



JAC Environmental & Animal Protection Foundation

Making Japan a Developed Nation for Animal Welfare

In Japan, activities to protect wild animals threatened with extinction began to be carried out in the early 1970s, and since 1990, they have been addressed with a heightened sense of urgency as part of efforts to create a more sustainable society. However, the tendency to give priority to economic development and other human-centred aspects of society remains unchanged, and Japan still has a number of challenges in the area of animal protection in comparison to other developed countries. In 2022, Hiromi Tazaki, who has been involved in volunteer activities for animal protection and animal welfare in the UK and Japan at the same time as driving forwards growth at JAC Group, invested her own private money in the establishment of the JAC Environmental & Animal Protection Foundation based on her powerful desire to bring Japanese standards of animal protection and protection of the natural environment up to the global standard.

The Quest to Normalise Respect for Animals

Visiting zoos when she was young, Hiromi Tazaki had often wondered why the animals were kept confined in spaces that were so unlike their true natural habitats. The questions about animal welfare that she harboured from an early age—"Is it really acceptable for humans and animals to interact like this?"—grew stronger after she went to the UK and saw with her own eyes how different the human-animal relationship was there. For example, pet shops are almost unknown in the UK, so those wanting to get a pet will usually need to purchase or adopt an animal after an interview of some kind, by going to a breeder who breeds animals in their home. Because pet shops, which treat animals like commodities, are unable to provide proper living environments for animals, the British, who tend to value animals a great deal, prefer to get animals from breeders (which in the UK means individuals breeding animals in their home, very different to the commercial breeders found in Japan). From the British perspective, the practice seen in Japan of keeping dogs outdoors all the time, chained up outside houses, is considered animal cruelty. The UK also has a robust framework in place for protecting animal welfare, with more than 70 laws on the books regulating the keeping, usage and sale of animals. Hiromi was impressed by the social mechanisms that were in place to protect animals. As she learned about how the UK's approach to animal protection and animal welfare extended not only to wild animals and to pets but also to zoo administration and livestock-raising environments, she found herself longing to bring Japan's

animal protection standards in line with other developed nations.

What really activated Hiromi's ideas was the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake that struck Kobe and its surrounding region in 1995. While staying in Tokyo, Hiromi served as a volunteer with an animal welfare organisation, assisting with the office activities. The idea of volunteer activity had not yet become well-established in Japanese society at this time; there was also little knowhow, and few organisations devoted to the protection of animals. Without knowing much about what she should be doing, Hiromi worked with a variety of people to contribute to rescue activities for animals affected by the disaster, including vets, zoos, local governments, non-profit organisations (NPOs) and volunteer organisations, driven by her sense of passion and mission.

Having discovered answers to some of the questions she had harboured since childhood by taking part in these hands-on activities, in March 2022 Hiromi went on to establish the JAC Environmental & Animal Protection Foundation (authorised as a public interest incorporated foundation in February 2023). Based on the belief that "Wealth created through the development of the economy returns to the earth", the Foundation began to provide financial assistance for the conservation of rare species of animal, the improvement of animal welfare in research institutions and zoos as well as cats and dogs, and the protection and welfare improvement of livestock and retired racehorses, through funding amounting to around ¥160 million per year as of 2024. The Foundation is Japan's largest foundation in terms of financial assistance sums dispersed for animal protection and welfare.



The Iriomote cat, an endangered species found on Iriomote Island, a World Heritage site



NPO Animal Hospital Okinawa
On-site observations of conservation activities for the Okinawa rail



At the symposium marking the launch of the One Welfare Endowed Class

Activating Animal Protection and Welfare Through Financial Assistance

The JAC Environmental & Animal Protection Foundation engages in activities aimed at bringing about the sustainable coexistence of humans and animals through providing financial assistance to organisations engaged in animal protection, animal welfare and protection of the natural environment in line with this, as well as grants for the reform of zoos and financial assistance for promoting the welfare of livestock. In the first round of selection (to select recipients of assistance) following the certification of the Foundation as a public interest incorporated foundation in February 2023, applications were received from around 200 organisations located all over Japan (from Hokkaido in the north of Japan to Okinawa in the south), with 59 of these being selected to receive assistance. A total of ¥82 million in assistance was dispersed to these targets in April. The following year, around ¥130 million was dispersed to 108 organisations. The activities of the Foundation are not limited to financial assistance to activity groups, but cover a wide range of activities, including holding endowed classes, and carrying out observations of organisations and awareness-raising activities. In addition to paying out ¥15 million to endowed classes at Nippon Veterinary and Life Science University (NVLU) in FY2024 and making the decision to provide support amounting to ¥75 million over a five-year period, the Foundation is also making efforts to share examples of best activities via its network of numerous organisations and research institutions.

1. Financial assistance to activity groups

The Foundation provides support to activity groups which aim at "conservation of rare wild animals" and "improving animal welfare". The organisations which are to receive financial

assistance are determined through resolutions by the board of directors following an initial screening carried out by a screening committee composed of experts.

(Spheres of activity eligible for financial assistance)

- Conservation of rare wild animals
- Improving the welfare of companion animals and household pets
- Improving the welfare of animals in zoos and aquariums
- Improving the welfare of livestock and farm animals
- Protection of the natural environment
- Financial assistance for the protection of retired racehorses

2. Financial assistance for endowed classes

Based on a "one welfare" concept which believes that "animal welfare improvement, the well-being of people, biodiversity, environmental conservation and the sustainability of society are all integrated", the Foundation carries out activities, education and human resource development aimed at improving animal welfare.

(Examples of endowed classes)

- JAC Environmental & Animal Protection Foundation One Welfare Endowed Class at NVLU

3. Observations and awareness-raising activities

The Foundation visits on-site activities carried out by organisations in receipt of financial assistance and communicates the status and results of the activities via various media, including its website. These communications foster greater understanding and promotion of the protection of natural environments and animals.

(Examples of organisations receiving financial assistance)

- Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund: Iriomote cat patrols by the Iriomote Island Office/Conservation activities for the Iriomote cat
- NPO Animal Hospital Okinawa: Conservation activities for the Okinawa rail
- Institute for Raptor Biomedicine Japan: Activities aimed at preventing bird strike by rare birds of prey

Future Prospects

Aiming to Expand Activities to Include All of JAC Group

In Japan, activities for animal conservation and animal welfare are still in the development process. Based on this reality, the JAC Environmental & Animal Protection Foundation is working to bring about a fundamental transformation of basic assumptions about protection of the natural environment, animal protection and welfare, and environmental protection in Japan. Going forwards, the Foundation will work to ensure that a sustainability-oriented mindset permeates JAC Group as a whole, including having JAC Group employees participate as volunteers in activities for the conservation of the global environment being carried out by the recipients of the Foundation's financial assistance, aiming to support the creation of a society and environment where humans can coexist with animals and nature.



Mr Etsuo Narushima, Adviser to the Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums (JAZA) (left) and Paul Littlefair, Head of International, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) (third from the left), at a seminar hosted by the Foundation