

Kinmen-bred horseshoe crabs to be released in southwestern Taiwan - CNA ENGLISH NEWS

Taipei, Dec. 19 (CNA) Thousands of horseshoe crabs bred in offshore Kinmen County will be released next April in southwestern Taiwan, where the species has been seriously depleted, officials said Wednesday.

The Kinmen county government and the Southwest Coast National Scenic Area Administration in Tainan signed an agreement that day that will allow 20,000 of the crabs to be released in the Haomeiliao Wetland in Chiayi County, which is run by the administration.

The primitive crabs were bred by the Kinmen Fisheries Research Institute in partnership with Academia Sinica, Taiwan's top research institute, as part of efforts since 2000 to revive the declining species.

Institute Director Wang Han-wen said the institute decided to choose the wetland as the site for the release after taking samples of water and mud in the area.

The institute also announced a breakthrough in breeding techniques that enable it to raise horseshoe crabs more quickly than in the past.

Kinmen Magistrate Li Wo-shi said the agreement marks the Southwest Coast National Scenic Area Administration's recognition of the institute's work to revive and preserve the creatures.

Horseshoe crabs, mostly found along the eastern coast of the United States and in Asia, can be found in southwestern Taiwan and its outlying islands.

However, they have been seriously depleted in Taiwan proper due to excessive fishing, pollution and coastal erosion, according to Academia Sinica.

(By Chen Shou-gow and Scully Hsiao)