

Imuta-ike

Freshwater Lake

Geographical Coordinates: 31°49'N, 130°28'E / Altitude: 296m / Area: 60ha / Major Type of Wetland: Freshwater lake (crater lake), low moor / Designation: Natural Habitat Conservation Area under the Species Conservation Law / Municipalities Involved: Satsumasendai City, Kagoshima Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005



A full view of Imuta-ike

Principal Features:

Imuta-ike is a crater lake situated in the mountains from which the Sendai River flows, 25km northwest of Kagoshima City, the capital of Kagoshima Prefecture. It is a 60ha lake formed in the crater of Mt. Iimori following an eruption. With the water level at an altitude of 296m, Imuta-ike is surrounded by a small cluster of volcanoes with altitudes ranging from 400 – 500m. Steep cliffs which form the crater wall surround the lake. Imuta-ike lacks an in-flowing river system, but is drained by the Sendai River on the east side of the lake.

Imuta-ike is a small round lake with a circumference of 4km. A low moor has formed on the northwest side of the lake where peat layers are found. Since the warm climate has caused accumulating peat layers to form floating deposits or "islands" of peat on the lake after a long time, the lake has been designated as the country's natural monument.

Imuta-ike is quite shallow with average and maximum depths of 0.8m and 2.7m, respectively. Few human settlements in the area have kept its pristine environment. In the surrounding wetlands, reeds and wild rice grow in abundance while numerous plant species such as water-shield and the water-lily are found on the water surface.

In addition to waterfowl such as the spot-billed duck and the little grebe, fish species such as Medaka *Oryzias latipes* and the pale chub are but a few examples of the animals found at Imuta-ike.

An Endangered Dragonfly:

It is in such a stabilized environment that Imuta-ike's most famous residents, dragonflies, thrive. The area provides ideal conditions for the life cycle of dragonflies, from the laying of eggs, through to the nymph and adult stages. Species such as *Sympetrum kunckeli*, *Trithemis aurora* and *Rhyothemis fuliginosa* are just some examples of the dragonflies found here, the most well-known being *Libellula angelina*.

Although there are approximately 200 species of dragonfly in Japan, loss and degradation of wetland ecosystems have threatened this number. For example, *Libellula angelina* is on the verge of extinction, and thus is considered a first priority for conservation. Because Imuta-ike represents one of the few habitats for *Libellula Angelina*, the Nature Conservation Library was built on the lakeshore to raise awareness of Imuta-ike and its natural environment.

[*Libellula angelina*] A small species of dragonfly with a body length ranging from 37–45cm, this dragonfly is recognized by its amber wings with

Libellula angelina



blackish-brown speckling. It is considered the oldest species of dragonflies. Although it is among the most famous of Japanese dragonflies, its breeding areas continue to be threatened.

Contact Information:

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