of GIS.

Cultural Briefing and cultural activities

- All participants stated having enjoyed the briefing and found it useful (84%);
- Cultural activities were valued as an outstanding and enjoyable experience (96%).

Preparations and Administration

Overall excellent comments from all the participants in terms of organisational arrangements and in particular helpfulness of UNITAR/KIWC staff (92%). Materials and handouts were excellent to good (64%).

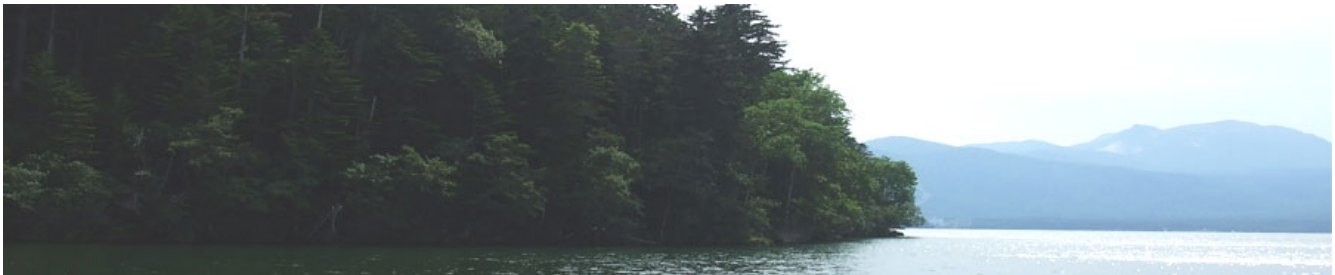
Difficulties reported:

- Hotel staff could not speak English;
- Display and sign boards in English can help;
- Limited internet connection;
- No time to explore the city;
- Some participant had themselves difficulty with English;
- If reimbursement provided before the workshop, it would be easier;
- Self-ticketing procedure is very long (better to do it through UNDPs);
- Difficult to start sessions at 8.00 am (better at 9.00);
- It is better to organize participants' travel by group;
- More detailed instructions on group sessions would be helpful.

Overall impressions from reading evaluations

The evaluations were very positive, except for some difficulties with time organization, reimbursement and travel arrangements. Participants reported that the workshop was valuable in deepening their understanding of various aspects of biodiversity management. The study visits and group discussions were considered to provide a venue for brainstorming and exchanging of views.

Hiroko Nakayama and Sergei Shaposhnikov*
Geneva and Hiroshima
September 2006



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