

# World Wetlands Day 2012 Events in Japan

April 2012, Wetlands International Japan

This is a collection of reports from World Wetlands Day (WWD) 2012 in Japan, which was submitted by Ramsar-related municipalities and organizations including members of the Domestic Ramsar Committee for Relevant Municipalities. Reports were collected by Wetlands International Japan through a questionnaire sent in March 2012.

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## 1. Sarobetsu Snowshoe Hike in Woods! (Sarobetsu-genya)

Reporter/ Organizer: NPO Sarobetsu Eco Network

Co-Organizer: Wakkanai Ranger Office, Ministry of the Environment of Japan

Date: February 11, 2012 Location: Sarobetsu Wetland Center

-This snowshoe hike aimed to create an opportunity to think about the wetland and share its importance by observing its relationship with forests as well as the flora and fauna there.

-There were 6 participants from Sarobetsu Town.

-They walked from "Maruyama-no-mori" (Maruyama Forest) to Satobetsu-genya on snowshoe while enjoying nature games. Many small wild birds were observed in the forest.

Picture 1: Strolling in Maruyama Forest,

Picture 2: Observing wild birds in the forest



## 2. Exploring the Frozen Mire~ 8th Field Workshop: At the Interface between Mire and Human Livelihoods 5~ (Kushiro-shitsugen)

Reporter: The Kushiro Wetland Restoration Committee, Bureau of Public Awareness Action Plan Working Group

Date: February 7, 2012

Location: Kottaro Wetland

-Participants enjoyed the pristine scenery of Kushiro-river while walking along the river path. Then, they entered into the untouched winter mire from which spring water flowed.

-The workshop was facilitated by Mr. Hisashi Shinsho (Chairman of the Working Group, Environmental Facilitator).

-23 Participants comprising applicants of the *Wondergreenda* Project (a network linking activities in Kushiro-shitsugen) and members of the Kushiro Wetland Restoration Dissemination Subcommittee took part.

-They explored the largely untouched heart of the moor, traversing the trackless mire on snowshoe, observing the unfrozen spring and blowing bubbles with reed straws – allowing the opportunity to experience both the richness of nature and enjoyment of the mire. The white-tailed eagle circling over the fanciful fog inspired participants to share the mire with others.



Picture 1: Blowing rainbow bubbles with reed straws in the winter mire

Picture 2: River remains unfrozen even below -15°C near springs

## 3. Winter Wetland Tour for WWD 2012 (Kushiro-shitsugen)

Reporter/ Organizer: Kushiro International Wetland Centre

Date: February 7, 2012

Location: Lake Shirarutoro

-There were 25 participants ranging from elementary schoolchildren to adults in their 80s.

-They boarded the steam locomotive (which operates only in winter) and enjoyed sights of the mire and wildlife including red-crowned cranes en route to Kayanuma district.



-There they strolled the forests near Lake Shirarutoro and on the frozen lake while observing the ice and the footprints of wildlife, etc.

-Afterwards, they went to a local famous hot spring facility for an enjoyable soak. Others made clay figurines of cranes by drawing from memories of the wetland tour.

<http://www.kiwc.net/english/k/2011katsu.html>

Picture 1: Stroll along the lakeshore

Picture 2: Getting a feel for the scale of the lake and the sound of nature



#### 4. Yatsu-higata Eco-action: Let's Clean the Tidal Flat (Yatsu-higata)

Reporter/ Organizer: Urban-Nature Management Service (UMS), official manager of YNOC by appointment of Narashino City      Date: February 11, 2012

Location: Yatsuhigata Nature Observation Center (YNOC)

The event was conducted to provide an opportunity to participate in an environmental conservation activity in Yatsu-higata. There were 60 participants from the general public and Yatsu-higata Junior Rangers. After listening to lectures on World Wetlands Day and Yatsu-higata as a Ramsar Site, they collected garbage washed ashore onto the tidal flat.

<http://www.yatsuhigata.jp/report/20120211.html>

Picture 1: Children searching for small garbage

Picture 2: Collected garbage that was washed ashore



#### 5. Exhibition "Wetlands and Tourism" (Yatsu-higata)

Reporter/ Organizer: Urban-Nature Management Service (UMS), official manager of YNOC by appointment of Narashino City

Date: February 1-29, 2012

Location: Yatsuhigata Nature Observation Center

This exhibition aimed to provide background on the development and importance of sustainable tourism through an introduction of World Wetlands Day, its theme "Wetlands and Tourism" and tourism in specific Ramsar Sites and tidal flats.

