

Yatsu-higata

Tidal Flat

Geographical Coordinates: 35°40'N, 140°00'E / Altitude: 0m / Area: 40ha / Major Type of Wetland: Tidal flat / Designation: Special Protection Zone of National Wildlife Protection Area / Municipalities Involved: Narashino City, Chiba Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: June 1993



View of the Yatsu-higata



Left to right: Cleaning up of Yatsu-higata / Children music concert / Story telling

Principal Features:

Yatsu-higata is located approximately 2km inland of Tokyo Bay. It is a 40ha tidal flat of sand and mud. The bay once had an extensive area of tidal flats, which was one of the largest in Japan. However, most of the area was reclaimed to make way for factories, housing, and roads during rapid industrialization. Yatsu-higata is an exceptional example of a tidal flat that has survived this process. The tidal flat resembles a swimming pool, enclosed by concrete walls on all sides. It is connected to Tokyo Bay via two channels on the western and eastern ends, which are accessible by tidal flow. At high tide, the area is filled with sea water to depths of about one meter.

The site is a very important stopover area for migratory birds. Ten percent of plovers and sandpipers migrating to Japan annually have been observed in this area. In 1996, Yatsu-higata became a part of the Waterbird Site Network based on the Partnership for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

A Tidal Flat Remains in a Metropolis:

Only 30 minutes away from downtown Tokyo, Yatsu-higata is situated between housing complexes, schools and an expressway. Locals appreciate and enjoy the site as a valuable natural feature remaining in an urban area. In 1994, the Yatsu-higata Nature Observation Center was opened to host programs for nature observation and environmental education. Around the center, observation stations and paths were established for public use. The center is used as a base for nature conservation and environmental education, as well as for bird watching, recreation and relaxation.

Local Participation in Conservation of the Tidal Flat:

With the belief that local participation and cooperation is indispensable for wetland conservation, Narashino City is actively enrolling volunteers at the Yatsu-higata Nature Observation Center. Currently about 130 volunteers support the conservation and management of the tidal flat and the operation of the center.

[Wetland Education] The Yatsu-higata Nature Observation Center provides various environmental education programs in collaboration with elementary schools throughout Narashino City. Through theater and music, students learn about the environment. In addition, starting in 1998, an exchange program with the Boondall Wetlands in Queensland, Australia was commenced, allowing students from both countries to exchange experiences.

Contact Information:

Narashino City Office
<http://www.city.narashino.chiba.jp/>

