



# Ramsar Sites Information Service

## Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

# Japan

53 Ramsar Site(s) covering 155,174 ha

### Akan-ko

Site number: 1,540 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido Prefecture

Area: 1,318 ha | Coordinates: 43°27'N 144°06'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Akan-ko. 08/11/05; Hokkaido; 1,318ha; 43°27'N 144°06'E. National Park. A freshwater caldera lake lying between two active volcanoes, Me-akandake and O-akandake, formed by volcanic subsidence. A number of rare aquatic freshwater algae, particularly the well-known Marimo *Cladophora aegagropila* are observed. The lake is also an important habitat for the largest freshwater fish in Japan, Japanese Huchen *Hucho perryi* and Kokanee *Oncorhynchus nerka*. In addition, 65 species of birds and 24 mammals, for example, Eurasian Brown Bear and Yezo Sika Deer, also depend on the lake ecosystem. The lake is surrounded by mixed forests of conifers and deciduous trees such as Ezo Spruce *Picea jezoensis*, Sakhalin Fir *Abies sachalinensis*, and Japanese oaks. Main landuses include hydroelectric power generation, fishery, aquaculture, and boating. At Akan Lakeside Eco-Museum Center and Marimo Exhibition Center, visitors, about 1.56 million per year, learn about the history of the lake and the status of Marimo and fish species. Ramsar site no. 1540. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

### Akiyoshidai Groundwater System

Site number: 1,541 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Yamaguchi Prefecture

Area: 563 ha | Coordinates: 34°15'N 131°18'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Akiyoshidai Groundwater System. 08/11/05; Yamaguchi; 563 ha; 34°15'N 131°18'E. "Quasi-National Park". One of Japan's largest karst topographies, situated in western Honshu with the karst tableland extending 13,000 ha on a gradual plateau and centrally located groundwater system developed underneath, forming three limestone caves of Akiyoshido, Taisido and Kagekiyodo. 'Karrenfeld' pinnacles and small dolines on the tableland are observed. Sometimes an ephemeral lake appears in Kaerimizu Uvala which functions as a rainwater drain. The site functions as a groundwater recharge area with some 50m deep springs observed in the downstream of Koto-gasa river to Aokaga-gawa river. The site is important for unique organisms endemic to caves in the area, including *Sinella akiyoshiana*, *Allochthoniue kobayashii akiyoshiensis*, numerous shellfish and several species of bats such as Horseshoe bat and Eastern Bent-winged bat. The area is surrounded by karst grasslands with fringe Kama poljes which are used in some parts as paddy fields. Akiyoshidai is a Quasi-National Park with approximately 900,000 tourists visiting every year. The Natural History Museum conducts regular research. Ramsar site no. 1541. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Akkeshi-ko and Bekambeushi-shitsugen

Site number: 614 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido

Area: 5,277 ha | Coordinates: 43°03'N 144°54'E | Designation dates: 10-06-1993

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Akkeshi-ko & Bekambeushi-shitsugen. 10/06/93; Hokkaido; 5,277 ha; 43°03'N 144°54'E. National Wildlife Protection Area; Natural Park; Natural Monument; Anatidae & Crane Network Site. A brackish lake with river inflow, surrounded by saltmarsh, extensive fens, and bogs and connected to the sea. The mire supports oyster and clam fisheries and numerous bird and plant species. Current land use includes fishing, aquaculture, tourism and forestry. The condition of the Manchurian Crane habitat is monitored. Ramsar site no. 614. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Arao-higata

Site number: 2,054 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Kyushu-Okinawa

Area: 754 ha | Coordinates: 32°58'09"N 130°25'30"E | Designation dates: 07-03-2012

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Arao-higata. 03/07/12; Kumamoto; 754 ha; 32°58'10"N 130°25'30"E. National Wildlife Protection Area. Arao-higata is situated in the eastern side of the central part of the Sea of Ariake and is the largest single tidal flat in the Central Kuroshio Current biogeographic region. The site serves as an important wintering and stopping point for the migratory waterbirds along the East Asia-Australasian Flyway, including shorebirds which feed on the biota of the tidal flats. The endangered Black faced spoonbill *Platalea minor* and the vulnerable Saunder's gull *Larus saundersi* occur and the site regularly supports more than 1% of the world population of the latter. Commercial laver (seaweed) culture and fishing for short-neck clams are carried out in the site. Ramsar Site no. 2054. Most recent RIS information: 2012.

## Biwa-ko

Site number: 617 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Shiga Prefecture

Area: 65,984 ha | Coordinates: 35°15'N 136°04'59"E | Designation dates: 10-06-1993

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Biwa-ko. 10/06/93; Shiga, Honshu; 65,984ha; 35°15'N 136°05'E. Lake Biwa Quasi National Park Special Zone; Wildlife Protection Area; Anatidae Network Site. Surrounded by vast reedbeds, the country's largest lake is the world's third oldest. Seventy species of aquatic plants have been recorded, as well as numerous relict plants. 53 species of fish, of which 11 are indigenous, and 172 bird species use the area for feeding, roosting or staging. Waterbird counts record over 50,000 birds annually. Most of the site is composed of beaches or natural and urban park zones used for tourism and recreation. Pearl and fish production are economically important. There is increasing urban demand for water from the lake. Ramsar site no. 617. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

## Fujimae-higata

Site number: 1,200 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Aichi Prefecture

Area: 323 ha | Coordinates: 35°04'26"N 136°50'17"E | Designation dates: 18-11-2002

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is a tidal flat lying at the mouths of the Shonai, Shinkawa, and Nikko rivers where they flow into the port of Nagoya. The downstream banks of the Shonia and Shinkawa rivers, which are covered with reedbeds, and the connecting intertidal flats provide important staging areas for birds migrating along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. The lower part of the Nikko river maintains a relatively stable flow which is suitable for freshwater ducks. About 20,000 waterbirds have been regularly recorded at the Site every year, including at least 1% of the flyway populations of northern pintail (*Anas acuta*), common cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) and great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*). The Site is also visited by a number of endangered species, including the Nordmann's greenshank (*Tringa guttifer*), the eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*) and the Japanese eel (*Anguilla japonica*). Once part of extensive tidal flats in the northern part of Ise Bay, the Site remains relatively unaltered amid widespread development of the surrounding areas. When plans to "reclaim" the entire tidal flat for a waste dumping site were abandoned by the city council, this popular site with bird watchers became a symbol of the wetland conservation movement in Japan.

