



Kobe Satoyama Biodiversity Strategy

What is Satoyama?

While Kobe is a major city of 1.5 million, which developed around one of Japan's first and most active international trade ports, it is also home to many areas of rich nature, known as satoyama. This term refers to natural environments that have been sustainably used, maintained, and protected by local residents through traditional agricultural practices. These include the management of rice paddies, fields, irrigation channels, ponds, streams and grasslands, as well as the use of trees for timber and fuel. Because of this, satoyama areas now constitute a mosaic of diverse environments, rich in biodiversity.

Challenges

Due to various changes in the socio-economic landscape, however, people no longer use the resources offered by the satoyama areas to the same extent as before. Because of this, we now see an increase in the number of abandoned farms, poorly maintained forests, overgrown thickets and bamboo groves. Many waterways and farm ponds are also no longer managed in an appropriate way. In addition to this, we also see an increase in the number of invasive alien species, all of which leads to the loss of biodiversity in these areas. Thus, once common animals, such as the Japanese pond turtles, red dragonflies and medaka fish, as well as plants like the balloon flower and field fleawort are now hard to come across.

Goals

We envision the ideal state of the satoyama areas as one, where a rich variety of plants and animals can thrive; the value of a harmonious relationship between people and nature is widely shared; and conservation, management, and sustainable use are practiced in a continuous manner, allowing us to enjoy the many benefits of biodiversity for generations to come.



Three Pillars of the Kobe Satoyama Biodiversity Strategy

Getting to Know the Satoyama

Promoting the appeal of the areas

Raising awareness about biodiversity

Raising awareness about issues of invasive species and wild animals

Satoyama Riches Experience

The City hosts various events that allow people to experience the riches of the satoyama areas, including wildlife observation, harvesting experiences and trail walks. These activities help participants connect with local residents, discover the charms of satoyama areas, and share their appeal in new and meaningful ways.



Invasive Species Exhibition Center

Japan's only public facility dedicated specifically to raising awareness about the issue of invasive species. Visitors can see and touch live animals, taxidermy specimens and displays to feel the presence of invasive species. Through explanations and informational panels, they can learn about the issues, and are encouraged to think about actions we should take moving forward.



Protecting the Satoyama

Promoting initiatives to achieve the 30-by-30 target

Wildlife monitoring

Conservation of forests, farmlands and grasslands

Measures against invasive species and wildlife pests

OECMs in satoyama areas

The City of Kobe strives to register these biodiverse areas within the framework of OECMs that contribute to the achievement of the global 30-by-30 target. Here, we collaborate with a wide range of partners, including local residents, businesses, universities, NPOs and government agencies, to carry out various pilot projects related to biodiversity monitoring, environmental education and sustainable use of resources.



Wildlife monitoring through eDNA analysis

This technique, which detects traces of DNA in pond water or forest soil, is utilized to monitor local wildlife in an effective and efficient manner. It enables us to identify which species live in each particular area, and helps us protect rare plants and animals, while improving and maintaining their natural habitats.



*30-by-30 is a worldwide initiative to designate at least 30% of the world's land and ocean area as conserved areas by 2030.

*OECMs = Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures refer to areas, where biodiversity is conserved through agricultural practices, water source management, etc.

Connecting People to the Satoyama Projects

Circular use of satoyama resources

Personnel development

Activities support

Achieving carbon neutrality

Connecting people engaged in conservation activities

Sustainable and circular use of satoyama resources: Kobe Wood & Kobe White Charcoal

By restoring forests that have been neglected for over half a century, we aim to transform them into well-managed woodlands, and use the trees removed in the process to produce high-quality timber and white charcoal. At the same time, we are also reviving abandoned terraced rice paddies, which enables us to protect surrounding water ecosystems, and allows us to promote the healthy organic rice grown in these paddies.



Subsidies for citizen activities in:

- Protection of rare wild plants and animals
- Control of invasive species with negative ecosystem impacts
- Promotion of sustainable fishing and agricultural practices, or revitalization of satoyama areas and other rural communities
- Innovative and creative initiatives by both citizens and businesses that contribute to achieving carbon neutrality

