A spring-fed mire in the vicinity of an urban area which is an ecosystem protected by the citizens

Tokai Hilly Land Spring-fed Mires

Spring-fed Mire

Geographical Coordinates: 35°08'N, 137°21'E (Yanami-shicchi), 35°12'N, 137°24'E, Kamitaka-shicchi), 35°11'N, 137°24'E (Onshinji-shicchi) / Altitude: 111-168m (Yanami-shicchi), 190-244m (Kamitaka-shicchi), 194-254m (Onshinji-shicchi) / Area: 22.5ha / Major Type of Wetland: Spring-fed mire / Designation: Special Zone of Quasi-National Park / Municipalities Involved:Toyota City, Aichi Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: July 2012 / Ramsar Criteria: 1, 3

Flowers of Tokai Hilly Land Elements (Photo by K. Ohata)

Yanami-shicchi

Nature watching in Yanami-shicchi (Photo by K. Ohata)

Star Magnolia (Photo by K. Kawashima)

Kamitaka-shicchi (Photo by K. Ohata)

General Overview:

In the Tokai region on the coast of Pacific Ocean and in central Honshu, there are a few small wetlands formed by spring waters from the ground in an area consists of sandy gravel layer and granite. There are some species endemic to this region and some other species that have disjunct distribution from Asian Continent. These species are represented by 15 plant species which are called collectively the "Tokai Hilly Land Elements"

A group of three mires, Yanami-shicchi, Kamitaka-shicchi and Onshinji-shicci, that represent the mires in this region, was designated as a Ramsar site with the name "Tokai Hilly Land Spring-fed Mires".

These mires are situated in the neighborhood of the urban area of Toyota City in Aichi Prefecture. Yanami-shicchi (5.13ha) is located in a corner of the park "Toyota City Nature Sanctuary", approximately 4km east of the urban area, and other mires, Kamitaka-shicchi (5.45ha) and Onshinji-shicchi (11.92ha), are situated 4km northeast of it.

Invaluable Flora and Fauna:

The distinctive characteristic of this site is that it has high density of plant communities of Tokai Hilly Land Elements including *Eriocaulon nudicuspe Maxim, Pedicularis resupinata var. microphylla*, Star Magnolia, *Veratrum stamineum Maxim. var. micranthum Satake*, all of which are endemic to Tokai Region, and *Eulalia speciosa*, a plant of disjunct distribution from the Asian Continent. The community of *Pedicularis resupinata var. microphylla* in Yanami-shicchi is one of the largest and it forms a beautiful flower garden together with *Eriocaulon nudicuspe Maxim* in autumn.

There are numbers of dragonfly species including the smallest dragonfly in Japan, *Nannophya pygmaea*, and some other rare aquatic species such as *Nepa hoffmanni* and *Lefua echigonia*.

It is considered that there used to be a number of mires like these in the Tokai Region. However, most of them were lost to agriculture or some other development. The wetlands in this Ramsar site are invaluable for retaining the original natural character.

Conservation by the Citizens in the Town:

In 1973 when a local plant study group revealed the importance of the mire with plant species such as *Eriocaulon nudicuspe Maxim*, the local government Toyota City started the conservation management of Yanami-shicchi.

When the mires were recognized as one of the "500 Important Wetlands in Japan", these unique mires in the Tokai Region attracted a lot of attention and the mires have been protected comprehensively since then. Some local organizations take charge of the maintenance and conservation work such as mowing for the three mires. Yanami-shicchi became open to the public for certain periods of days every year, offering a good opportunity for many citizens to enjoy the nature and understand the importance of it.

In accordance with these movements, the "Tokai hilly Land Spring-fed Mires Conservation Plan" was developed in 2011. It is a framework for the people and organizations including governments to promote the conservation and wise use of the mires. The stakeholders organize meetings regularly to promote exchange and co-learning.

Contact Information:

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