

Hinuma

Brackish Lake

Geographical Coordinates: 36°16'N, 140°30'E / Altitude: 0m / Area: 935ha / Major Type of Wetland: Brackish lake / Designation: Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area / Municipalities Involved: Hokota City, Ibaraki Town and Oarai Town, Ibaraki Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: May 2015 / Ramsar Criteria: 2, 4, 6



Full view from the west



Inland water fishery



Greater Scaups

General Overview:

Hinuma is the largest brackish lake in the capital region and located 5km inland from Oarai Beach on the Pacific coast in Ibaraki Prefecture. It used to be an inlet of the sea approximately 6000 years ago. Over time, with the sea's recession, it was separated from the sea by sediments accumulated on its estuary and formed a lagoon stretching from east to west with an area of 935ha and an average depth of 2.1m. It is fed by several rivers such as Hinuma River and Kasama River and drains water out from the northeastern end of the lake. The water travels through Naka River and flows into the Pacific Ocean approximately 10km away.

This lake is situated in a flat paddy field where the sea water flows in at high tide and forms a brackish environment with a mixture of sea water and fresh water. As the salinity in the lake differs from place to place, there is a variety of life forms such as brackish, marine, and fresh water spe-

cies. Thanks to this rich biodiversity, local people have been engaged in active fishery for a long time. The thriving fishery for Asian clam (*Corbicula japonica*), Yellowfin Goby and Japanese smelt still support the local community.

This lake has an important reed bed habitat for Four-spot Midget (*Mortanagrion hirosei*), an endangered damselfly living in brackish water. Hinuma is also known as one of the remaining habitat for those declining plant species such as *Penthorum chinense*, *Carex rugulosa* and *Monochoria korsakowii*.

Important Wintering Habitat for Greater Scaups:

88 species of birds have been recorded in this lake so far. A number of ducks including Mallards and Greater Scaups winter here. Especially for Greater Scaup, it is an important wintering habitat as approximately 5000 birds visit every year, which exceeds 1 % of its population in East Asia. Furthermore, the endangered Steller's Sea Eagles visit here in winter too.

Abundant Resources:

Because of the abundant fish resources in Hinuma, there are some full-time fishers, which is rare among inland water fishery in Japan. In order to conserve the fish resources, there are some fishing regulations limiting

the size and open season for each species. They have a traditional fishing practice called "Takappo, Sasabitashi", using no hook, net or bait. A special fishing rod named "Hinuma sao" has been handed down since the Edo period, which was approximately 400 years ago.

Recreational Waterfront for Locals:

Hinuma used to be an important water route for transporting the products including rice from northern Honshu to the capital. In our time, the lake is highly valued for recreation and tourism such as bathing, fishing, yachting, camping and nature walking.

There are many good sites for outdoor activities on the 22km long lakeshore including; 34.5ha Hinuma Nature Park, Hiroura Park which is famous for the magnificent landscape of Mt. Tsukuba, Oyasawa Park and its popular sand beach, Hinuma Recreational Village with a swimming pool and Hinuma Yacht Harbour.

[Four-spot Midget] A species of damselfly, "Hinumaitotombo" by the Japanese name, lives in brackish water such as estuaries. As it was first found in Hinuma in 1971, it was named after the lake. Even it is found in some places other than Hinuma, it is threatened with extinction because its habitat of reed bed was reduced in exchange for estuary weirs and bank protections.

Contact Information:

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