



Spoonbills Speak

echoes across the Pacific

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DELEGATION TRAVELS TO TAIWAN



In late March 1999 a delegation of 17 SAVE members and University of California graduate students traveled to coastal Tainan County, Taiwan, winter home to the black-faced spoonbill. The purpose of this trip was to conduct field research on black-faced spoonbill habitat and meet with local environmental groups and ecotourism operators. Members of the delegation were struck by the vast coastal landscape which is comprised of fishing villages, miles of aquaculture fishponds, mudflats, mangrove forests, lagoons, dunes and barrier islands. Many ecotourists were still visiting to see the spoonbills that winter in the mudflats.



Students and SAVE volunteers visit spoonbill habitat.

The delegation also participated in a workshop with local fisherman, environmental groups and ecotourism operators to share research and learn about local success stories. At this workshop the local entrepreneurs expressed the need for better ecotourism planning. During the Chinese New Year, 10,000 visitors came to see the spoonbills, an incredible volume for an area with very little infrastructure. It was also clear from the meeting that while there has been initial success in starting up ecotourism facilities, continued investment is difficult to obtain with the threat of proposed development projects such as the Bin-nan Industrial Complex and an incinerator looming over the region.

Thank you to all SAVE members that supported this trip through membership renewal!

SAVE'S RAMSAR CAMPAIGN GAINS FORMAL SUPPORT IN TAIWAN

At a legislative hearing in Taipei, SAVE International, along with Taiwan Environmental Action Network (TEAN) and the Sustainable Development Association of Taiwan's National Legislature, advocated for Taiwan's participation in the Ramsar Convention (Convention of Wetlands) and designation of the Tsengwen Estuary wetlands as Wetlands of International Importance. The hearing was hosted by

Legislator Su Huan-Chi and joined by legislators from all three major political parties in Taiwan. In a white paper presented at the hearing, SAVE and other environmental groups demanded the Taiwan government establish national wetland protection policy and protect the habitat of the endangered black-faced spoonbill at the Tsengwen Estuary wetlands. The white paper outlines Taiwan's international situation, the importance of environmental diplomacy for Taiwan, and the protection of the Tsengwen Estuary habitats as the necessary step to prepare for Taiwan's participation in the Ramsar Convention.

Following the hearing, SAVE representatives and eight legislators from the Sustainable Development Association also met with Vice Premier Liu Chao-Shiuan. At the meeting the Vice Premier agreed to support the plan for the protection of the habitat in order to promote Taiwan's participation in Ramsar. Environmental groups including Taiwan Wetland Protection Association, Tainan County Wild Bird Society, Tainan County Black-faced Spoonbill Society, Taiwan Coastal Protection Association and Chinese Wild Bird Foundation also endorsed the white paper. Representatives of SAVE, TEAN, Taiwan Wetland Protection Association and Tainan County Wild Bird Society are scheduled to attend the Ramsar Convention Conference in Costa Rica in May, as well as a delegate from the Agriculture ministry.



Legislator Su chairs hearing on wetland and habitat protection.

SUPPORTERS RALLY IN TAIPEI



SAVE volunteer and NTU student perform at the Taipei train station.

National Taiwan University students and members of the delegation held a spoonbill rally in the Taipei central rail station. Several legislators and students spoke out about the importance of protecting the spoonbill and the dangers of the Bin-nan Industrial Complex. An impressive display of spoonbill sculptures, banners and balloons set the stage for the students, legislators, local NGO representatives, and

National Taiwan University students and members of the delegation held a spoonbill rally in the Taipei central rail station. Several legislators and students spoke out about the importance of

delegation members who dressed up as spoonbills by wearing masks and wings. Two guerilla theater skits were staged to attract attention and raise awareness. One skit involved a student dressed as Bai-Un-Chown, the Taiwanese figure of death, with Bin-nan written on his hat. Death (Bin-nan) attempted to swoop down on a group of tranquil spoonbills only to be beaten back by legislators, local groups, and NGO's. Hundreds of people were exposed to the issues, and the event was covered in two major Taipei newspapers.

SAVE FIGHTS MEINUNG DAM PROJECT

After seven years of conflicts with local residents and environmentalists, the national legislature in Taiwan, dominated by the ruling party, is poised to pass the government proposed budget for the construction of Meinung Dam. The proposed Meinung Dam is expected to supply water to the Bin-nan Industrial Complex. Construction for the dam is scheduled to begin later this year. Please sign on to a letter to Taiwan's Premier Vincent Siew and members of the legislature asking them to consider alternatives to the dam. Send a message with your name, title, affiliation and contact information to <meinung99@uclink4.berkeley.edu>.



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SAVE UPDATE

Jane Goodall Calls in Support of Spoonbills

SAVE member Marcia McNally received a call from the internationally renowned conservationist Jane Goodall on April 22. Dr. Goodall toured the Chiku area in 1998 with Legislator Su and met with President Lee to give him the facts on this important environmental issue. During the conversation she indicated she was impressed by how many groups were now joining forces to fight the Bin-nan project. Dr. Goodall will return to Taiwan in November at which time SAVE members hope to meet with her to present new work.

SAVE Requests Coastal Highway Halt until Full Environmental Assessment Complete

SAVE scientists recently uncovered alarming impacts on the habitat of the black-faced spoonbill and have urged Taiwan officials to conduct a proper EIA for the proposed coastal highway. The project was approved before the eco-tourist industry developed and before the importance of this habitat for the survival of the spoonbill was known.

SAVE Campaigns against Proposed Incinerator

SAVE recently issued a statement condemning the placement of an incinerator adjacent to the spoonbill's primary foraging area. Local groups agree that the environmental impacts have not been seriously considered and are planning a May protest in Taipei.

MESSAGE FROM CHI-CHAO THE SPOONBILL

Hello! Since my last letter I've been very busy. I stayed a bit longer in Chiku this winter so I could see my friends from Berkeley who traveled such a long way to look at little ol' me. It was great to finally meet some of my biggest fans. As soon as they left I began my long journey to North Korea where I like to spend the summer. And those Berkeley students think *they* have jetlag! Keep up the good work . . . talk to you soon!



Love, Your Friend, Chi-chao