Picture: World Wetlands Day Exhibition



## 6. Annual Waterbirds Observation Event Marathon in Biwa-ko (Biwa-ko)

Reporter/ Organizer: Biwako Ramsar Network

Date: January 28 and February 5, 2012

Location: 8 sites on Biwa-ko lakeshore

-This event has been conducted annually since the Ramsar designation of Biwa-ko in 1995.

-It aims for participants to get to know water birds, experience the beauty of the Ramsar Site Biwa-ko and to think about the importance of nature.

-There were approximately 190 participants from the general public.

<http://www.pref.shiga.jp/d/shizenhogo/ramsaru/>

Picture: Participants looking into a telescope



## 7. Meeting for Bewick's Swans and Middendorf's Bean Geese, Party for Tasting Lake Fishes, Excursion for Wetland and Waterfowls in Biwa-ko (Biwa-ko)

Reporter: Jun Ueda (Biwa-ko Waterfowl and Wetland Center: BWWC)

Organizer: Biodiversity Center of Japan, Ministry of the Environment and Bird Research

Date: January 21 and 22, 2012

Location: Biwa-ko Waterfowl and Wetland Center, Kohoku-cho, Nagahama-city, Shiga Prefecture, Japan

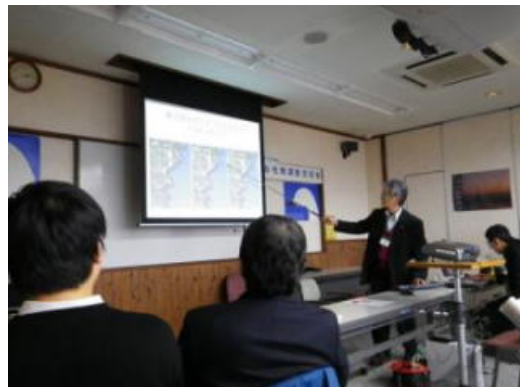
-On January 21 and 22, 2012, the meeting for “Monitoring Site 1000 Anatidae Survey” was held in BWWC. The meeting was hosted by Biodiversity Center of Japan, Ministry of the Environment, and arranged by Bird Research.

-Bewick's Swans and Middendorf's Bean Geese are regularly wintering in Kohoku, and widely observed by many tourists. In the meeting there were lectures about their routes of wintering areas Hokuriku. The areas are located in Niigawa, Ishikawa, and Fukui, which are all along Japan sea coast, and Shiga.

If there is heavy snowfall in Hokuriku area, Bewick's Swans and Middendorf's Bean Geese change their wintering sites to southern locations like Kohoku and Shiga. Regular wintering number of Bewick's Swans in Kohoku is about 300 to 600, but 905 swans were recorded in 2005-2006 winter because of heavy snowfall in Hokuriku.

-In the 21th evening, at the special dinner party for tasting different types of lake fishes in cuisine Inn “Uwoyoshi”, participants of the meeting enjoyed eating various kinds of dishes. While they enjoyed the dinner, workers of Inn explained how to catch fish and cook it.

Those dishes are: Funa (crucian carp)'s sashimi, raw Funa dusted with their eggs, Hiuwō



(juveniles of Ayu)'s chawan-mushi (Egg custard), Fried wakasagi (Wakasagi tempura), Isaza (Gobies)'s tsukudani (boiled in soy sauce), Eel Sukiyaki.

The best delicacy was Funazushi (fermented crucian carp). Funazushi, the specialty of Shiga prefecture, has an overpowering smell, which discourages many people from trying it. However, some people found its sharp and vinegary taste quite delicious at the first time.



-At the excursion on January 22th, participants went to watch the roosting site of Bewick's Swans in biotope rice paddy in Hayasaki, and their foraging site in rice paddy, a resting female Steller's Sea Eagle in Yamamoto-yama (Mt. Yamamoto). Thereafter participants took a special fishing vessel, so called "Lake Taxi". It was converted from a regular fishing boat to a sightseeing one. We watched the pelagic areas where the most number of waterfowls were recorded in Biwa-ko, and saw "Eri", traditional fixed-shorenet in Biwa-ko. Fisherman, Mr. Masatomi Matsuoka explained how to catch fishes.

We found several hundreds of the Baikal teals flying. At the moment, Mr. Yoshio Yamamoto confirmed two electric waves by his receiver. Those waves were coming from transmitters which were attached to Baikal teals in Katano-kamoike pond. It is a Ramsar Site located in Ishikawa. This is the first time that Baikal teals from Kamoike pond were located in Lake Biwa.



