

## World Wetlands Day 2011 events in Japan

March, 2011

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## World Wetlands Day 2011 events in Japan

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(Sarobetsu-genya Ramsar Site)

Reporter/ organizer: NPO Sarobetsu Eco Network and MOE Wakkanai Office of Park Ranger for Nature Protection

Date: January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 9:30-12:00

Location: Maruyama district, Sarobetsu-genya (Sarobetsu Wetland Center and surrounding forest and moor)

As participants walked around Maruyama district in snowshoes, they observed wild animals tracks, winter buds of trees and small birds living in the forest. With a relatively large number of trees compared to other parts of the moor, the district has predated the time when most of Sarobetsu-genya moor was connected to the sea. In summer, branches and young trees do not allow people to enter the area easily, but winter opens a path for people to explore as long as they are equipped with snowshoes.

Sarobetsu-genya became a Ramsar Site in November 2005, which made people recognize its importance and our responsibility to realize co-existence between human activities and the natural environment of the moor. The snowshoe event has been organized annually for 3 years in order to provide an opportunity to start thinking about the link between our life and the precious moor, which is the cradle of various living creatures.

[Details]

1) 9:35 meet at Sarobetsu Wetland Center PL→9:35 Opening→10:00 Enter the forest in Maruyama→11:50 Coffee break→12:00 Leave the forest→12:10 Closing

2) Participation fee: 500yen (for insurance and refreshments)

3) Participants: 19+6 staff, 25 in total

4) Weather: Sunny, -6 degrees C

<http://d.hatena.ne.jp/sarobetsu/20110204>



walking in the woods



Group picture

## #2: “Exploring Moor Forest! ~Sarobetsu& Indonesia~”

(Sarobetsu-genya Ramsar Site)

Reporter: Sarobetsu Nature Game Association

Date: February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 10:00-14:30 (children part conducted on previous day)

Location: Sarobetsu-genya primeval forest Sarobetsu Visitor Centre

Organizer: Sarobetsu Nature Game Association, Wakkanai office for MOE park ranger for nature protection

Co-organizer: Toyotomi-cho

Participants ranging from schoolchildren to adults explored the forests of Sarobetsu-genya moor in snowshoes. They observed mainly trees and animal tracks during a nature game. They also enjoyed indoor activities, starting with paper-folding brown bears, which are seen in Hokkaido. Then a representative of the Kalimantan Association gave a lecture about peat fire in Indonesia. He gave another lecture about wetlands in Indonesia the previous day to schoolchildren, showing drawings made by local children. Participating children also drew pictures and decided to send them to Indonesia.

<http://yaplog.ss-hosyozi.com/archive/77>



## #3: Ice-walking tour of Kutcharo-ko lake

(Kutcharo-ko Ramsar Site)

Reporter: Hamatombetsu Kutcharo-ko Waterfowl Observation Center and Hamatonbetsu Town

Date: January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Location: Kutcharo-ko and the Waterfowl Observation Center in Hamatonbetsu Town, Esashi-gun, Hokkaido

Organizer: Hamatonbetsu Town

Following an orientation on how to identify swans and geese by child guides who had been honing their skills since last April, participants walked on the frozen lake, observing animal tracks and wintering Bewick's swans and eagles. During the walk, they checked the state of the lake by picking holes into the ice and measuring its thickness, among other things. Afterwards, participants learned about aquaculture in Kutcharo-ko was introduced as they enjoyed some blessings of the lake; *Tsukudani*, a preserved food of pond smelts, shrimps and gobies boiled down in soy source and sugar). In the afternoon, they made snow sculptures of an eagle, swan and

goose in front of the observation centre. This event has been held annually since 2009 to celebrate WWD with adults and schoolchildren.



#### **#4: World Wetlands Day event “Winter Eco-tour”**

(Kushiro-shitsugen Ramsar Site)

Reporter/ organizer: Kushiro International Wetland Centre (KIWC)

Date: January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Location: in and around Hosooka Visitor’s Lounge (Hosooka, Kushiro Town, Hokkaido)

25 local participants boarded the steam locomotive “Winter Moor train” at JR Kushiro station and enjoyed sights of the moor en route to Kushiro-shitsugen Station. They then walked in a *Hannoki* (alder) forest and on marshy land, guided by the environmental facilitator, Mr. Hisashi Shinjo, observing streams of water springing out from the forest and flowing into the moor, *Yachi-bouzu* (*Carexcespitosa*), plants and wild animal tracks.