## Furen-ko and Shunkuni-tai

Site number: 1,542 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido Prefecture

Area: 6,139 ha | Coordinates: 43°18'N 145°21'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Furen-ko and Shunkuni-tai. 08/11/05; Hokkaido; 6,139 ha; 43°18'N 145°21'E. NWP. Furen-ko is a brackish lagoon, low moor and sea grass beds that used to be a part of the sea on the base of Nemuro peninsula at the northeastern tip of Japan. Among 13 rivers flowing into Furen-ko, the estuary of the Furen River has developed into a saltmarsh forming a vast landscape. Shunkuni-tai resembles a lid on Furen-ko lagoon consisting of 3 rows of ancient sand dunes covered by Sakhalin Spruce *Picea glehnii* forest. 280 species of birds were recorded in this site including globally endangered *Grus japonensis*, *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*, and rare White-tailed Sea Eagle, Steller's Eagle, Black Woodpecker and Blakiston's Fish Owl. Fishery, aquaculture, harvesting of clams and tourism are the main activities. Shunkuni-tai Wildbird Nature Center attracts 10,000 visitors annually. Various nature observation programmes are conducted by local NGOs and other organizations. Ramsar site no. 1542. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Higashiyoka-higata

Site number: 2,234 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Saga City, Saga Prefecture, Kyushu Okinawa region

Area: 218 ha | Coordinates: 33°10'30"N 130°15'47"E | Designation dates: 28-05-2015

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Higashiyoka-higata is a tidal mudflat at the mouths of Honshoe River and Hattae River on the north shore of the innermost section of Ariake Bay. The Site is internationally important in the life cycle of migratory waterbirds, acting as a stopover and a wintering site. About 7,000 migratory shorebirds are recorded from autumn to spring, including over 1% of the flyway populations of the grey plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*). The Site also support globally threatened waterbirds, such as the critically endangered spoon-billed sandpiper (*Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*), the endangered black-faced spoonbill (*Platalea minor*), and the vulnerable far eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*) and Saunders's gull (*Chroicocephalus saundersi*). More than 1% of the flyway population of Saunders's gull occur at the Site. A rich biodiversity can be found on the mudflat, including fish, benthos, and halophytes, due to the warm climate, large tidal variation, and shoals which facilitate sediment deposition. Over the years, the extensive mudflats around the Ariake Bay have been subjected to land reclamation and the construction of dykes. As a result, Higashiyoka-higata, together with the two other coastal Ramsar Sites in Ariake Bay, Arao-higata and Hizen Kashima-higata, has an increasingly important role in biodiversity conservation in the Bay. The Higashiyoka-higata mudflats are also locally important as a fishing site and for supporting local cultural practices.

## Hinuma

Site number: 2,232 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Ibaraki Town, Oarai Town and Hokota City, Ibaraki Prefecture, Kanto region

Area: 935 ha | Coordinates: 36°16'41"N 140°30'16"E | Designation dates: 28-05-2015

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

About 6,000 years ago a rise in sea level on the east coast of Honshu Island formed a cove, and subsequently the narrowing of the cove's entrance with sand from rivers made it into a brackish lake, namely Hinuma. The seawater flows ten kilometres upstream to Hinuma through Naka River and Hinuma River at high tide, and blends with freshwater. Hinuma provides habitats for many species, including nationally endangered species such as the four-spot damselfly (*Mortonagrion hirosei*) and Steller's sea eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*) during important stages of their lives. More than 88 species of birds are observed at Hinuma. In winter, more than 10,000 ducks such as mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and greater scaup (*Aythya marila*) migrate to Hinuma to feed and roost. The number of greater scaup wintering at Hinuma is estimated at around 5,000 individuals annually and accounts for more than 1% of its population in East Asia. Hinuma has also long been a fishing site for brackish fishes and clams such as Asian clams, gobies and pond smelts.

## Hizen Kashima-higata

Site number: 2,235 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Kashima City, Saga Prefecture, Kyushu Okinawa Area

Area: 57 ha | Coordinates: 33°06'45"N 130°07'45"E | Designation dates: 28-05-2015

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Hizen Kashima-higata is a tidal mudflat at the mouths of Shiota River and Kashima River on the western shore of the Ariake Bay. Although the Site is part of the Central Kuroshio Current biogeographical region, the water is brackish rather than marine because it is about 100 km away from the mouth of the Bay. The Site is internationally important in the life cycle of migratory waterbirds, acting as an important stopover and wintering site for globally threatened species such as the endangered black-faced spoonbill (*Platalea minor*), and the vulnerable Saunders's gull (*Chroicocephalus saundersi*) and far eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*). It hosts more than 1% of the flyway populations of Saunders's gull, black-faced spoonbill and whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*). The mudflat has a rich biodiversity, including fish, benthos, and halophytes, due to the warm climate, large tidal variation, and shoals which facilitate sediment deposition. Over the years, the extensive mudflats around the Ariake Bay have been subjected to land reclamation and the construction of dykes. As a result, Hizen Kashima-higata, together with the two other coastal Ramsar Sites in Ariake Bay, Arao-higata and Higashiyoka-higata, has an increasingly important role in biodiversity conservation in the Bay. Hizen Kashima-higata is also important for supporting the livelihood of the local communities and for its cultural value that stems from traditional fishing and recreational activities.

## Hotokenuma

Site number: 1,543 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Aomori

Area: 222 ha | Coordinates: 40°40'N 141°22'59"E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Hotokenuma. 08/11/05; Aomori; 222 ha; 40°49'N 141°23'E. NWPA. Hotokenuma lies at the Pacific coast of Shimokita-Hanto peninsula, connected to the largest lake Ogawara-ko. It was part of the converted ricefields under a reclamation project in the early 1960s which was later suspended by the government, when Hotokenuma became an undisturbed reedlands owned by the Misawa city. It is a low moor dominated by common reed, *Phragmites communis*. Hotokenuma was brought to public attention for the sighting of IUCN Redlisted Japanese Marsh Warbler *Locustella pryeri*, a species found only in some parts of China and Japan with last remaining world population of 2500. It is also a breeding site for endangered Japanese Reed-bunting and Schrenck's Bittern and important staging site for migratory waterbirds. Apart from the special wildlife protection, a nature conservation programme was conducted in the past. Ramsar site no. 1543. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Hyo-ko

Site number: 1,842 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Agano City, Niigata Prefecture

Area: 24 ha | Coordinates: 37°50'21"N 139°14'17"E | Designation dates: 30-10-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is a small wetland consisting of man-made ponds that were constructed initially for irrigation purposes in Agano City. At present, these ponds serve as habitats for various plants and animals including threatened species such as Japanese crucian carp (*Carassius cuvieri*) and common pochard (*Aythya ferina*). At least 117 bird species have been recorded here, among which many are migratory and use the Site as non-breeding habitats. The Site is particularly important for the conservation of tundra swan (*Cygnus columbianus*), as over 3,000 individuals migrate here every year. It also shelters about 3% of the regional population of northern pintail (*Anas acuta*). Hunting is prohibited at the Site and local residents are involved in its conservation. Dredging and invasive species are major threats, but a management plan is being implemented. The Site has also been designated as a Special Protection Area within the Hyo-ko National Wild Protection Area.

## Imuta-ike

Site number: 1,544 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Kagoshima Prefecture

Area: 60 ha | Coordinates: 31°49'N 130°28'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Imuta-ike. 08/11/05; Kagoshima; 60 ha; 31°49'N 130°28'E. Natural Habitat Conservation Area, Natural Monument. In Satuma-sendai city, outflowing to the Sendai River and surrounded by a small cluster of volcanoes, the freshwater crater lake Imuta-ike of Iimori Mountain forms a crucial component of its surrounding lake-low moor ecosystem. At the northwest, the peat 'islands' are considered a national natural monument serving an ideal for *Phragmites japonica*, *Zizania latifolia* Manchurian Wild-rice, and *Nymphaea tetragona* Pygmy Water Lily. The lake is a conservation priority for many species of dragonfly including IUCN Redlisted critically endangered *Libellula angelina*. It is also a breeding site for Spot-billed duck and habitat for various other waterfowl. Scarcity of human settlements in the area has kept its pristine environment, although water is utilized for irrigation downstream. The city government established a Ecosystem Preservation Museum to raise public awareness of the site's diversity, especially the peat plant communities, using interpretive panels, models, visual images and training sessions. Annually, about 35,000 tourists visit the site for sight-seeing, fishing and canoeing. Ramsar site no. 1544. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Izumi Wintering Habitat of Cranes

