

Status of Wetlands in Japan

Control of Wild Birds and Mammals and Hunting Management Law, Law for Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Law for the Promotion of Nature Restoration, and the Invasive Alien Species Act. Some of the laws regulate the development and exploitation of resources to protect specific species and/or specific areas, and some of them are aimed at restoration of lost natural environments. Many wetlands and the countless species inhabiting them are covered in these laws.

Stakeholder Participation:

In Japan, there is a network called "Meeting of Japanese Municipalities Involved with Wetlands Designated under the Ramsar Convention" aiming to promote grass root wetland conservation projects and contribute to the appropriate management of Ramsar sites by encouraging information exchange and project cooperation between cities, towns and villages. Regular meetings are organized by the members.

In addition, there are several examples of prefectures that include wetlands when designating their conservation areas such as wildlife protection areas, nature conservation areas, and natural parks, and/or formulate independent environmental ordinances and projects for wetland conservation.

Conservation and wise use of wetlands may not be achieved without the understanding and participation of the local people who live in the neighborhood of the wetlands. In many Ramsar sites in Japan, there are numbers of examples of cooperation and collaboration by many stakeholders promoting local level activities.

International Cooperation

International cooperation such as sharing experiences and technologies is vital to meet the goals of wetland conservation and wise use. Acknowledging this, the international community has high expectations for Japan, a developed country in Asia, to work towards its realization. To meet these expectations, Japan is actively engaged in a variety of international cooperation activities such as those described below.

Financial Assistance and Technology Transfer for the Conservation of Wetlands:

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) invites trainees from developing countries to Japan for study courses for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

In addition, technology transfer projects for the conservation and sustainable use of wetland are underway in several countries such as Iran, Uganda and Malaysia.

As for the financial assistance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan supports various wetlands conservation programmes in the Asian region by contributing voluntarily to the Ramsar Small Grants Fund.

Wetland Surveys and Information Exchanges:

The Ministry of the Environment organized surveys and workshops in Myanmar in order to compile a national wetland inventory, which subsequently led to



Myanmar's entry into the Ramsar Convention. In addition, the Ministry supported the designations of Ramsar Sites in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Cambodia.

The Ministry has also supported the "Asian Wetland Symposium", which has been held regularly with the participation of scientists, specialists, administrative bodies and NGOs that are involved in wetland management in Asia. Japan proposed at COP 9 a draft resolution on encouragements and instructions to promote regional scientific and technical forums such as the "Asian Wetland Symposium" and it was adopted as the Resolution IX.19. (See Appendix 2)

Twinning arrangement between Wetland Sites:

In order to promote information exchange and awareness-raising activities for the conservation and wise use of

wetlands between Japan and other countries, twinning arrangements have been established. The existing arrangements are linking Kushiro-shitsugen, Kiritappu-shitsugen, Akkeshi-ko and Bekambeushi-shitsugen to Hunter Estuary Wetlands of New South Wales, Australia, Yatsu-higata to Boondall Wetland in Queensland, Australia, and Fujimae-higata to the wetlands in Geelong, Victoria, Australia.

Bilateral Efforts for the Conservation of Migratory Birds:

Japan has promoted migratory bird protection and has bilateral conventions/agreements with the United States, Russia, Australia and China. Actions have been taken to ban migratory bird hunting, promote habitat conservation, as well as to conduct joint surveys. The Japan-Korea Environment Protection and Cooperation Agreement was signed, whereupon joint surveys and meetings have been organized for the protection of migratory birds.

The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP):

There are nine main flyways for migratory birds in the world. Japan belongs to the East-Asian Australasian Flyway which is crucial to more than 50 million migratory waterfowl such as shorebirds, ducks, geese cranes and swans, including 33 worldwide endangered species. In addition, in Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu, migratory birds account for 60 percent of the bird species recorded, and as much as 80 percent in Hokkaido and Ryukyu islands. This indicates that the Japanese Archipelago is an important place for migratory birds.

The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) is a framework for international collaboration and cooperation to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats within East Asia and Australasian region. The Partnership was launched in 2006 under the initiative of two governments, Japan and Australia. EAAFP set up the "Flyway Site Network" and activities for awareness raising, conservation and researches of migratory waterbirds has been promoted in each network site. Some of Ramsar sites in Japan such as Arahigata, a stopover site for shorebirds, and Izu-numa and Uchi-numa, a wintering site for Anatidae, participate in this network. As of June 2015, Japan has 32 network sites including 21 Ramsar sites.