

In a major rice-producing region, the wetland provides wintering grounds for the White-fronted Goose

Kabukuri-numa and the surrounding rice paddies Freshwater Lake, Rice Paddies

Geographical Coordinates: 38°38' N, 141°06' E / Altitude: 5.7m / Area: 423ha / Major Type of Wetland: Freshwater lake (dammed lake), low moor, rice paddies / Designation: Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area / Municipalities Involved: Kurihara City, Tome City and Osaki City, Miyagi Pref. / Ramsar Designation: November 2005



Bean Goose



White-fronted Goose



Geese at Kabukuri-numa take flight

Principal Features:

Situated in northern Miyagi Prefecture in the river basin of the Hasama River, a tributary of the Kitakami River is the retarding basin Kabukuri-numa, and the surrounding rice paddies with which it is closely linked. Every year in winter, over 30,000 ducks and geese arrive to winter. Most notable is the White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*, whose numbers exceed 1% of the entire East-Asian population.

With a current area of 150ha, Kabukuri-numa was originally a 1000ha dammed lake within the floodplain of the Kitakami Plains. The lake was soon reclaimed and replaced by rice paddies. However, as the area constantly experienced floods, periodic overflows restored the lake to its current state.

The lake is inhabited by communities of Manchurian wild rice and reeds, as well as willow along its shores; a gradation of vegetation characteristic of the lowland wetland. In addition, rare plant species

such as *Penthorum chinense* and *Monochoria korsakowii* are also found here.

Wintering Grounds for Ducks and Geese:

Kabukuri-numa is shallow with an average depth of 0.5m and wide open on its periphery, which extends into vast rice paddies. These characteristics make for ideal wintering grounds for migratory birds. Indeed, the area is the largest wintering ground for large geese such as Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*. In order to maintain the ecological character of this wintering ground, measures such as water management, cleanups, channel maintenance, and water quality improvements among others are conducted. Of these, notable is the "Fuyumizu-tambo" in winter, where rice paddies that are usually left dry are flooded, thus conserving the biodiversity of these wetlands. This activity is gaining attention for providing new roles for rice paddies.

In order to promote such measures, pro-

grams to raise local awareness are underway. For example, the east end of the lake has been designated an 'environmental education zone', where education programs for children are routinely held.

Kabukuri-numa and its surrounding areas is a part of the Waterbird Site Network based on the Partnership for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and joined by the adjacent Izu-numa and Uchi-numa between which ducks and geese frequently travel back and forth.

["Fuyumizu-tambo"] Following the autumn harvest of rice, a selected number of rice paddies surrounding Kabukuri-numa are flooded throughout winter. These grounds not only provide areas for roosting, feeding, and rest for ducks and geese, their droppings become fertilizer for rice crops. In addition, flooding significantly controls weed and insect pest numbers. As a result, additional benefits to this practice are accrued as the pesticide and herbicide-free rice of high quality produced is sold at a premium price.

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