

# World Natural Heritages in the Amur-Okhotsk region

## **Hiroyuki Matsuda**

*Faculty of Environment and Information Sciences, Yokohama National University, 79-7 Tokiwadai, Hodogaya-ku, Yokohama, Kanagawa 240-8501, Japan , matsuda@ynu.ac.jp*

### **Abstract**

Two world natural heritages (WH), Shiretoko and Central Sikhote-Alin exist in Okhotsk region, inscribed in 2005 and 2001, respectively. There are no WH but 5 Biosphere Reserves (BRs) exist along Amur River Region. Sikhote-Alin was also designated as BR in 1978. The Project for Japan-Russia Cooperation on the Conservation of Ecosystems promotes pair-wise cooperation between Shiretoko and Central Sikhote-Alin. UNESCO also encourages cooperation between WHs and between BRs. Sikhote-Alin BR hosted the 7th meeting of East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network in 2001. The Sikhote-Alin mountain range contains one of the richest and most unusual temperate forests of the world. In this mixed zone between taiga and subtropics, southern species such as the tiger and Himalayan bear cohabit with northern species such as the brown bear and lynx. The site stretches from the peaks of Sikhote-Alin to the Sea of Japan and is important for the survival of many endangered species. Central Sikhote-Alin is a good control site for Shiretoko because wolves, which were extinct in Japan, persist for similar biophysical environment. Shiretoko is characterized by sustainable fisheries. The activities of coastal fisheries co-management during review process of WH was selected as one of the 6 Impact Stories by International Association for the Studies of the Commons in 2010. The UNESCO Mission Team for Shiretoko WH appreciate a bottom-up approach of stakeholders and wrote that it is an excellent model of WH elsewhere. Shiretoko is an observer of Japan BR network. Sikhote-Alin BR has a big transition area (ca. 40,000km<sup>2</sup>). These suggest the possibility of further development of sustainable human activities in Shiretoko and Sikhote-Alin and its cooperation between these two sites.

**Keywords:** Biosphere reserve, brown bear, co-management, Japan-Russia Cooperation on the Conservation of Ecosystems, sustainability, temperate forests,