

CONSERVATION JUSTIFICATION AND FLAGSHIP SPECIES STRATEGIES IN RAISING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS RELATED TO BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION

Liliya Mihaylova

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The most striking feature of Earth is the existence of life, and the most striking feature of life is its diversity. However, the world has undergone drastic changes in the last century. Halting the loss of biodiversity has become an urgent issue in recent years. It has become clear that an immediate response to the problem is necessary and, thus a clear and urgent message must be presented to the public. The main objective of this paper is to explore possible conservation strategies and tools with the intention of triggering concern for ecosystem health and endangered species among the population. Moreover, it aims to search for a systematic approach required to encourage a deeper level of community-wide environmental consciousness and conservational participation.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research puts emphasis on various ways of conservation justification or identifying the values of biodiversity may serve as different conservation incentives. In the search for a clear and effective environmental message for promoting conservation, this paper maps history of conservation thinking and focuses on two main approaches of conservation, namely the flagship species approach and the ecosystem approach. Thorough investigation of the advantages and limitations of both these approaches is presented. This is achieved with the overview and analysis of two relevant cases of secondary nature conservation in Japanese rural areas - Ryuoh town and Toyooka city - where such approaches are applied and give a good example of what the motivating force that promotes public involvement in conservation projects.

3. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The analysis of both flagship and ecosystem approaches to campaigning shows that focusing solely on either one is detrimental to the overall conservation goals. While each case is unique, a careful combination of both approaches should be considered to maximize efficiency.

Moreover, this study provided support and further explanation for the hypothesis that exposure to environmental values heightens concern and ultimately leads to conservation intentions. These results provide a baseline understanding of the mechanisms behind which a flagship species is capable of motivating conservation intentions and behaviors, including the need for both socio-economic and ecological role of the species.

From flagship literature and both cases presented and discussed in this paper, we can conclude that if flagship species relate to the local cultural context, they can become the center of community-based conservation, since they would symbolize already imbedded socio-economic values. Furthermore, exposure to the ecological role of a flagship may resonate to the intrinsic values of nature the public holds and the pull given by ecological importance might even exceed the pull generated from the charisma of the given species. It will also bestow an understanding of the interconnectedness of the species, its habitat, and human well-being and promote behavior change. In conclusion, a flagship that has a broad ecological role should combine the functions of both flagship and ecosystem approaches.