All participants, including 5 children in pre-school and the lower grades as well as seniors were excited to explore the moor, which is mostly flooded and covered by plants and thus only enterable during winter, when the land is frozen.

After lunch at the Hosooka Visitor’s Lounge, they tried “wood letter” crafting, guided by Lounge Director Mr. Watanabe. Here, illustrations or messages were carved onto little wooden boards shaped into Hokkaido Island as a memento.

At the end of the tour, participants reviewed what they saw and exchanged thoughts on the relationship between forests and wetlands, the WWD 2011 theme, including water distribution and soil binding.

#### **#5: 6th Field workshop: At the Interface between Moor and Human Livelihood 3 ~Exploring the Frozen Moor~**

(Kushiro-shitsugen National Park Ramsar Site)

Reporter and Organizer:

Secretariat of restoration and dissemination action plan working group of Kushiro Moor

Nature Restoration Committee

Date: February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 9:00-13:00

Location: potential site for future moor restoration in Hororo-gawa district

Participants observed a potential site for moor restoration in Hororo-gawa district for the Kushiro moor nature restoration project. They then walked along the stream down to the old Hororo-gawa river area, the end of the proposed restoration site which is seldom entered by humans during winter. The site was designated as a “reference site,” setting the standard for the restoration of other sites. The tour was facilitated by Mr. Hisashi Shinjo, chair of the working group and an accredited environmental facilitator.

Participants were applicants to the “Wanda Grinda,” network of activities linking people to Kushiro-shitsugen, and members of the Small Committee for Nature Restoration and Dissemination of Kushiro Moor. They learned about nature restoration and flora through a rare look into the depths of the moor, experiencing a real winter moor. The workshop reminded participants that moors are one of the fundamental landscapes of Japan, as well as reed beds, which even appear in the old name for Japan, *Toyo-ashi-hara no mizuho no kuni*, meaning “a country with rich reed forests and abundant rice harvest.”



The area is flooded during summer



Potential moor restoration area: currently a willow forest due to siltation, goals to restored to a meadow sweet community

## #6: “Izu-numa and Uchi-numa Biodiversity Symposium ~conserving the lakes with biodiversity”

(Izu-numa and Uchi-numa Ramsar Sites)

Reporter/ organizer: Miyagi-ken Izu-numa and Uchi-numa Environmental Conservation Foundation

Date: January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 13:30~17:00

Location: Epoka21 (near Kurikoma-kogen station of the JR East Shinkansen line)

160 people including staff participated in the symposium with the following programme:

### 1. Keynote lectures

- 1) “Biodiversity of Izu-numa and Uchi-numa”  
by Jun Yokoyama (Faculty of Science,  
Yamagata University)
- 2) “Hokkaido Ramsar Network and Nature



Restoration” by Katsumi Ishiyama (Miyajimanuma Waterbird and Wetlands Center)

## 2. Poster Presentation

- Where does *tsurusuge* (*Carex pseudocuraica*) in Izu-numa come from?
- The influence of lotus colonies on wildlife in Izu-numa
- Examination of the decline of submerged plant colonies in a man-made pond on the Izu-numa lakefront
- Water environmental change in man-made pond on Izu-numa lakefront as a result of *Ike-boshi*, the activity of dredging soil and sand sediment

## 3. Presentations on local activities in and around Ramsar Sites

### #7~9: WWD events held by Yatsuhigata Nature Observation Center (YNOC)

(Yatsu-higata Ramsar Site)

Reporter/organizer: Urban-nature Management Service LLP, official manager of YNOC appointed by Narashino City

Location: YNOC

#### #7. WWD Interactive Exhibition “Let’s Link Forests and Tidal Flats! Making Wetland Creatures with Paper Craft”

Date: February 1<sup>st</sup> ~27<sup>th</sup>, 2011

All visitors to the Center were free to join activities at the exhibition inside. They were invited to make paper crafts of any wetland creature such as birds, fish and insects that depend on waterfront habitats, including rivers and river basins in forests, rice paddies, reed forests and tidal flats. The crafts were posted on their relevant wetland area on an illustrated poster that illustrates water flow from forest to tidal flats through a river.