Site number: 2,462 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Izumi City / Kagoshima Prefecture / Kyushu and Okinawa region of Japan

Area: 478 ha | Coordinates: 32°06'18"N 130°16'49"E | Designation dates: 18-11-2021

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is located at the end of the Izumi alluvial fan, where three rivers converge: the Takaono, the Noda and the Euchi. It is mainly covered with rice paddies, together with open water at the estuaries and sandbars that appear during low tides. This area is one of the best birdwatching sites in Japan, with about 300 of the 650 species of wild birds in the country. The wetland is known as an internationally important wintering site for endangered crane species, including almost all of the global population of hooded crane (*Grus monacha*) and about half of the global population of white-naped crane (*Grus vipio*). It also provides shelter for the vulnerable common pochard (*Aythya ferina*). To facilitate crane conservation, the local government established the Council for Crane Conservation Measures of Kagoshima Prefecture in the mid-1950s, and later the Kagoshima Crane Conservancy. Local junior high school students have been conducting crane count surveys since 1960, continuing to this day for 62 years. The area was designated as a national special natural monument in 1952, and the no-hunting zone was expanded in 1962. The Izumi-Takaono National Wildlife Protection Area special protection zone was designated in 1987 and extended in 2021. The Izumi Wintering Habitat of Cranes provides numerous services to surrounding communities, including food production, maintenance of hydrological regimes, hazard reduction, tourism and religious activities.

## Izu-numa and Uchi-numa

Site number: 318 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Miyagi Prefecture, Honshu

Area: 559 ha | Coordinates: 38°43'N 141°06'E | Designation dates: 13-09-1985

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Izu-numa & Uchi-numa. 13/09/85; Miyagi, Honshu; 559 ha; 38°43'N 141°06'E. National Wildlife Protection Area; Nature Conservation Area. Two interconnected freshwater lakes supporting fringing peat swamps, reedbeds, and submerged vegetation. One of the few Japanese localities for wild rice, an important food source for wintering Anatidae (ducks, geese, swans, etc.). The current research focuses on wintering bird populations and the declining growth of wild rice. Principal human activities are nature conservation and fishing. Surrounding areas support rice-growing and pastoralism. Ramsar site no. 318. Most recent RIS information: 1992.

## Kabukuri-numa and the surrounding rice paddies

Site number: 1,545 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Miyagi Prefecture  
Area: 423 ha | Coordinates: 38°37'59"N 141°06'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Kabukuri-numa and the surrounding rice paddies. 08/11/05; Miyagi; 423 ha; 38°38'N 141°06'E. NHPA. One of the largest wintering sites for Anser albifrons White-fronted Goose (7.86%-18.46% East Eurasian Population), Anser fabalis middendorffii Bean Goose, Whooper Swan and, in total, 230 bird species for breeding, foraging and roosting. The lake is inhabited by typical lowland swamp vegetation of Manchurian wild rice and reeds, with willows along the shores and rare species of Penthorum chinensis. About 22 species of dragonflies and various freshwater fishes are found. For managing the wintering ground, measures such as water management, clean-ups, channel maintenance and water quality improvement are regularly conducted. In winter and post-harvest, the rice fields are left flooded for wildbirds to winter in the site; later the nutrient-rich soil from droppings is used as natural fertiliser for the wild rice, in addition to controlling weeds and pests. Public awareness programmes and school education are integrated with the local conservation measures. Ramsar site no. 1545. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Kasai Marine Park

Site number: 2,357 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Tokyo Metropolis  
Area: 366.9 ha | Coordinates: 35°37'40"N 139°51'31"E | Designation dates: 18-10-2018  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site, a brackish wetland in the estuaries of the Arakawa and Kyuedogawa Rivers in the Tokyo Bay, was created in 1976 to restore and conserve the natural ecosystem which was lost due to development activities such as land reclamation. It features human-made beaches known as Nishi Nagisa (west beach) and Higashi Nagisa (east beach), which were constructed by placing U-shaped training dikes to create foreshore tidal flats. Connected to Higashi Nagisa is the natural Sanmaizu tidal flat; and while Nishi Nagisa is designated for recreation, Higashi Nagisa is a National Wildlife Protection Area providing habitats for wildlife. Greater scaup (*Aythya marila*) and great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) winter there, and it is also a key habitat for little tern (*Sternula albifrons*) and some *Anatidae* species. Overall, about 126 species of birds have been observed on the Site. It has become an important wetland for biodiversity conservation in a highly developed urban context and an example of coexisting natural and urban environments. Following the expansion of Higashi Nagisa between 1986 and 2008, the number of coastal plant species in the Site has increased.

## Katano-kamoike

Site number: 616 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Ishikawa Prefecture  
Area: 10 ha | Coordinates: 36°19'N 136°16'59"E | Designation dates: 10-06-1993  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Katano-kamoike. 10/06/93; Ishikawa, Honshu; 10 ha; 36°19'N 136°17'E. Wildlife Protection Area; National Park; Natural Monument; Anatidae Network Site. A shallow pond and marsh, important as a resting place for 190 bird species, including the nationally rare Accipiter gentilis and White-tailed Eagle. Abundant wild rice and reedbeds provide the largest wintering area for Anatidae (ducks, geese, swans, etc.) in western Japan, attracting over 10,000 waterbirds. The pond functions as a seasonal agricultural reservoir. To ensure sufficient water surface for waterbirds, wetland plants are harvested. The visitors' centre attracts people for bird-watching and nature appreciation and provides educational and research opportunities. Ramsar site no. 616. Most recent RIS information: 1993.



## Kejo-numa

Site number: 1,843 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Miyagi Prefecture

Area: 34 ha | Coordinates: 38°37'N 140°57'E | Designation dates: 31-10-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Kejo-numa. 30/10/08; Miyagi; 34 ha; 38°37'N, 140°57'E. Habitat /Species Management Area, National Protection Area. A reservoir as well as freshwater lake, located in the northeast of Osaki city, serves in flood control and irrigation of rice fields. The site provides habitat to vulnerable species like Steller's Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*) and Baikal Teal (*Anas formosa*) as well as 13 bird species and 28 flora species in the national protected list, and it supports the 1% threshold for White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons*) and Bean Geese (*Anser fabalis serratirostris*). Declines of native fish due to the release of Largemouth Bass and Bluegill present a threat. A national historical site "Ruin of Miyazawa" exists within the site. A management plan is in place. Ramsar site no. 1843. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

## Keramashoto Coral Reef

Site number: 1,546 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Tokashiki village and Zamami village (Keramashoto Islands), Okinawa Prefecture, Kyushu/Okinawa Region. Keramashoto Coral Reef is located in the surrounding ocean area of Keramashoto Islands, 20-40 km west of Naha City on the mainland of Okinawa.

Area: 8,290 ha | Coordinates: 26°12'19"N 127°21'17"E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Keramashoto Coral Reef is located in Okinawa Prefecture, southern Japan. Originally designated as a Ramsar Site in 2005 with an area of 353 hectares, its area was greatly increased in 2015 to 8,290 ha. The boundary now overlaps with that of the Marine Park Area within Keramashoto National Park. The Ramsar Site is internationally important as a representative of the coral reef ecosystem in the Ryukyu Islands biogeographic region, as well as for its biodiversity. Tabular, branching, horn-shaped, mound, and sheet reef-building corals are densely distributed in the water. The fringing reefs are especially well-developed, with 248 species, 59 genera and 14 families of reef-building corals accounting for about 62% of such species in Japan. The Site is also an important feeding, spawning and larva nursery area for some 360 species of coral reef fish such as damselfish and clownfish (Pomacentridae), butterflyfish (Chaetodontidae) and wrasse (Labridae). Globally threatened species include the critically endangered hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and the endangered green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) that breed in summer. Keramashoto Coral Reef and the surrounding areas are among the most beautiful marine waters in Japan and are highly valued for nature observation and tourism. Two nearby villages have developed a programme to conserve the coral reefs and to promote sustainable resource use.

