

Nakaumi

Brackish Lake

Geographical Coordinates: 35°32'N, 133°09'E / Altitude: 0m / Area: 8043ha / Major Type of Wetland: Brackish lake / Designation: Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area / Municipalities Involved: Yonago City and Sakaiminato City, Tottori Prefecture; Matsue City, Yasugi City and Higashiizumo Town, Shimane Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005



View of Nakaumi from the west

Principal Features:

Nakaumi is a lagoon located on the boarder of Tottori Prefecture and Shimane Prefecture in the Chugoku region of Honshu Island. Cut off from the Japan Sea by Yumigahama peninsula extending northwest from Yonago City to Sakaiminato City, the lagoon has a circumference of 80km, linking it to the sea by means of a narrow waterway in the northern shore.

Nakaumi is located at the estuary of Hii River system that originates in the Chugoku Mountains. It lies in the downstream of 7km Ohashi River flowing from Shinji-ko. Nakaumi has a high salinity of 1/2 of seawater while Shinji-ko's salinity remains low with 1/10 of seawater. Due to small tidal range, the salinity at the bottom of Nakaumi is much greater than at the surface.

The difference in brackish water quality created different fish habitats. While Shinji-ko is inhabited by freshwater fish and brackish water fish, Nakaumi is home to brackish water fish and seawater fish. However, among the 80 species observed in Nakaumi, 2/3 of the species can be seen in both Nakaumi and Shinji-ko, meaning that most fish travel to both lagoons.

Discontinued Reclamation Project:

Since 1963, Nakaumi had faced a reclamation project that aimed to form new agricultural farmlands, confronting a risk of being transformed into a freshwater lake. However, locals' active movement against the development plan stopped the reclamation project in 2002, and subsequently, it is now designated as a Ramsar site.

In Nakaumi, 260 species of wild birds are observed, making it one of the largest wintering spot for ducks and geese, hosting more than 75,000 birds every year. In particular, Nakaumi supports more than 1% of the East Asian population of Tundra Swan, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck, and Scaup. Furthermore, it serves as the crucial southernmost wintering spot for Tundra Swan.

Furthermore, a lake created in the process of the reclamation project in the northwest of Yonago City now attracts many waterfowl to gather at this spot. Yonago City has decided to make this area of 30ha a waterfowl sanctuary and utilize it for observation of water-bird and environmental education. It also participates in the Waterbird Site Network based on the Partnership for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

[Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus*]
Body length: 120cm. It has a white

body and a black-pointed, yellow bill. It is smaller than Whooper Swan *Cygnus Cygnus*. It inhabits throughout Eurasia and North America. They breed in the tundra, and then fly to Japan spending the winter mainly in lakes, marshes, and rivers alongside Japan Sea, making Nakaumi and Shinji-ko the southernmost wintering ground.

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