#### #8. WWD Workshop “Let’s Link Forests and Tidal Flats! Making Wetland Creatures with Paper Craft”

Date : 8 days during 2<sup>nd</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> of February. Each WS was 40 minutes.

The workshop took place at the observation center at certain hours for visitors. It consisted of a lecture of WWD and the interactive exhibition mentioned above, with guidance from rangers. The lecture aimed to emphasize the interdependence between forests and the sea (tidal flat).



#### #9. Exhibition “Benefits of the Ramsar Convention ~a Wisdom Tool to Link Wetlands, People and Wildlife”

Date: February 1<sup>st</sup>-March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011

The exhibition introduces the purpose of the Convention on Wetlands and the importance of wetlands, as well as issues including the current state of wetland loss. It also presents fine examples of wetland wise use and revitalized communities along with interviews of local people at Shinji-ko, Kabukuri-numa, Kerama-shoto Coral Reef and so on. 5<sup>th</sup> grade children and older children are the expected audience.



### **#10: Citizens' Bird Watching Tour in Sakata**

(Sakata Ramsar Site)

Reporter/ organizer: Niigata City (organized in collaboration with Niigata City Birder's Club)

Date: January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011

Location: Sakata Park (Nishi-Ward, Akatsuka, Niigata City)

Organizer: Niigata City

The 15th Bird-Watching Tour was held in Sakata Park. 86 participants observed 60 species of wild birds including swans and kingfishers as they strolled through the park.

In addition, a cultural festival was held at Sakata Waterfowl and Wetland Center from January 22nd to March 13th. Photos and drawings were collected under the theme "Sakata's nature and people," which were displayed at the festival. As a city, we are conveying Sakata's attractions to many people.

[http://www.city.niigata.jp/info/kantai/bird/tanchoukai/230123\\_sakata.htm](http://www.city.niigata.jp/info/kantai/bird/tanchoukai/230123_sakata.htm)



### **#11: WWD and Ramsar 40th Anniversary Commemorative Event: Symposium on Environmental Conservation in Shibayama-gata Basin ~Conservation and Wise Use And Local Revitalization of Shibayama-Gata Basin**

(Katano-kamoike Ramsar Site)

Reporter: Shibayama-gata Basin Environmental Conservation Council consisting of Kaga and Komatsu Cities

Date: February 11, 2011 at 13:00-16:00

Location: Hotel Arrowle in Shibayama Town, Kaga City

Organizer: Shibayama-gata Basin Environmental Conservation Council

Co-organizer: Kaga and Komatsu City

The forum has been held annually to promote understanding of the environmental issues regarding the lakes such as water purification, and to trigger activities for their resolution. This time, the forum included a wider theme than water purification as the sub-title shows; "Conservation and wise use and local revitalization of Shibayama-gata basin" More than 200 people participated.

The keynote speech, case study reports and a 3-person discussion were successful in deepening understanding about the "conservation and wise use of wetlands" in Shibayamagata basin and domestic Ramsar Sites. It was a fruitful opportunity to ensure the common view to conserve Shibayama-gata, a local treasure, in a fair condition for future generations and accordingly to seek Ramsar designation.



3-person discussion



Participants in the hall

## #12: the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Waterbirds Observation Event Marathon in Biwa-ko

(Biwa-ko and Nishino-ko Ramsar Sites)

Reporter: Nagahama City, Hikone City and Biwa-ko Ramsar Network

Date: February 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Location: 8 sites in Shiga Prefecture: Higashi Oumi, Otsu, Kusatsu, Hikone, Nagahama, 2 sites in Takashima and Omi-Hachiman)

Organizer: Biwako Ramsar Network, Ohmi Environment Conservation Foundation

The marathon aimed to raise awareness on the Ramsar site Biwa-ko by conducting waterbird observation events along the lakeshore. It has been carried out every year since the lake's Ramsar designation in 1993, on Sundays close to February 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Biwako Ramsar Network, one of the organizers, is a panel consisting of municipalities on the lake. Usually, relevant officers in each municipality take charge of running events in their respective sites. The event was promoted through the city newsletter, resulting in the participation of 244 people.





