

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 / EAAFP Flyway Network Site



Monitoring and research activities



Waterfowl blanket on the water surface



Greater White-fronted Goose 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 a depth of 55cm at its center. The lake has no river inflow and is maintained by the inflow of water from surrounding agricultural water channels, melting snow, and rainwater.

The Ishikari River is a large river that flows west of the lake. Historically, this river is repeatedly flooded and altered its channel, forming oxbow lakes such as Miyajima-numa. Ishikari Plain in the upper stream of this river is one of Hokkaido's most important grain fields, where water from Miyajima-numa has been used for irrigation.

A Stopover Site for Geese:

Miyajima-numa was previously part of a large wetland. However, farmland has largely replaced these wetland areas. 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 Greater White-fronted Goose exceeds 70,000, accounting for more than 1% of the species population in East Asia.

Miyajima-numa plays an essential role in their life cycle along with the lakes in the south, such as Izu-numa and Uchi-numa, and Kabukuri-numa.

Shifting from the Shotgun Lead Bullet Issue to Protecting Birds:

Miyajima-numa used to be a popular hunting ground since it was not designated as Wildlife Protection Area. However, in the late 1980s, a large number of geese and swans continued to die of emaciation. It turned out that the cause of death was acute lead poisoning resulting from the ingestion of lead bullets from shotguns that had been left in the swamps. It became a major social issue, which resulted in self-restraint of hunting by hunter associations. The government designated Miyajima-numa as National Wildlife Protection Area where hunting is regulated, and as a Ramsar Site in 2002. The Miyajimanuma Waterbird and Wetland Center is located on the lakeshore.

[Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)] A medium-sized goose of approximately 70cm in length with a white face and a dark brown body with irregular black stripes on its underbelly. They spend the winter in Japan after breeding in the northern tundra. They fly to Miyajima-numa in spring and autumn.

Contact Information:

Bibai City Office

<http://www.city.bibai.hokkaido.jp/>



A banded Greater White-fronted Goose



Full view of Miyajima-numa

