



June 12, 2017

TO: Mr. Koichi Yamamoto
Minister of the Environment
Ministry of the Environment Government of Japan
Godochosha No.5, Kasumigaseki 1-2-2,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8975, JAPAN

Dear Minister of the Environment:

The Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) is an international, non-profit organization that was founded in 1972 to promote knowledge, study, and conservation of Pacific seabirds with a membership drawn from the entire Pacific basin. Among PSG's members are biologists who have research interests in Pacific seabirds, government officials who manage seabird refuges and populations, and individuals who are interested in marine conservation. Over the years, PSG has been a leader in conservation, developing the monitoring protocols and convening a standing Japanese seabird working group. Collectively, the Group's members have a great deal of specific knowledge and experience with respect to Japanese Murrelets (*Synthliboramphus wumizusume*) conservation in the Asian Region.

Japanese Murrelets are rare seabirds that utilize the Kaminoseki area throughout the year. A national icon, Japanese Murrelets have been listed as Vulnerable since by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) due to their small population size (less than 10,000 breeding birds), restricted range and ongoing losses due to introduced predators (cats, rats) and gill net fisheries. Several members of PSG have participated in studies of the Japanese Murrelet. They have been the focus of Symposia, Special Paper Sessions and poster presentations at annual meetings of PSG, including several presentations about the Kaminoseki region by Midori Takashima of the Kaminoseki Nature Conservation Association (KNCA).

The Pacific Seabird Group and the Japan Seabird Group wrote a letter in 2011 expressing concern over the lack of information about Japanese murrelets and the potential impacts of the construction of two nuclear power plants in Kaminoseki. The Western Seto Sea is critical habitat for this unique and rare species. The KNCA have carried out surveys in the Kaminoseki region of the Seto Sea every year from 2008 to 2017. Each year they have found Japanese Murrelets during both the breeding and non-breeding season. There is no other place known to be used by Japanese Murrelets throughout the year. More research needs to be done on this species to resolve many unanswered questions; for example, no complete survey of islands in the Kaminoseki region has been carried out to find the location of the breeding colonies of Japanese Murrelets.

Consequently, PSG is concerned that measures to conserve the Japanese Murrelet will not be put in place before more impacts from the plants occur. The construction and operation of the plants will likely have serious impacts on Japanese Murrelets with the filling of Tanoura Bay, dredging, the warming of the sea around the plants, as well as coastal erosion and nutrient deposition. We urge

you to support more research on Japanese Murrelets and to develop of a conservation plan for this species and region.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark Rauzon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Rauzon" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Rauzon
Vice Chair for Conservation
Pacific Seabird Group