

Miyajima-numa

Freshwater Lake

Geographical Coordinates : 43°20'N, 141°43'E / Altitude : 13m / Area : 41ha / Major Type of Wetland : Freshwater lake / Designation : Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area / Municipalities Involved : Bibai City, Hokkaido Prefecture / Ramsar Designation : November 2002 / Ramsar criteria : 2, 4, 5, 6



Monitoring and research activities



Waterfowl blanket the water surface



White-fronted Geese of Miyajima-numa

General Overview:

Miyajima-numa is a round lake with an area of 41ha in Bibai City, located 50km northeast of Hokkaido's capital city, Sapporo. It is a shallow lake with an average depth of 1.7m. The lake has no river inflow and, except for a small amount of inflow from the surrounding rice paddies and outflow for irrigation, it is fed mainly by a large amount of melting snow and rainwater.

There is a big river named the Ishikari River meandering to the west of the lake. Historically, this river flooded and changed its route repeatedly, eventually creating oxbow lakes such as Miyajima-numa. As the Ishikari plain in the upper stream of this river is one of the major granaries in Hokkaido, the water of Miyajima-numa has been used for irrigation.

A Stopover Site for Geese:

Although Miyajima-numa was surrounded by a forest in the past, there are almost no trees left now. One can get a full view of the lake standing by the shore. Characterized by vast open water, with water plants and the surrounding rice paddies that serve as food sources for the geese, Miyajima-numa is an invaluable resource for migratory birds.

An astounding number of waterfowl including geese, ducks and swans visit this lake every autumn and spring. Miyajima-numa is one of the most important

stopover points in Japan. Especially, the number of White-fronted Geese exceeds 50,000, constantly accounting for more than 1% of the species population in East Asia. Miyajima-numa occupies an important position in their life cycle along with the lakes in the south, such as Izu-numa and Uchi-numa, and Kabukuri-numa.

Regulations on the Use of Lead Shot:

Miyajima-numa used to be a good hunting ground before it was designated as a wildlife protection area. In the late 1980's, a number of geese and swans died of acute lead poisoning ingesting the lead shot left by hunting in the lake. It became a major social issue and hunter associations stopped hunting voluntarily. The national government regulated the use of lead shot and promoted the use of steel shot, before designating the lake as a wildlife protection area. Eventually, the lake was designated as a Ramsar site in 2002.

[White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*]

A medium-sized goose of approximately 72cm in length with a white face and a dark brown body with irregular black stripes on its underbelly. After breeding in tundra in the north, they winter in Japan. They arrive in Miyajima-numa en masse in autumn and pass through heading north in spring.

Contact Information:

Bibai City Office
<http://www.city.bibai.hokkaido.jp/>



A banded White-fronted Goose



Full view of Miyajima-numa

