

Nakaikemi-shicchi

Geographical Coordinates: 35°39'N, 136°05'E / Altitude: 45m / Area: 87ha / Major Type of Wetland: / Low moor, rice paddy / Designation: Special Zone of Quasi National Park / Municipalities Involved: Tsuruga City, Fukui Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: July 2012 / Ramsar Criteria: 1, 3



View of Nakaikemi-shicchi (Photo by Fukui-shimbun Newspaper)

General Overview:

The Ramsar site “Nakaikemi-shicchi” sits in the central part of Tsuruga City that faces the Sea of Japan in the south-western Fukui Prefecture. It is a low moor surrounded by three mountains, Mt. Tedutsuyama, Nakayama and Oyama. The main feature of this wetland is the “sediment-filled valley” which was formed by the accumulation of peat layers in a valley after the river flow was halted by the faulting and folding of the earth crust in the past. An approximately 40m deep continuous peat layer is found underground, which represents a record of the change in climate and vegetation for 100,000 years.

It was initially developed for rice cultivation during the Edo period (1603-1868). There are water passages in every direction forming a mosaic of rice paddies and water pools. As a result, a diverse wetland habitat has developed in this area fostering diverse flora and fauna.

A repository of aquatic life:

Because of the thick layer of peat, the rice paddies in this wetland are extremely deep and muddy. As it was difficult to introduce machinery in such deep paddies, rice cultivation has been carried out in a traditional way here. In most farmland in hilly rural areas in Japan, a number of species that used to be common are threatened today. In contrast, this wetland still sustains some valuable aquatic plants such as *Isoetes japonica*, *Marsilea quadrifolia*, *Natant salvinia* and *Azolla japonica*.

More than 70 species of dragonflies and damselflies are identified in this wetland including *Asiagomphus pryeri* and *Sarasaeschna pryeri*, accounting for 38% of 184 species of dragonflies and damselflies found in Japan. The endemic *Scymnus nakaikemensis Sasaji et Kishimoto* was found here for the first time and this wetland is the only habitat for it in this prefecture.

“Nakaikemi Harmony of Rural Nature and Human Life”

Tsuruga City established a visitor center called “Nakaikemi Harmony of Rural Nature and Human Life” in the south of this wetland. This place is busy with more than 10,000 visitors every year, concentrated in the flower season in spring and autumn. People can get the information of the area at the visitor center equipped with board walks and information boards. It is a good field for events such as nature watching and wildlife monitoring, which are organized for citizens regularly.

Conservation Efforts:

Although human intervention is important to sustain a good habitat condition in this wetland, most of the rice paddies are left abandoned with no farmers to take care of them. Local conservation group and the local government jointly take charge of the work in the rice paddies and engage in such activities as monitoring and removal of alien species, as well as the environmental education for local schools.

Low Moor, Rice Paddy



Reconstructed farm house in Nakaikemi-shicchi



Marsilea quadrifolia



Traditional water passage management

Moreover, people carry out a traditional conservation practice for the rice paddies. They dredge the water passage and remove the plants and soils in it. At the same time, people are trying to transfer these practices to the next generation.

Contact Information:

Tsuruga City Office
<http://www.city.tsuruga.lg.jp/>

