

Hotokenuma

Low Moor

Geographical Coordinates: 40°49'N, 141°22'E / Altitude: 0-10m / Area: 222ha / Major Type of Wetland: Low moors / Designation: Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area / Municipalities Involved: Misawa City, Aomori Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005



Aerial view of Hotokenuma



Hotokenuma's field of reeds

Principal Features:

Mutsu-Ogawara Lakes are located on the Pacific Ocean coast at the base of Shimokita Peninsula in Aomori prefecture, the northernmost tip of Honshu Island. In this area pockmarked with large and small lakes, a reclaimed land of Hotokenuma lies nestled between the largest of the lakes, Ogawara-ko, and coastal sand dunes.

Hotokenuma, originally a lagoon connected to Ogawara-ko, was to be converted into agricultural fields by a reclamation project that began in 1963. Only portions of the 700ha were converted to rice fields while most of the works had to be suspended due to policy changes involving reduction of the rice acreage. Consequently, the area remained untouched as a public land owned by Misawa City, and gradually became a marshland covered with reeds.

As the reclamation plan had not been

called off, appropriate management of the area has been carried out, including forced drainage and burning of reeds in spring. The local climate with cool summers also helps to keep grass short in the stable, natural environment.

Breeding of Japanese Marsh Warbler:

Hotokenuma has been successfully brought to the public attention by sighting of the Japanese Marsh Warbler to breed in the area. Although the Japanese Marsh Warbler, a family of bush warblers, was identified as a new species in 1884, it had been a "phantom bird" since the details of its habitat or breeding ground had not been observed. This incident has prompted the local community to be actively involved in protection and conservation of this wetland as an important breeding ground of precious Japanese Marsh Warblers.



Japanese Marsh Warbler (photo by I. Ando)

[Japanese Marsh Warbler *Megalurus pryeri*]

A small, reddish-brown bird with white superciliary ridge, averaging 14 cm in size. It can only be found in parts of Japan and China, with the estimated total population to be around 2500. It prefers grasslands such as field of reeds, and has been sighted only in limited locations in Japan. The population in Hotokenuma is estimated around 1000. The bird is known for sharp chirp as it soars over the territory.

Contact Information:

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