## Kiritappu-shitsugen

Site number: 613 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido

Area: 2,504 ha | Coordinates: 43°05'N 145°05'E | Designation dates: 10-06-1993

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Kiritappu-shitsugen. 10/06/93; Hokkaido; 2,504 ha; 43°05'N 145°05'E. National Wildlife Protection Area; Natural Park; Natural Monument; Crane Network Site. A Sphagnum peatbog formed on ancient dunes with a tidal river bisecting the site. Marshes connected to the sea are brackish lakes under tidal influence. The site supports several species of noteworthy plants, 13 species of birds and various mammals. Human activities include clam fishing, forestry and research. The area is a tourist destination. Ramsar site no. 613. Most recent RIS information: 1993.

## Kuju Bogatsuru and Tadewara-shitsugen

Site number: 1,547 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Oita Prefecture  
Area: 91 ha | Coordinates: 33°06'N 131°15'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Kuju Bogatsuru and Tadewara-shitsugen. 08/11/05; Oita; 91 ha; 33°06'N 131°15'E. Quasi-National Park. Near the summit of the mountain in Kirishima Volcanic Belt and below at its base, the largest intermediate moors of mixed sphagnum bogs formed in the mountainous areas in Japan. Bogatsuru is nestled in a basin between Mt. Mimata and other volcanic mountains, whereas Tadewara is located in alluvial fan. The site is the central attraction within Aso-kuju National Park drawing 5 million visitors annually to the breathtaking landscape of smoking volcanoes, meadows, forests, and hot springs. Popular activities include sight-seeing during autumn, hiking, camping, nature walking and folk events. It supports 74 fern species and 493 seed plants, including some rare plants like *Geranium soboliferum*, *Pterygopleurum neurophyllum* and *Sphagnum palustre*. To maintain the vegetation, terrestrialisation of the wetlands into forests is hindered through meadow burning in spring by the local community. Nationally Redlisted species Golden Eagle, Hodgson's Hawk-eagle and Peregrine Falcon are also found. Ramsar site no. 1547. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Kushimoto Coral Communities

Site number: 1,548 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Wakayama Prefecture  
Area: 574 ha | Coordinates: 33°27'N 135°46'59"E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Kushimoto Coral Communities. 08/11/05; Wakayama; 574 ha; 33°27'N 135°47'E. National Park. A unique littoral area rich in high-latitude to tropical marine life of 120 species, situated at southern tip of Kii Peninsula. Kuroshio Current, the major warm current on the earth, touches the area allowing formation of a peculiarly warm environment supporting tropical organisms on the main island of Japan. *Acropora hyacinthus*, the dominant species, is important for its high nutrition productivity and topography formation capacity, and also significant for tourism resources because of its beautiful tabular coral landscape. The highest concentration of *Catalaphyllia jardenei* population was identified only in this area, making it the largest marine colony in Japan and northernmost distribution in the world. The remarkable coral communities support rich biodiversity with nutrition and habitat sources stabilising the neritic environment. The site has special value for marine fishery, leisure fishing, scientific research and tourism, particularly coral observation and scuba diving. Typhoon, natural retreat of the warm current, Arita Bay development activities, illegal and over-fishing are considered as major threats to the coral communities. Ramsar site no. 1548. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Kushiro-shitsugen

Site number: 205 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido  
Area: 7,863 ha | Coordinates: 43°09'N 144°26'E | Designation dates: 17-06-1980  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Kushiro-shitsugen. 17/06/80; Hokkaido; 7,863 ha; 43°09'N 144°26'E. National Wildlife Protection Area; National Park; Anatidae & Crane Network Site. Extensive peatland with raised bogs, freshwater lakes, and the most extensive tracts of reedbeds in Japan. The site supports an important assemblage of flora and fauna and is important for various species of globally threatened birds such as the Japanese Crane. It is the only location in Japan for certain reptiles, dragonflies, damselflies and notable plants. Human activities include nature conservation and fishing. It is an important water source for domestic and industrial users. Research facilities support studies relating to the notable species occurring within the site, and include a Wildlife Centre and Crane Sanctuary. Adjacent to the site of Ramsar COP5, 1993. Ramsar site no. 205. Most recent RIS information: 1999.



## Kutcharo-ko

Site number: 439 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido

Area: 1,607 ha | Coordinates: 45°09'N 142°20'E | Designation dates: 06-07-1989

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Kutcharo-ko. 06/07/89; Hokkaido; 1,607 ha; 45°09'N 142°20'E. National Wildlife Protection Area; Natural Park; Anatidae Network Site. Two interconnected, coastal, freshwater lake basins supporting excellent examples of typical Northern Japanese reed swamp communities and bordered by a dune system, hills and fen/peatland. An especially important staging and wintering area for up to 10,000 swans and 50,000-60,000 ducks. One of the most important Japanese sites for the globally threatened White-tailed Eagle. Principal human activities are nature conservation, fishing, and recreation, while some of the surrounding areas support pastoralism. The wetland is an important source of drinking water. Ramsar site no. 439. Most recent RIS information: 1992.

## Lower Maruyama River and the Surrounding Rice Paddies

Site number: 2,055 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hyogo Prefecture

Area: 1,094 ha | Coordinates: 35°36'39"N 134°50'23"E | Designation dates: 03-07-2012

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site consists of various types of wetland including the estuary of the Maruyama River, which stretches more than 16 kilometres inland, the surrounding rice paddies, the constructed Toshima Wetland, and the Kaya Wetland which was constructed as part of a natural area restoration project. It is famous for the successful reintroduction since 1955 of the endangered oriental white stork (*Ciconia boyciana*), after the species had become extinct in the biogeographic region. The stork population in and around the Site has been increasing, with the storks using the surrounding area as foraging and nesting grounds. Accordingly, the Site has been extended from 560 to 1,094 hectares to ensure better protection of the species. The diverse wetlands provide an ideal spawning and nursery habitat for a variety of fish, including threatened species such as the globally endangered Japanese eel (*Anguilla japonica*), the nationally vulnerable northern medaka (*Oryzias sakaizumii*) and the fourspine sculpin (*Cottus kazika*). The Site is also a suitable habitat for the black-spotted pond frog (*Pelophylax nigromaculatus*) and the Japanese weatherfish (*Misgurnus anguillicaudatus*), which the storks eat. The people in Toyooka City rely on the lower Maruyama River for water for domestic, industrial and agricultural use and as a source of food through its fisheries.

## Manko

Site number: 996 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Naha City and Tomigusuku City, Okinawa Prefecture

Area: 58 ha | Coordinates: 26°11'44"N 127°41'05"E | Designation dates: 15-05-1999

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is an estuary tidal flat formed at the meeting point of the Kokuba River flowing through Naha City and the Noha River flowing through Tomigusuku City, in the southern part of Okinawa Island. It is located three kilometres inland and is affected by tidal fluctuations, with a maximum of 47 hectares of mudflat appearing at low tide. The Site is an important stop-over place for migratory waterbirds because there are abundant juvenile fish and benthos such as lugworms, which are specific to brackish tidal flat. Many shorebirds are observed and these include Pacific golden plover (*Pluvialis fulva*), dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), Eurasian curlew (*Numenius arquata*), far eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*), black-faced spoonbill (*Platalea minor*) and Saunders's gull (*Larus saundersi*).

