

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

1. Country: Japan

2. Date:

3. Ref: 2J008

4. Name and address of compiler:

Yoshihiro Natori, Wildlife Protection Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Environment Agency,
1-2-2 Kasumigaseki
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100 Japan

5. Name of wetlands: *Katano-kamoike*

6. Date of Ramsar designation: 10 June 1993

7. Geographical coordinates: 36° 19' N 136° 17'E

8. General location:

Katano-machi, Kaga City, Ishikawa Prefecture. In southern Ishikawa, 5km north-west of the centre of Kaga City.

9. Area: 10ha

10. Wetland type: S (freshwater marsh/pond permanent)

11. Altitude: The entire area lies between 2.5m and 8.0m above sea level.

12. Overview:

A basin with a pond and marsh. The largest hibernating area for *Anser albifrons* and *Anser fabalis* in western Japan, it attracts more than 10,000 anatids, including *Anas platyrhynchos* and *Anas formosa* every winter.

13. Physical features:

About 10,000 years ago, erosion began to take place, due to a lowering in the level of the Sea of Japan. 1,000 years ago, sand and gravel accumulated on the eroded valley, forming a new plain. Then about 500 years ago, sand dunes which developed along the Sea of Japan caused the valley to be filled in, water accumulated and the pond was formed. The area consists of a pond 2.5ha in area (and 2.5m deep at its deepest part) and marsh land. Two waterways originating in the hills to the east supply the pond's water. During the winter, as the marshy area is filled with water and unites with the pond, waterfowl use it as a resting place. From May to August, water from the pond flows into the rice paddies to the north, so the pond also functions as an agricultural reservoir. The quality of the water flowing into the pond is fairly good. The climate of the Hokuriku region is referred to as being of the "Japan sea type" which is characterised by a lot of rain, cold north-west wind and changeable weather. However, because Kaga City is close to the sea, the weather is rather warm, with an average yearly temperature of 13.9°C. The coldest it becomes in winter is around 0°C and very little snow accumulates.

14. Ecological features:

Trapa Linn japonica grows abundantly in the pond, and at about the same depth there is an area of *Nuphar Smith japonicum*. Until the mid 1980s, rice had been grown in marshy districts, but this is no longer the case. Now *Zizania Linn latifolia* and *Phragmites Adans communis* grow in abundance where there was once rice. The hills around the wetland are covered with forest; predominantly *Pinus*

Linn densiflora and Quercus Linn serrata, but the area is also dotted with evergreen broadleaf trees such as Machilus Nees thunbergii and Castanopsis Spach cuspidata. In order to ensure sufficient water surface for waterfowl of the Anatidae family, some of the wetland plants are cut every autumn.

15. Land tenure/ownership of:

(a) site: Privately owned land 6.9ha; Public land 0.8ha; privately owned pond 2.5ha.

(b) surrounding area:

16. Conservation measures taken:

The entire wetland was designated as a special protection zone of a prefectural wildlife protection area in 1968, as a prefectural natural monument in 1969, and as a special protection zone of the Echizen Kaga Coast Quasi-National Park class 2 in 1968. In this area, construction, modification of land, mining, reclamation, changing the water level and taking wildlife are prohibited without the permission of the governor.

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

The following two changes are planned for the near future: 1) The special protection area of the prefectural wildlife protection area will be changed to a special protection area of a national wildlife protection area; 2) The special protection zone of the Echizen Kaga Coast Quasi National Park class 2 will be changed to class 1.

18. Current land use:

(a) site: The whole area has been designated as a special protection zone of a prefectural wildlife protection area. It consists of a 2.5ha pond and a 6.9ha marshy area. Water from the pond is used to irrigate nearby rice paddies and the marshy area becomes full of water in the autumn. In the wetland area is the Kaga City Kamoike Sanctuary Visitor Centre, which attracts many people for bird-watching and nature appreciation.

(b) surroundings/catchment: The area surrounding the wetland is made up of both national government and privately-owned forests, of which approximately 100ha have been designated as hunting ground. In this area, only the traditional method of hunting using nets is permitted for the hunting of wildfowl of the Anatidae family. In the eastern part of the wetland is the Shimofukuda Reservoir, which supplies water to the pond.

19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects:

(a) at the site: As the marshy areas adjacent to the pond have not been farmed for a long time, watercourses and paths have disintegrated. Also the growth of plants such as Zizania Linn latifolia and Phragmites Adans communis has been gradually changing the wildfowl's habitat conditions.

(b) in the surroundings/catchment: None

20. Hydrological and physical values:

Pond water comes from two watercourses and as it is used to irrigate the rice paddies to the north, it also serves to control the level and purity of the wetland water.

21. Social and cultural values:

The traditional net hunting technique which has been practised in the hills near the wetland for 300 years has been designated as a prefectural ethnic cultural asset.

22. Noteworthy fauna:

This is the largest hibernation area for Anser albifrons and Anser fabalis in western Japan. During the winter, more than 10,000 birds of the Anatidae family, including Anas platyrhynchos and Anas formosa gather here. The wetland is a very important visiting place for migratory birds, the species of which number about 190. These include species designated as national rare wild species, such as Accipiter gentilis and Haliaeetus albicilla.

23. Noteworthy flora: None

24. Current scientific research and facilities:

Specialists at the Kamoike Sanctuary Visitor Centre are observing vegetation and animal life, as well as environmental changes.

25. Current conservation education:

Nature conservation education is carried out by specialists at the Visitor Centre.

26. Current recreation and tourism:

The "Gankamo Matsuri" (Festival of Anatidae family waterfowl) is held annually by the Kamoike Visitor Centre Friendship Association.

27. Management authority:

Social Education Division, Kaga City Board of Education, Ni 41, Daishoji Minami-machi, Kaga-shi, Ishikawa 922, Japan

28. Jurisdiction:

Territorial conservation jurisdiction: Birds and Beasts Section, Nature Conservation Division, Ishikawa Prefectural Government. Functional conservation jurisdiction: Wildlife Protection Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Environment Agency of Japan.

29. Bibliographical references:

Japan Wild Birds Society 1985. Report on basic research for an environmental management plan for Katano-Kamoike Sanctuary, trust of Kaga City.

Japan Wild Birds Society 1986. Report on plans for a "Wild Birds Paradise" area in Kaga City, to be a trust of Kaga City.

30. Reasons for inclusion: 3(b)