

Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management in Japan: from Asia to the world

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Human-wildlife conflicts which include agricultural damage and occasional human casualties are worldwide problems. Understanding social aspects of wildlife management including people's values and attitudes regarding wildlife and wildlife issues is important for mitigating potential conflicts and garner long-term public support. Human dimensions of wildlife management is an academic discipline founded and developed in the US. This discipline covers a broad set of ideas and practices, including social and economic values, individual and social behavior, public involvement in management decision making, and communication. Wildlife management has been explained as 90% is about managing people (and managing wildlife is 10%). However, research about wildlife management were, traditionally, mostly done by such as ecologists and biologists who mainly studied about wildlife itself and/or habitats. In order to fill the gap of human dimension studies in Japan, a series of studies were conducted to examine local residents' perception regarding human-wildlife conflicts and how their perceptions as well as behavioral intentions could be changed through community education seminars. This presentation specifically focuses on bears (Asiatic black bear: *Ursus thibetanus*). Human-bear conflicts including human casualties are challenging issues in Japan. In order to mitigate human-bear conflicts, residents' participation in damage preventative actions is necessary. Firstly, interviews (n=77) were conducted with local residents and stakeholders, and revealed various reasons why people engage in or do not engage in intervention. Secondly, a survey on local residents (n=1,210) were conducted, and revealed that a majority of respondents in one study site did not engage in damage preventative behaviors. The Potential for Conflict Index implied the gap between actions that residents wanted government to take and actual policy that the government was implementing. These findings encouraged the Tajima Branch Office of Hyogo Prefecture to implement a series of community education seminars regarding bears, the first time in the prefecture, a few months after the survey. Contents of seminars were designed to reflect residents' needs based on results of interviews and the survey. Thirdly, pre- and post-seminar surveys (n=227) were conducted on participants of these seminars, and revealed that participating in the seminar prompted a majority of them to engage in damage preventative actions. The studies showed the important role the field of human dimensions of wildlife management could play to the scientific community and general public (e.g., launching education seminar) in Japan. In addition, these series of studies implied that collaboration with governmental officials could enable researchers to conduct a practical research that meets the needs of local stakeholders and to contribute to better decision making. Lastly, this presentation concludes by explaining the potential of human dimensions in terms of solving human-wildlife conflicts in not only Japan but also Asia and all over the world.