## Mikata-goko

Site number: 1,549 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Fukui Prefecture

Area: 1,110 ha | Coordinates: 35°34'59"N 135°52'59"E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Mikata-goko. 08/11/05; Fukui; 1,110 ha; 35°35'N 135°53'E. Quasi-National Park. A cluster of 5 brackish-semi-freshwater lakes (locally referred to 'the lakes with five colors') along the Rias Coast of Wakasa bay, surrounded by gradual hills and Mt. Baijo. Though the lakes are connected, each has different salinity, size and depth, which harbours variety of fish species, including different endemic fish species in natural and aquaculture areas, such as *Gnathopogon elongates*, Stripped bitterling *Acheilognathus cyanostigma*, Big-eye sardine *Etrumeus teres* and rare Piscivorous chub *Opsariichthys uncirostris*. The coastline thrives on fishery, tourism and gourmet seafood all year round. The freshwater vegetations are mainly reed, wild rice and water-chestnut. These lakes, except Hiruga-ko, are wintering site for more than 10,000 waterbirds and *Pandion haliaetus* (Osprey). Eutrophication is seen as a major threat to two of the lakes. Even though the site is developed for commercial fishery and aquaculture, fish catches in the recent years have been decreasing. The Seaside Nature Center of Fukui operates 'Mikata-goko Nature School' with local organisations for observing life forms in rice fields around the lakes, fishes and migratory waterbirds. Ramsar site no. 1549. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Miyajima

Site number: 2,056 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hiroshima Prefecture

Area: 142 ha | Coordinates: 34°14'34"N 132°16'09"E | Designation dates: 03-07-2012

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Miyajima. 03/07/12; Hiroshima; 142 ha; 34°14'34"N 132°16'09"E. National Park, UNESCO World Heritage site. A natural coastal wetland consisting of sandy shores and intertidal marshes on Miyajima Island within the Seto Inland Sea National Park in the northwestern part of Hiroshima Bay. The site is well conserved compared to other parts of the coast along the Seto inland sea that have already been lost due to bank protection work. Spring water from Mount Misen mixes with the inflow of seawater to form brackish tidal marshes that provide an ideal habitat for the vulnerable *Orchetrum poecilops miyajimaensis*, a subspecies of the IUCN red-listed Mangrove skimmer *Orchetrum poecilop*. Miyajima is the only site in the world where this subspecies has been recorded. The wetland lies within the Itsukushima Shinto Shrine World Heritage site. Ramsar Site no. 2056. Most recent RIS information: 2012.

## Miyajima-numa

Site number: 1,201 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido Prefecture

Area: 41 ha | Coordinates: 43°19'59"N 141°43'E | Designation dates: 18-11-2002

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Miyajima-numa. 14/10/02; Hokkaido; 41 ha; 43°20'N 141°43'E. A small, open, shallow freshwater lake left by the nearby Ishikari river, surrounded chiefly by rice paddy. The lake is one of the most important staging sites for migratory Anatidae species, especially large ones, that winter in Japan, and more than 50,000 Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* stop over in the spring. The government-owned site is used as an agricultural reservoir for surrounding farmlands and is popular with bird watchers. Ramsar site no. 1201. Most recent RIS information: 2002.

## Nagura Amparu

Site number: 1,550 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Ishigaki City

Area: 157 ha | Coordinates: 24°23'43"N 124°08'46"E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is a tidal flat with mangrove forests located at the mouth of Nagura River in the western part of Ishigaki Island. It falls within the Wildlife Protection Area and is also known as Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park. The tidal flats and mangrove forests host a typical subtropical ecosystem which is composed of diverse organisms including juvenile fish, shellfish and benthos. Therefore, the Site serves as a stop-over habitat and/or wintering habitat for migratory shorebirds, and also provides habitats for forest bird species and the Ryukyu serpent eagle *Spilornis cheela perplexus*, which is a crested serpent eagle subspecies endemic to the Yaeyama Islands.

## Nakaikemi-shicchi

Site number: 2,057 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Fukui Prefecture  
Area: 87 ha | Coordinates: 35°39'39"N 136°05'20"E | Designation dates: 03-07-2012  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Nakaikemi-shicchi. 03/07/12; Fukui; 87 ha; 35°39'40"N 136°05'20"E. Quasi-National Park. Within the Japanese Mixed Forest biogeographic region, this type of low moor wetland is rare and not widely distributed. The peat sediment at the central part of the site is approximately 40 meters deep, representing a valuable record of changes in climate and vegetation during the past one hundred thousand years. It is also considered a biodiversity hot spot with more than 2,000 species of animals and plants inhabiting the area. It was initially developed for rice cultivation during the Edo period (1603-1868) and has since been used as unprepared wet paddies without improvement. Currently, cultivation has been abandoned for the entire field except for the wet paddies for conservation of the wetland. The Japanese Yellow Bunting, *Emberiza sulphurata*, listed as vulnerable by IUCN, occurs in the wetland. The visitor centre is managed by Tsuruga city and used for environmental education and communication; boardwalks, paths, and information boards have been built for the 15,000 visitors that visit the area each year. Incursion of alien species such as *Procambarus clarkia* (Red swamp crawfish) and *Solidago altissima* (Canada goldenrod) is seen as a potential threat. Ramsar Site no. 2057. Most recent RIS information: 2012.

## Nakaumi

Site number: 1,551 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Shimane and Tottori Prefecture  
Area: 8,043 ha | Coordinates: 35°28'N 133°13'59"E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Nakaumi. 08/11/05; Shimane, Tottori; 8,043 ha; 35°28'N 133°14'E. NWP. A brackish lagoon located at the estuary of the Hii River system, linked to the Sea of Japan by a narrow waterway in the northern shore. The site is home to 80 species of brackish and sea fishes and is one of the largest wintering and staging spots of more than 75,000 birds and 260 species. Nakaumi supports more than 1% of the East Asian population of Tundra Swan, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck and Scaup. The site has a high value for fishery resources with average annual catch more than 500 metric tons. A strong environmental movement against a reclamation project for converting the lands to farmlands with freshwater flow has subsequently led to Ramsar designation. Main conservation measures include Anatidae census, regular national survey of the environment, and a Sanctuary established for Yonago Waterbirds. Ramsar site no. 1551. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Notsuke-hanto and Notsuke-wan

Site number: 1,552 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido Prefecture  
Area: 6,053 ha | Coordinates: 43°34'59"N 145°16'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Notsuke-hanto and Notsuke-wan. 08/11/05; Hokkaido; 6,053ha; 43°35'N 145°16'E. NWP. Notsuke-hanto is the largest sand spit in Japan, a fish hook-shaped peninsula jutting into Nemuro Strait on the eastern edge of Hokkaido. Notsuke-wan is a bay formed between the sand spit and the mainland with average depth of 4m, widespread tidal flats and full of *Zostera* seagrass bed. The site is one of the largest staging and breeding habitat for migratory waterbirds with 66,935 annual migratory population of 211 species, particularly IUCN Redlisted *Grus japonensis*, and regularly supporting more than 1% population of *Cygnus cygnus*, *Branta bernicula*, *Anas penelope*, *Aythya marila*, and *Bucephala clangula*. Seaside vegetation on salt marshes consist of *Elymus mollis* community among other species, and sand dunes are covered with Japanese Rose and White clovers. It also functions as an important spawning and nursing ground for local fish. In Notsuke-wan, the major catch in the seagrass bed is Hokkai shrimp *Pandalus kessleri*, protected by a fisherman cooperative to regulate its open season and catch, managing limited marine resource as one of the best practice wise use wetland fisheries in Japan. Ramsar site no. 1552. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Oku-Nikko-shitsugen

