

A small pond where a 300-year old duck trapping method is still in use

Katano-kamoike

Freshwater Pond, Rice Paddies

Geographical Coordinates: 36°19' N, 136°17' E / Altitude: 2.5-8.0m / Area: 10ha / Major Type of Wetland: Freshwater pond, rice paddies / Designation: Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area, Special Protection Zone of Quasi-National Park / Municipalities Involved: Kaga City, Ishikawa Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: June 1993



Saka-ami trapping



Complete view of Katano-kamoike from the east



Waterfowl at Katano-kamoike

Principal Features:

The Katano-kamoike, in Kaga City, Ishikawa Prefecture, is a wetland located about 1km inland from the Sea of Japan. It consists of a 2.5ha freshwater pond, and 7.5ha of surrounding rice paddies, reed beds and other terrain common in marshy areas. The site is bordered by hills (elevation 30-50m) covered with pine and broadleaf trees.

"Kamoike" means "duck pond" in English. As the name implies, the area has been especially important as a wintering site and stopover for ducks, geese and other waterfowl. It is said that there had been a number of ponds like Katano-kamoike in the area before, however, most of them were reclaimed for rice paddies. The Katano-kamoike is one of the remaining ponds.

From November to March, thousands of ducks and geese visit this pond every year as a wintering place and stopover. The area is a part of the Waterbird Site Network based on the Partnership for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Traditional Water Management:

For centuries, Katano-kamoike has been used as an agricultural reservoir to irrigate surrounding rice paddies, and is managed by the local people. During summer, pond water is distributed to surrounding rice paddies. After the rice harvest, irrigation is stopped allowing the pond to be replenished, thus providing enough roosting area for wintering migratory birds. This wetland management scheme has been traditionally used since the Edo period for about 300 years. A duck trapping technique called "Saka-ami" was also developed during this time and is still in use today.

In recent years, the rice paddies surrounding Katano-kamoike, which are commonly left dry in winter are being flooded, thus increasing the wintering grounds for birds. This is known as "Fuyumizu-tambo", practiced by local NGOs and farmers.

[Saka-ami Trapping] A style of duck trapping employing nets that was developed in the Edo period. Ducks rest in Kamoike in daytime and at dusk fly to

the surrounding rice paddies to feed. Taking advantage of these habits, traditional trappers hiding in the pine woods surrounding the pond cast a nest over the ducks preparing to fly over the woods at dusk. The trappers have formed a union which sets stringent restrictions for sustainable trapping such as trapper numbers, the trapping season, and trapping numbers.

Contact Information:

Kaga City Office
<http://www.city.kaga.ishikawa.jp/>

