

Imuta-ike

Freshwater Lake, Low Moor

Geographical Coordinates: 31°49'N, 130°28'E / Altitude: 296m / Area: 60ha / Major Type of Wetland: Freshwater lake (crater lake), low moor / Designation: Natural Habitat Conservation Area under the Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora / Municipalities Involved: Satsumasendai City, Kagoshima Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005 / Ramsar Criteria: 2



Full view of Imuta-ike

General Overview:

Imuta-ike is a crater lake situated in the mountains in the upper reaches of the Sendai River, 25km northwest of Kagoshima City, the capital of Kagoshima Prefecture. It is a 60ha lake formed in the volcanic crater of Mt. Iimori. The water level of the lake is at an altitude of 296m. Imuta-ike is surrounded by volcanoes with altitudes ranging from 400 - 500m. Steep cliffs of the crater wall surround the lake. Imuta-ike has no river inflow but it drains into the Sendai River on the east side of the lake.

Imuta-ike is a small round lake with a circumference of 4km. Some peat strata have been formed over a long period of time in the northwestern part of the lake to form a low moor, and as it is unusual to find a peat strata and a number of floating peat islands in such a warm climate, this area is designated as a national natural monument.

Serene Shallow Lake:

Imuta-ike is a shallow lake with an average depth of 0.8m and a maximum depth of 2.7m. It has a quiet atmosphere with few human settlements around. Reed and Wild Rice grow in abundance in the wetland with a variety of water plant species such as Water-shield and Water-lily on the water surface. It is a good habitat for a number of wildlife including waterfowl such as the Spot-billed Duck and the Lit-

tle Grebe, and fish species such as Medaka *Oryzias latipes* and Pale Chub.

An Endangered Dragonfly:

Imuta-ike is a stable wetland habitat consisted of water and marsh. The featured species in such an environment is dragonflies. This lake has a good habitat for the lifecycle of dragonflies including the laying eggs and emergence. Species such as *Sympetrum kunckeli*, *Trithemis aurora* and *Rhyothemis fuliginosa* are just a few examples of the dragonflies found here. However, the most well-known is *Libellula angelina*.

Although there are approximately 200 species of dragonfly in Japan, many of them has reduced their numbers because of habitat loss and degradation of wetland ecosystems. Especially, *Libellula angelina* is one of the most endangered dragonflies in Japan and Imuta-ike is one of a few habitats for it. Local people organize a conservation group for this dragonfly and there is a reference library for ecosystem conservation to raise public awareness located on the lakeshore. In order to conserve the habitat of this dragonfly, a biotope was created in the eastern part of the marshland it is used as a field for environment learning as well.

[*Libellula angelina*] A small dragonfly with a body length ranging from 3.7 to 4.5cm, this dragonfly is recognized by its amber wings with blackish-brown speck-

Libellula angelina



ling. It is considered the oldest species of dragonflies. Although it is among the most famous of Japanese dragonflies, its breeding areas continue to be threatened.

Contact Information:

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