Site number: 1,553 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Nikko City, Tochigi Prefecture

Area: 260.4 ha | Coordinates: 36°46'53"N 139°26'15"E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is located in the northern part of the Tochigi Prefecture and includes Senjogahara mire, Odashirogahara mire and Lake Yunoko, which were formed from volcanic activities of Mount Nantai and Mount Mitsudake. The mires feature permanent forested peatlands, which are rare to this biogeographical region and are protected within the Nikko National Park. Over 100 plant species are found in the Senjogahara area, some of them genetically distinct in the region. The high prevalence of sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) has had a negative impact on the native flowers and butterflies in this area, so their numbers have been controlled and a fence has been constructed to protect the native plants. The Odashirogahara area also features some grasslands and woodland, which are declining due to urbanization and agricultural expansion. The grasslands of Odashirogahara and Lake Yunoko provide essential foraging and breeding grounds for various migratory waterbirds such as Eurasian wigeon (*Anas penelope*) and tundra swan (*Cygnus columbianus*). The Site has a management and restoration plan.

## Onuma

Site number: 2,058 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido

Area: 1,236 ha | Coordinates: 42°00'15"N 140°40'53"E | Designation dates: 03-07-2012

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Onuma. 03/07/12; Hokkaido; 1,236 ha; 41°59'16"N 140°40'28"E. Quasi National Park. The site includes the Onuma, Konuma, Junsainuma freshwater lakes at the centre of the Oshima Peninsula, connected by waterways called "sebatto" (literally: 'narrow doors'). The lake system formed as a result of the damming of rivers following the great eruption of Mt. Komagatake in 1640. More than 120 islands called "Nagareyama" (small lava cones) were formed within the ponds, creating a unique landscape. After the volcanic eruption, vegetation slowly colonized the site and the forest is now dominated by *Fagus crenata*, of which the site is the northernmost limit. The site is also known for the diversity of shellfish species from the boreal regions and from Honshu (mainland Japan). The wetland provides flood control and acts as a reservoir used for agriculture, power generation, ecotourism and fisheries. Around 2 million visitors visit the site annually. It is currently threatened by eutrophication caused by agriculture and stockbreeding effluent and by the invasion of the alien plant species *Rudbeckia laciniata*. Ramsar Site no. 2058. Most recent RIS information: 2012.

## Oyama Kami-ike and Shimo-ike

Site number: 1,844 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Yamagata Prefecture/ Tohoku Region

Area: 39 ha | Coordinates: 38°45'17"N 139°45'27"E | Designation dates: 30-10-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Located near Mount Takadate, the Site comprises two near-natural ponds which were built for irrigation about 400 years ago. The Site is globally important for the endangered Japanese eel (*Anguilla japonica*) and Shinai top-mouth gudgeon (*Pseudorasbora pumila*), and for wintering waterbirds. Some 50,000 waterbirds have been recorded at the Site, including about 15% of the flyway population of the Tundra swan (*Cygnus columbianus*). White-tailed sea eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and Steller's sea eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*) are also present, both of which are listed as vulnerable on the National Red List and are included in the List of Natural Monuments of Japan. East Indian lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*) cover most of the water surface, in particularly of the Oyama Kami-ike pond. The Site has been designated as a Special Protected Zone within the National Wildlife Protected Area. There is a management plan in place.

## Oze

Site number: 1,554 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Fukushima, Niigata, Gunma Prefecture  
Area: 8,711 ha | Coordinates: 36°55'59"N 139°13'59"E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Oze. 08/11/05; Fukushima, Gunma, Niigata; 8,711 ha; 36°56'N 139°14'E. National Park. Oze consists of Ozegahara moor, Ozenuma Lake and surrounding mountains, forests and small moors. Ozegahara is the largest high moors in Japan, 760 ha spreading across Niigata, Gunma and Fukushima, a flat basin (at 1400m asl.) with high water retention capacity. The site possesses rich wetland biodiversity including endangered aquatic *Chara globularis* var *globularis*, dragonflies and coleopterous, and many migratory birds. The site includes around 6,277 ha of private lands area (72% of the total designated area) now brought under conservation measures. To appreciate one of Japan's most beautiful landscapes, ecotourism has been developed in Ozegahara and Oze-numa with nature trails, boardwalks, visitor's center, and local restoration programmes and about 3-6 million visits annually. Ramsar site no. 1554. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Sakata

Site number: 820 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Niigata City, Niigata Prefecture  
Area: 76 ha | Coordinates: 37°48'50"N 138°52'15"E | Designation dates: 28-03-1996

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is a lagoon composed of two permanent freshwater lakes lying in the Niigata sand dune system near the coast of the Sea of Japan. The slopes of the surrounding dunes feature Japanese black pine (*Pinus thunbergii*) forests and fields of watermelons and radishes. Abundant aquatic insects and plants including common reeds and willows and the nationally threatened prickly water lily (*Euryale ferox*) attract some 27,000 waterbirds of 210 species each year. The Site is particularly popular for Anatidae waterbird species such as whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) and tundra swan (*Cygnus columbianus*) that migrate from eastern Russia in winter. There is a waterfowl and wetland centre at the Site, which was established in 1998 for educational, biodiversity monitoring and research purposes, and an ecological garden to preserve important native plant species. The Site is protected within the Sakata National Wildlife Protection Area, and there is a management plan in place.

## Sarobetsu-genya

Site number: 1,555 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido Prefecture  
Area: 2,560 ha | Coordinates: 45°04'59"N 141°42'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Sarobetsu-genya. 08/11/05; Hokkaido; 2,560 ha; 45°05'N 141°42'E. NWP. A vast peatland at the northern tip of Hokkaido represents one of the largest high moors in lowland plains. The Sarobetsu River, flowing around the marshland, has limited water fluctuation and poor supply of nutrients leading to ideal conditions for formation of such high moors. Ponds and small lakes scattered in the site provide breeding sites for waterbirds and support more than 1% of the East Asian population of *Anser fabalis* *middendorffii* and *Cygnus columbianus*. From spring to autumn, the wetland is covered by more than 100 species of colorful flora including Small cranberry, Hare's cotton-grass, and lilies. Boardwalks constructed in Sarobetsu Wildflower Garden and Panke-numa provide a close look at these pretty flowers. A project is underway to restore the dry areas of wetlands due to past incidence of lowering the groundwater level. About 300,000 people visit the Sarobetsu Nature School/Toyotomi Visitor Center and Horonobe Visitor Center annually and walk along the nature trails. Ramsar site no. 1555. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Shinji-ko

