



New Report Submitted to International Union for Conservation of Nature

(IUCN): “What is the “holistic approach” to address increasing tourism/visitors pressure in Iriomote Island?”

Today, the Non-profit organization Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund (JTEF)/JTEF Iriomote Chapter (Taketomi Town, Okinawa) submitted the newest report to the officials associated with nomination of Iriomote as a World Natural Heritage. (Officially nominating “Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, the northern part of Okinawa Island and Iriomote Island” for inscription on the World Natural Heritage List.) This report is a follow-up to the first report submitted to the committee members in October, earlier this year.

On October 17, the IUCN experts conducted an on-the-spot inspection of the nominated area and submitted their preliminary comments to Japanese officials during the meeting. JTEF staff wrote this report to directly reply to their comments and make suggestions which would enhance critical protections for the Iriomote Cat, in the face of increasing visitor pressure on the habitat. JTEF is the only NGO invited on the committee panel and the report reflects the concerns of what effects uncontrolled tourism might have on the natural habitat.

In this report you will find the following topics addressed:

1. More caution is needed to address increased pressure on the natural property caused by an increase of tourism/visitor pressure due to being added to the World Heritage List (Transportation to the island by sea and by air, rental cars and the relationship of these to the increased rate of road kills of Iriomote cat)
2. Why Total volume control should be required in Iriomote Island (Case study of popular tourist areas on the island and management of the access)
3. Conclusion: It is necessary to introduce an unbiased comprehensive management of tourism/visitors pressure, which strictly meets the following 4 requirements outlined by the IUCN experts
 - A) Seeing the whole island as one unit
 - B) Consistency and Integrity
 - C) Sufficient effectiveness
 - D) Provide regulations that serve as a total volume control of tourists/visitors

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