

One of the largest highland high moors of Japan at the altitude of 850m

Uryunuma-shitsugen

High Moor

Geographical Coordinates: 43°41'N, 141°36'E / Altitude: 850-900m / Area: 624ha / Major Type of Wetland: High moors / Designation: Special Protection Zone of Quasi-National Park / Municipalities Involved: Uryu Town, Hokkaido Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005



A pond cluster of Uryunuma (Photo by H.Okamoto)

Principal Features:

Uryunuma-shitsugen is located at an altitude of 850m on the eastern slope of Shokanbetsu-dake, 70km north of Sapporo, the prefectural capital city of Hokkaido. The 100ha wetland extending 4km by 2km has developed over a large hollow created from volcanic lava flow. The Penkepetan River meanders through this wetland inclining north-west-southeast, flowing over the steep eastern cliff into a narrow gorge.

Although the altitude of Shokanbetsu mountain range is relatively low (below 1500m), facing the Japan Sea makes this region subject to one of the heaviest snowfall in Hokkaido with more than 3m of snowfall to last more than half a year. The abundant water from the thaw has developed Uryunuma-shitsugen to

be the second largest in scale for highland high moor of Japan after Oze.

Diverse Wetland Plant Communities:

Diverse vegetation of approximately 150 species of aquatic plants are observed in Uryunuma wetland in its pristine condition, including the spatterdock *Nuphar pumilum*, peat moss and *Moliniopsis japonica*. Summer months of June-September would be an excellent season to view Broad Dwarf Day-Lily *Hemerocallis dumortieri*, Blackberry Lily *Belamcanda chinensis*, and Plantain Lily *Hosta rectifolia* blooming all over this wetland.

The most remarkable characteristic about Uryunuma-shitsugen is more than 100 pond clusters scattered in the wetlands as well as small islands of floating waterweed in such swamps. These pond clusters provide unique habitats for a



Uryunuma viewed from the east (Photo by H. Okamoto)



Uryu Spatterdock in a pond cluster (Photo by H. Okamoto)

variety of wildlife and insects, including the rare Ezoruri-damselfly *Enallagma boreale circulatum selys* and Japanese Argus *Erebia nipponica*.

Protection of Native Species:

In order to protect Uryunuma-shitsugen in its natural condition, continuous efforts are being made to control and keep out alien species such as Tall Goldenrods *Solidago altissima* Linn. by encouraging visitors to wash the bottom of their shoes before entering the area.

[Pond Clusters] Pond cluster refers to a unique formation of the ponds that are developed in wetlands. They are created through the process of high moor development, when water gathers on rough surfaces of accumulating dead plants.

Contact Information:

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