Site number: 1,556 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Shimane Prefecture  
Area: 7,652 ha | Coordinates: 35°25'59"N 132°58'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Shinji-ko. 08/11/05; Shimane; 7,652 ha; 35°26'N 132°58'E. NWP. The seventh largest lake in Japan and one of the largest wintering sites of Anatidae species, with 21,000-48,500 per year. Shinji-ko offers an essential habitat for 80 brackish water species of fish and shellfish, including Japanese indigenous Shinjo-ko Goby and popular Shijimi or Corbicula clam. The site supports 240 species of waterbirds and more than 1% of the East Asian population of White-fronted Goose and Scaup. The lake provides the largest catch of Corbicula Leana, about 7500 tons, more than 40% of the country's total catch, and has a special connotation in Japanese seafood culture as 'Shinji-ko Shichi-chin' or '7 rare seafoods of Shinji-ko'. Bird watching, nature observation, Nature Museum visits, windsurfing, pleasure fishing and boating are popular activities. In recent years, reduction of pollution loads in this prefecture has become a priority, and there is a plan to employ effective measures for conservation and raise water quality. Ramsar site no. 1556. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Shizugawa-wan

Site number: 2,358 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Minamisanriku Town / Miyagi Prefecture / Honsyu, Tohoku District  
Area: 5,793 ha | Coordinates: 38°40'49"N 141°31'27"E | Designation dates: 18-10-2018  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Located on the southern Sanriku Coast on the Pacific Ocean, Shizugawa-wan is a bay (wan) encompassing a number of scattered islands such as Areshima and Tsubakishima. Its complex "ria coast", featuring capes and inlets formed by submerged river valleys, includes various subtidal habitats such as reef zones, silt grounds and mudflats; these support extremely diverse vegetation, including 208 species of seaweeds and seagrasses. The Site is influenced by three ocean currents, the cold "Oyashio" and the warm "Kuroshio" and "Tsugaru" currents, enabling warm- and cold-water kelp to coexist. This uncommon environment provides habitats or feeding grounds for 553 animal species. The abundant seaweeds and seagrasses make the Site an ideal wintering ground for brent geese (*Branta bernicla nigricans*), white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and Steller's sea eagles (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*), all of which are designated as natural monuments of Japan under the National Red List and the Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (LCES). The Site is the southernmost wintering ground for brent geese in Japan. The bay supports local livelihoods including the farming of seaweed (wakame), oysters and fish such as coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*). The 2011 tsunami had a great impact on the seaweed beds, but the bay has been recovering steadily.

## Streams in Kume-jima

Site number: 1,845 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Okinawa Prefecture  
Area: 255 ha | Coordinates: 26°22'N 126°46'E | Designation dates: 30-10-2008  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Streams in Kume-jima. 30/10/08; Okinawa; 255 ha; 26°22'N 126°46'E. Habitat/ Species Management Area, Habitat Conservation Area. The site mainly consists of streams flowing from Mt Uegusuku on Kume-jima in the Ryukyu Islands, creating an important habitat for endangered species under IUCN Red List and National Protected Species lists, including bird species like Amami Woodcock (*Scolopax mira*) and reptile species like Kikuzato's Stream (or Brook) Snake (*Opisthotropis kikuzatoi*), Ryukyu black-breasted leaf turtle (*Geoemyda japonica*), and Kuroiwa ground gecko (*Goniurosaurus kuroiwaeyamashinae*) as well as some endemic species. The vegetation with *Psychotria rubra* - *Castanopsis sieboldi*ssp. *lutchuensis* and *Pinus lutchuensis* serves as excellent habitat for these rare species. Ruins of Uegusuku Castle in the site are an Okinawa Prefectural historical site. Surrounding communities use stream water for liquor production. Decrease of stream flow due to water withdrawals, disruption by invasive alien species like Bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*), and disturbance to stream environment from gusty heavy rain and floods due to steep landscapes are some of the potential threats in the site. A management plan is in place. Ramsar site no. 1845. Most recent RIS information: 2008.



## Tateyama Midagahara and Dainichidaira

Site number: 2,059 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Toyoma Prefecture  
Area: 574 ha | Coordinates: 36°34'18"N 137°32'06"E | Designation dates: 03-07-2012  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Tateyama Midagahara and Dainichidaira. 03/07/12; Toyama; 574 ha; 36°34'18"N 137°32'06"E. National Park. An alpine wetland extending over the flat lava plateau formed by the past volcanic activity of Mt. Tateyama. These snow patch grasslands contain about 1,000 shallow ponds recharged by melting snow and rain. The site includes Shomyo Waterfall, at 350m the highest waterfall in Japan, and offers a wintering spot for *Lagopus muta* (Ptarmigan) and several species of alpine butterflies and the dragonfly *Leucorrhinina dubiaorientalis*. The site overlaps the Special Protection Zone of the Chubu-sangaku National Park which is intended to give strict protection to the pristine natural environment of the park. The site holds religious significance as it lies within the Tateyama area, a place of mountain worship. Shomyo Waterfall (Shomyo = chanting the name of Buddha) is said to have been named for the roaring sound of the waterfall that closely resembles Buddhist prayer. The opening of the Tateyama-Kurobe Alpine sightseeing route in 1971 has caused some disturbances that are seen as potential threats. Ramsar Site no. 2059. Most recent RIS information: 2012.

## Tofutsu-ko

Site number: 1,557 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido Prefecture  
Area: 900 ha | Coordinates: 43°55'59"N 144°24'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Tofutsu-ko. 08/11/05; Hokkaido; 900 ha; 43°56'N 144°24'E. Special National Park Zone. A brackish lagoon in eastern Hokkaido, with salt marshland developed in lowlands along the shore filled with rare aquatic plants, in particular, Common Glasswort *Salicornia europaea*, which fills the shore with red color in autumn inviting many tourists. It is one of few important stopovers for 67,000 Anatidae species as well as *Grus japonensis* and Yellow-breasted Bunting for breeding every year. White-tailed Eagle, Steller's Eagle and commercially important mollusks are also found. Common vegetation includes meadow, cropland, coniferous and broad-leafed forest. Present threats affecting the ecological character are sediment inflow, land development for agriculture, and population. Ramsar site no. 1557. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Tokai Hilly Land Spring-fed Mires

Site number: 2,060 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Aichi Prefecture  
Area: 23 ha | Coordinates: 35°05'02"N 137°12'59"E | Designation dates: 03-07-2012  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Tokai Hilly Land Spring-fed Mires. 03/07/12; Aichi; 23 ha; 35°05'02"N 137°12'59"E. Quasi National Park. A cluster of six small oligotrophic spring-fed mires at an elevation of 100-300m that occur in three main areas (Kamitaka, Onshinji, and Yanami) in adjacent catchments, but are hydrologically linked because of underground seepage from the Yahagi River system. The mires are representative examples of such wetland types that once used to be common in the biogeographic region but have since been lost due to development. The wetland supports many rare and endemic plant species that are adapted to the oligotrophic conditions of Tokai Hill, including a number that are locally called 'Tokai Hill Land Elements' because they have their main distribution only at the site. These include 'Shiratama-hoshikusa' *Eriocaulon nudicuspe*, 'Mikawa-shiogama' *Pedicularis resupinata* var. *microphylla* and 'Tokai-komousengoke' *Drosera Tokaiensis*. As a result of land development elsewhere, these are the only remaining spring-fed mires that are still in good condition. The clusters of wetlands are currently well conserved and protected under national law. They represent a water reservoir and support the agriculture carried out downstream. Ramsar Site no. 2060. Most recent RIS information: 2012.

