

Abstract

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Raccoons became popular pets for Japanese during the 1970's, in the wake of a TV cartoon which portrayed them as cute, intelligent animals. Raccoons were imported mainly from the U.S. After the pet boom ended in the early 1980's, abandoned or escaped raccoons survived in the wild, and the population increased throughout Japan. Raccoons have damaged agricultural crops, property, and native species. Lately, risk of infectious diseases has also caused concern.

Under the Invasive Alien Species Act of 2004, Kanagawa prefecture, which includes urban, suburban and rural areas near Tokyo, formulated a raccoon control plan in order to eradicate them within 10 years. Several factors have hindered effective raccoon management in Kanagawa prefecture, including difference in attitudes toward raccoons and acceptability of management approaches within communities, insufficient budget, and perception gap between local governments. In order to minimize problems in consensus building, develop education strategies and allocate budgets effectively, it is important to ascertain what management strategies will be the most acceptable for stakeholder.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the most socially beneficial scenario of raccoon management toward gaining public support, developing education program, allocate budgets effectively, finally minimize problems in consensus building between local public having various value on raccoon issues.

Research will be conducted with three phases; Phase I) understand local citizens' perceptions of raccoon issues, Phase II) identify preferred management scenario and choice probability and III) determine what scenario gives maximize social benefit. Latest quantitative survey showed no big difference between areas on lethal or non-lethal approach, but average willingness to pay per person presented gap between areas.