

Foundation to pay fees

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KYOTO — Environmental activists have established a foundation to raise money to pay legal fees in court cases being fought in the name of endangered species and other animals, creating the first such foundation in the country.

The proposal to create the Fund for the Rights of Nature came from Kyoto lawyer Takaaki Kagohashi, 39, who is currently arguing a case in Kagoshima Prefecture in the name of the Amami rabbit, a specially designated species.

The rabbit's habitat is in a special nature preserve that is being targeted for

golf course development.

"The view that people have of plants and animals might change if the number of cases in which an animal has been named as the plaintiff increase," said Kagohashi. "Donations to the foundation will provide support to lawyers and these plaintiffs in their court fights, so we hope people will help."

The money that is generated will be used to help cover legal fees in court cases, including the case in which Kagohashi is involved and another that is being argued in Ibaraki Prefecture.