

Village wants to nab crop-damaging monkeys

JT. 7/1/94

AOMORI (Kyodo) The local government of Wakinosawa, Aomori Prefecture, plans to ask the Cultural Affairs Agency for permission to capture several monkeys of a species designated as a national treasure because they are damaging crops.

If permission is granted, it will be first time any of the monkeys have been captured since 70 were caught in 1982.

The municipality plans to capture about 30 of the monkeys, which live the farthest north of any in Japan, and keep them in a park in the village.

According to the local board of education, the village paid about ¥3.6 million to farmers in compensation for damage caused by monkeys in 1992.

The village will be forced to pay nearly twice as much in compensation to farmers for damage they caused in 1993.

After paying people to drive the monkeys from the fields, the village will have to spend

about ¥20 million to protect farms from them, according to local authorities.

The village only receives ¥3.75 million in compensation from the national and Aomori Prefecture governments, they said.

Naohiko Tanaka, head of the board of education, said villagers want to coexist with the monkeys, but if nothing is done, farmers will lose interest in farming.

If the national government says the village cannot capture the monkeys, it should compensate them for the damage, he said.

The Shimokita Peninsula monkeys are suitable for academic study.

Three groups of 70 monkeys live near Wakinosawa.

Warding away bears

NAGANO (Kyodo) A private wildlife protection office is working on ways to keep bears out of villages, orchards and tourist spots in mountainous areas without

killing them.

In the popular Kamikouchi area, bears search at night for food in the garbage dumps of neighboring hotels and inns.

The number of bears, which live mostly in Honshu, is estimated to be between 10,000 and 15,000, according to the Environment Agency.

Experts fear the species may face extinction, because nearly 2,000 are either hunted

or exterminated each year.

A Kawasaki-based private institution for the protection of wild animals, in cooperation with the agency's local office, is studying how to capture alive and "punish" them so they will not return to the same area.

The researchers are calling for local people to make an effort to coexist with the creatures, noting the bear is basically a timid animal.