

Academic and Administrative Efforts in Understanding the Environment in the Amur-Okhotsk Region

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Abstract

It is crucial for Japan to conserve and sustainably-use the environment in the Sea of Okhotsk and its adjacent region. The area is characterized by rich biodiversity as exemplified by unique ecosystem in the Shiretoko World Nature Heritage. It is also found through long-term multilateral academic efforts that the environment of the Sea of Okhotsk is closely related to that of the neighboring terrestrial counterparts. Of particular importance is the impact from the Amur River which watershed expands over Mongolia, China and Russia. Various particulate and dissolved elements as well as significant amount of fresh water are supplied to the Sea of Okhotsk from this river. Based on the common understanding of this shared trans-boundary environmental system, the Amur-Okhotsk Consortium has repeated conferences, workshops and joint field researches since its establishment in 2009.

This report will summarize the Japanese members' activities in the framework of the Amur-Okhotsk Consortium since the 3rd International Meeting held in Vladivostok in October 2013. At first, the author will introduce his own preliminary research trip to the upper Bureya River, a Russian tributary of the Amur River, conducted in July 2014 with the help of the Institute of Water and Ecological Problems, RAS. Then it will followed by two administrative efforts in understanding and sustainably-using the environments between Japan and Russia: 1) Conservation of Ecosystem in the Sea of Okhotsk and Japanese-Russian Cooperation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Ministry of Environment of Japan; 2) Bilateral economic cooperation program named "The Contribution and Involvement Project" by Hokkaido Government.