## Uryunuma-shitsugen

Site number: 1,558 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Hokkaido Region  
Area: 624 ha | Coordinates: 43°42'N 141°36'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Uryunuma-shitsugen. 08/11/05; Hokkaido; 624 ha; 43°42'N 141°36'E. Quasi-National Park. The second largest mountain high moors, after Oze, in Japan. The regular snowfall is more than 3m high and post-winter thawing of snows leave the area with replenished freshwater with frozen parts of semi-decomposed, but nutritious land. The most diverse plant communities among Japan's northern marshlands, at least 150 species, are developed in the site, where peatmoss, Sphagnum spp. and Moliniopsis japonica are typically observed. The most remarkable characteristic of this site is that more than 100 ponds are scattered in the wetlands including small islands of waterweed swamps, in summer filled with colourful aquatic flowers like blooming lilies. A main threat is invasion of alien species like Solidago altissima, although continuous control measures are taken by the local management authority. Ramsar site no. 1558. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Utonai-ko

Site number: 539 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Tomakomai City/Hokkaido Prefecture/Hokkaido region  
Area: 510 ha | Coordinates: 42°41'52"N 141°42'41"E | Designation dates: 12-12-1991  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is a shallow freshwater lake with marshes and small rivers, located on the island of Hokkaido. It has been designated nationally as a Special Protection Zone within the Utonai-ko National Wildlife Protection Area and is globally listed as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area. The lake is dominated by common reeds, while its surroundings are covered by dense grasslands and woodlands mainly composed of the Japanese alder (*Alnus japonica*) and Mongolian oak (*Quercus crispula*). These habitats provide important breeding grounds for threatened species such as white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and red-crowned crane (*Grus japonensis*). Some 56,000 waterbirds of 270 species have been regularly recorded at this Site every year, including birds that migrate along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. There is a bird sanctuary and a conservation centre within the Site. Land conversion and logging activities have been prohibited and a sluice gate has been installed to maintain the water level of the lake.

## Watarase-yusuichi

Site number: 2,061 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Honshu Island  
Area: 2,861 ha | Coordinates: 36°14'18"N 139°41'03"E | Designation dates: 03-07-2012  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Watarase-yusuichi. 03/07/12; Ibaragi, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama; 2,861 ha; 36°14'20"N 139°40'56"E. National Wildlife Protection Zone. A natural river flood plain where the Watarase, Uzuma and Omoi rivers meet and includes the Watarase reservoir, an artificial retarding basin surrounded by an embankment managed mainly for flood control. Located 60 km north of Tokyo, it is representative of a Phragmites australis-dominated low moor wetland in the Japanese Evergreen Forest biogeographic ecoregion. The extensive reedbed is one of the largest in the biogeographic region and supports a diversity of wetland flora and fauna. The site has an important flood control function by retarding the flood water from the rivers that flows into the site, and then slowly releasing the water into the Tone River that flows downstream. It is also used for fisheries, recreation, and environmental education. The wetland is at risk of drying up due to excess deposits of earth and sand and is being maintained through excavation since 2010. Ramsar Site no. 2061. Most recent RIS information: 2012.

## Yakushima Nagata-hama

Site number: 1,559 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Yakushima Island

Area: 10 ha | Coordinates: 30°24'N 130°25'E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Yakushima Nagata-hama. 08/11/05; Kagoshima; 10 ha; 30°24'N 130°25'E. National Park, UNESCO World Heritage site. A sand shore on the northwestern part of Yakushima Island, entirely surrounded by sea cliffs and the beach sweeping south from the River Nagata-gawa. With subtropical climate, it experiences rare and diverse vertical distribution of pristine flora, the most famous 1000-year old 'Yaku-sugi' cedar and other ancient Yaku-sugi revered as sacred trees. The beach is a renowned spawning ground and crucial stopping point for the Loggerhead Turtle *Caretta caretta* -- in 2005, a total of 2,799 turtles were recorded, of which 1,394 individuals nested. In 1985, the NGO Yakushima Umigame-kan/Sea Turtle Center was established with activities including ecosystem assessment, beach cleanups, nesting patrols, protecting the eggs and eco-volunteer training. A Sea Turtle Aquarium was also built near the beach. Recreation activities include bathing and turtle observation, attracting at least 7,000 visitors every year. Ramsar site no. 1559. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Yatsu-higata

Site number: 615 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Chiba Prefecture

Area: 40 ha | Coordinates: 35°40'59"N 140°00'E | Designation dates: 10-06-1993

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Yatsu-higata. 10/06/93; Chiba, Honshu; 40 ha; 35°41'N 140°00'E. Wildlife Protection Area; Shorebird Network Site. This mudflat, submerged at high tide and connected to Tokyo Bay, is in relatively pristine condition. Important for visiting migratory birds: 10% of the plovers and sandpipers migrating through Japan are counted in this area. The site is used for conservation education, birdwatching, research, and light recreation. A nature observation centre is located on-site. Surrounding areas are residential or industrial. Ramsar site no. 615. Most recent RIS information: 1993.

## Yonahawan

Site number: 2,062 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Miyako Island

Area: 704 ha | Coordinates: 24°45'56"N 125°16'15"E | Designation dates: 03-07-2012

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Yonaha-wan. 03/07/12; Miyako Island; 704 ha; 24°45'57"N 125°16'16"E. Special Protection Zone. Located in the Okinawa archipelago, Yonaha-wan is the biggest tidal flat on Miyako Island and is one of the largest in the Ryukyu Islands biogeographic region. The site supports mangrove forests and extensive seaweed beds mainly composed of *Thalassia hemprichii*, *Cymodocea rotundata* and *Syringodium isoetifolium*. A significant number of waterbird species stop at the site to forage or breed, including the critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* and the endangered Japanese Crane *Grus japonensis* and Oriental stork *Ciconia boyciana*. A number of reptiles are also recorded in this marine sanctuary, such as the critically endangered Hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* as well as endangered endemic species such as the Miyako Grass Lizard *Takydromus toyamai*. The area is important for fisheries, tourism and environmental education and is currently affected by the inflow of excess nutrients and sediments from agricultural and domestic sources. Ramsar Site no. 2062. Most recent RIS information: 2012.

## Yoshigadaira Wetlands

Site number: 2,233 | Country: Japan | Administrative region: Nakanojo town, Agatsuma-gun, Gunma Prefecture

Area: 887 ha | Coordinates: 36°38'58"N 138°34'08"E | Designation dates: 28-05-2015

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Yoshigadaira Wetlands are located in the centre of Honshu Island on the north-east flank of Mount Kusatsu-Shirane, an active volcano that erupted eight times in the 30 years to 2015. The Site comprises a group of moors, ponds, a lake and a stream which developed on low-permeable layers, depressions and a crater created by the volcanic activities. The Site is unique because of the high temperature and acidity from the volcano and volcanic gases such as hydrogen sulphide. The water of the Anajigoku stream is extremely acidic (pH 2.6-2.8) with abundant iron and sulphur, but it hosts the largest community of the aquatic liverwort *Jungermannia vulcanicola* in East Asia. The water of Yugama, a crater lake near the top of Mt. Kusatsu-Shirane, is even more acidic (pH 1.0-1.2) and so there is little vegetation in the area. Yoshigadaira moor and Odaira moor provide an important refuge in the surrounding volcanic area for animal and plant species that depend on the wet environment. The geothermal heat and water around the Yoshigadaira Wetlands enable wild fauna and flora to survive the winter at altitudes up to and beyond 2,000 metres and temperatures below -15°C. For example, the breeding site of the forest green tree frog *Rhacophorus arboreus* in Yoshigadaira Wetlands is at 2,150m, the highest recorded in the world.