Makino-sunnyBeach (Takashima)



KarasumaPeninsula (Kusatsu)

The event at Nagahama was held in conjunction with a regular observation event, gathering 70 participants from throughout the prefecture and beyond. The programme started with a short lecture on the Ramsar Convention and waterbirds in Biwa-ko, followed by an observation tour of a fishing port and the lakeshore. 44 species of waterbirds including 13 geese were observed.

Handouts:

- Notes for Waterbirds Observation Event Marathon in Biwa-ko
- Biwako Ramsar Network pamphlet
- Laminated leaflet of Biwako Ramsar Network

<http://www.biwa.ne.jp/~nio/image/2010event.gif>



A child excited to find his favorite bird



Inugami-gawaEstuary (Hikone)

### #13: Shimane Art Museum Exhibition: Getting to Know Nakaumi and Shinji-ko”

(Nakaumi Ramsar Site and Shinji-ko Ramsar Site)

Reporter/ Organizer: Shimane Prefecture

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> of January, 2011

Location: the 2<sup>nd</sup> gallery of Shimane Art Museum

Nakaumi and Shinji-ko both celebrated the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being designated as Ramsar Sites on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The exhibition was held to commemorate the anniversary in order to sustain and restore the lakes' fertile nature and blessings, which are internationally important heritage for



future generations. The exhibition was held jointly by Shimane and Tottori Prefectures, 5 local municipalities around Nakaumi, NGOs and local people.

<http://www.pref.shimane.lg.jp/environment/nature/shizen/ramsar/ramsar5thanniversary.html>

#### **#14: Let's Make Crafts of Creatures of Our Wetland!**

(Nakaumi Ramsar Site)

Reporter: Yonago Waterbirds Sanctuary (Manager: Nakaumi Waterbird International Exchange Foundation)

Date: February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011 10:00-15:00

Location: Yonago Waterbirds Sanctuary Nature Centre

Organizer: Nakaumi Waterbird International Exchange Foundation

This event was held as the 11<sup>th</sup> event of the “Kodomo Ramsar Club,” a series of monthly courses for elementary schoolchildren to observe nature. They made paper-clay crafts of living creatures that were seen during previous events in the wetland. Displaying their craftwork, they displayed their understanding of the biodiversity of the wetland. 20 children, 4 preschool children, 9 parents and 5 staff including 4 volunteers participated.

23 kinds of wetland creatures were made including Bewick's swan, white-tailed eagle, common shelduck, mallard, northern pintail, common pochard, tufted duck, Eurasian coot, kingfisher, Chinese pond turtle, soft-shelled turtle, red swamp crayfish, etc. Each piece was colored with paints.



Crafts made by children



Group picture

#### **#15: Shall we Taste? ~the Blessings of Nakaumi**

(Nakaumi Ramsar Site)

Reporter: Yonago Waterbirds Sanctuary (Manager: Nakaumi Waterbird International Exchange Foundation)

Date: February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011 10:00-13:00

Location: Yonago Waterbirds Sanctuary Nature Centre

Organizer: Nakaumi Waterbird International Exchange Foundation

Here, the monthly “Nature Cooking Class” celebrated WWD for its February event. The class aims to provide opportunities for schoolchildren and older people to cook the seafood of

Nakaumi, enjoy it and understand the preciousness of the wetland. 6 families (17 people in total: 6 parents, 9 schoolchildren and 2 preschool children) and 4 staff including 3 volunteers participated.

Each family enjoyed cooking and eating smoked Japanese sea perch, *Akagai-meshi* (rice cooked with ark-shell), *Akagai-jiru* (ark-shell soup) and smoked cheese.