Picture 1: The meeting for "Monitoring Site 1000 Anatidae Survey"

Picture 2: Funa (crucian carp)'s sashimi, raw Funa dusted with their eggs

Picture 3: In "Lake Taxi", fisherman, Mr. Masatomi Matsuoka explained how to catch fishes

<http://homepage2.nifty.com/Larus/WWD2012inKOHOKUeng.htm> A link to whole text written by the Biwa-ko Wetland Study Group, which includes links to event programme, report about Baikal teals wave by Mr. Yamamoto, and participants' reports.

## 8. Shall we Taste? ~the Blessings of Nakaumi (Nakaumi)

Reporter/ Organizer: Nakaumi International Exchange Fund Foundation

Date: February 19, 2012

Location: Yonago Waterbird Sanctuary

-This event was held in order for participants to realize the importance of wetlands through cooking and tasting delicious aquatic products caught in the



local wetland Nakaumi.

Picture 1: Participants cooking the blessings of Nakaumi

Picture 2: Participants and their prepared dishes



## 9. The 11th event of the Kodomo Ramsar Club 2011 "Let's Make Crafts of Creatures from our Wetland!" (Nakaumi)

Reporter/ Organizer: Nakaumi International Exchange Fund Foundation

Date: February 12, 2012

Location: Yonago Waterbird Sanctuary

-This event was held as the 11<sup>th</sup> event of the "Kodomo Ramsar Club," a series of monthly courses in which elementary schoolchildren observe nature. Reflecting on past events, it aimed for children to become aware of wetland biodiversity and realize its importance as a habitat for living creatures.



-They made paper-clay crafts of living creatures that were seen during previous events in the wetland.

-32 local participants included 19 schoolchildren, 2 preschool children and 11 parents,.

<http://www.yonago-mizutori.com/blog/2012/02/post-860.html>

Picture 1: Group photo

Picture 2: Lecture on the shape of waterfowl bills and the reasons behind them

Picture 3: Crafts made by the children



## 10. Shinji-ko Learning Seminar "Prey of Waterfowl" (Shinji-ko)

Reporter/ Organizer: Hoshizaki Green Foundation

Date: February 5, 2012

Location: Hoshizaki Institute for Wildlife Protection

- Public seminar on Ramsar Site Shinji-ko and Nakaumi, which provide migrating sites for thousands of waterfowl every winter. These birds are a threat to freshwater and *asari* clams. With a focus on creatures striving to survive in a significantly changed lakebed environment, the event was aimed at thinking about the wetland along with its beautiful landscapes.

Picture 1: Lecture by Mr. Masami Hamaguchi

Picture 2: Seminar hall



## 11. Shinjiko Green Park Exhibition "Attraction of Shinji-ko" (Shinji-ko)

Reporter/ Organizer: Hoshizaki Green Foundation

Date: February 22- April 2, 2012

Location: Shinjiko Green Park

-This exhibition intended to provide an opportunity for visitors to realize the good aspects of Shinji-ko by introducing the charms of "Shinji-ko" from the unique viewpoint of Shinjiko Green Park.

-It included film footage of white-fronted geese flying out from their roost, a beautiful photo gallery of the scenery of the lake, a fishing game corner and a "Birdwatching Etiquette Quiz."

Picture 1: Exhibition hall

Picture 2: Fishing game with birds in Shinji-ko



## 12. Exhibition and Tasting of Blessings of Manko (Manko)

Reporter: Manko Waterbird and Wetland Center

Organizer: Manko Waterbird and Wetland Center Management Committee

Date: February 19, 2012

Location: Manko Waterbird and Wetland Center

- The exhibition was held in order to provide an opportunity for visitors to feel closer to Manko and rediscover its attractions, as well as to collect information on the food culture of the tidal flat through a diet-themed exhibition and tastings of local seafood.
- Exhibition included *okishijimi* clams, *gazami* crabs and tofu.
- Tastings of miso soup made with crab and fish found in Manko were offered. There were 47 participants spanning a variety of generations.

[http://www.geocities.jp/manko\\_mizudori/](http://www.geocities.jp/manko_mizudori/)

## 13. NAGURA AMPARU Tideland Observation events (Nagura Amparu)

Reporter/ Organizer: Ministry of the Environment Naha Nature Conservation Office, Ishigaki Ranger Office

Date: February 25, 2012

Location: Nagura Amparu

- This observation event was aimed at creating an opportunity for participants to realize the role of the tidal flat and its importance and to deepen understanding of the link between tidal flats and us humans in order to raise concern for nature conservation.
- It took place at Nagura Amparu, an estuarine tidal flat. 20 participants above schoolchildren age participated.
- They explored the tidal flat in drizzling rain for about 1 hour in two teams.

Picture 1: Gathering under the Nagura Bridge

Picture 2: The “Fish team” caught and observed aquatic animals

Picture 3: The “Plant team” took part in a lecture about mangroves

