

RTD11 Re-introduction of the endangered ibises of the world

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1 Issues

After the rediscovery of crested ibis (*Nipponia nippon*) in China in 1981, the wild population has been increased, at enormous effort and cost, from 7 to over 120. In addition, another 180 birds have been raised in captivity. At present, wild crested ibis are confined to a small region in central China, where increasing human population has reduced habitat availability and depleted food resources. To ensure the survival of the species, Chinese and Japanese ornithologists are planning a re-introduction program for captive-bred birds, bearing in mind that the transition from captivity to the wild is seldom easy.

A similar situation pertains to the northern bald ibis (*Geronticus eremita*), which is confined to west Morocco and Algeria and numbers about 220 birds in the wild. This species has been helped by a re-introduction program over several years, from which much experience about re-intro-

ducing ibis to the wild has been gained.

2 Outcomes

This RTD offered a unique opportunity for ornithologists worldwide who were involved or interested in re-introduction as a conservation tool to meet and exchange ideas towards developing a re-introduction program for the crested ibis. Using case histories of reintroduction programs for northern bald ibis, whooping cranes and other endangered species, the RTD focused on (1) application of research results and experience to devising re-introduction programs for northern bald and crested ibises and other endangered species, (2) criteria for site selection, including public awareness, (3) methods for release, and post-release monitoring, and (4) strategies for maintaining viable populations of re-introduced crested ibis in the wild.