Cooking *Akagai-jiru*



Prepared dishes (smoked Japanese sea perch, *Akagai-meshi* (rice cooked with ark-shell), *Akagai-jiru* (ark-shell soup) and smoked cheese)

<http://www.yonago-mizutori.com/event/2011/02/wwd2011.html>

## #16: Tottori Prefectural Office Exhibition “Getting to know Nakaumi and Shinji-ko ~celebrating the 5th anniversary of Ramsar designation”

(Nakaumi and Shinji-ko Ramsar Sites)

Reporter/ organizer: Tottori-prefecture

Date: February 2<sup>nd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Location: Entrance and observation room of Tottori Prefectural Office

Nakaumi and Shinji-ko are internationally important wetlands, designated as Ramsar Sites in November 2005. In October 2010, Shimane and Tottori Prefectures worked together to create an exhibition, symposium and exchange event between local and Korean children. These events raised awareness to maintain both lakes and their blessings for future generations, in accordance with the Ramsar key principles of “wetland conservation, wise use and CEPA.” This exhibition introduced part of the “5<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition.”



Exhibition at the prefectural office

<http://www.pref.tottori.lg.jp/dd.aspx?itemid=551634#itemid551634>

## #17~20: WWD events held at Shinjiko Green Park

(Shinji-ko Ramsar Site)

Reporter: Shinjiko Green Park

Location: YNOC

Organizer: Hoshizaki Green Foundation

**#17. “Making Kazamidori Weathercock,” Monthly Green Park event for February**

Date: February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011

About 30 participants made *Kazamidori* weathercocks using wood pieces and acorns. Using a wild bird guide, participants then added illustrations.

(picture) *Kazamidori* Weathercock made by a participant



**#18. “Let’s Try Making a Miniature Yoshizu Reed Tapestry Weaving!” Monthly Green Park event for March**

Date: February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011

The event aimed to make participants get familiar with the waterfront and reeds through weaving miniature reed tapestries using reeds from the lakeshore. The tapestry was about 30cm<sup>2</sup> and could be used as a wall decoration or carpet.

**#19. Shinjiko Green Park Monthly Nature Observation Tour “What are Birds in Rice-paddies like?”**

Date: February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011

After an indoor workshop about creatures inhabiting rice-paddies, participants went out to look for birds in rice-paddies. They went back inside after the observation field trip, which was shortened due to bad weather. They observed insects found in the reeds they caught, enjoyed quizzes about birds in rice-paddies, and had a lecture about rice-paddy creatures including birds, which were coordinated to convey the importance of rice-paddies.

(picture) Explaining biodiversity in rice-paddies



**#20. WWD exhibition “Wetlands and Forest Sugoroku Board Game”**

Date: February 2<sup>nd</sup>-March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011

This exhibition was of a *Sugoroku* board game that showed the importance of forests and their link to wetlands, and the seriousness of deforestation. Each participant filled out message cards on daily-life activities that would contribute to a better earth environment, then posted them onto the board game. The exhibition was held for visitors to the Shinjiko Green Park, mainly targeting children and their parents.

<http://www.green-f.or.jp/greenpar/ivent.html> (for event A-D)



**#21~22: WWD events held by Shinjiko Nature Museum Gobius**

(Shinji-ko Ramsar Site)

Reporter/ organizer: Shinjiko Nature Museum Gobius

Location: Shinjiko Nature Museum Gobius

**#21. GobiusWildlife Observation Workshop “Let’s Examine Whitebait!”**

Date: February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011

This was a study workshop about whitebait, listed as one of the “7 Best Delicacies of Shinjiko.” First there was a lecture on the characteristics of the fish, such as its scent resembling watermelons, and the fact that females lack scales. Then staff demonstrated the artificial insemination of whitebait. Participants enjoyed this rare experience with some wishing for the healthy development of the eggs.

(picture) A parent and child observing whitebait

[http://www.gobius.jp/kansatsu\\_02.html](http://www.gobius.jp/kansatsu_02.html)



**#22. WWD exhibition: Introduction of “World Wetlands Day ~Forests for Water and Wetlands~”**

Date: January 26th, 2011~

The museum has a special exhibition area for the Ramsar Convention and holds related exhibitions throughout the year. This February, a panel exhibition was held on World Wetlands Day and the relationship between forests and Shinjiko and Nakaumi, as a dedication to the WWD 2011 theme “Forests and Wetlands.”

