

Izu-numa and Uchi-numa

Freshwater Lake

Geographical Coordinates: 38°43'N, 141°06'E / Altitude: 6m / Area: 559ha / Major Type of Wetland: Freshwater lake / Designation: Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area / Municipalities Involved: Kurihara City and Tome City, Miyagi Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: September 1985 / Ramsar Criteria: 2, 3 / EAAFP Flyway Network Site



Morning flight of Greater White-fronted Goose



Izu-numa (left) and Uchi-numa



Activities of Bass Busters

General Overview:

Izu-numa and Uchi-numa are two interconnected freshwater lakes lying in an alluvial plain of Hasama River, a tributary of Kitakami River, running through north-western Miyagi Prefecture. The surrounding area is mostly rice paddies with hills (elevation 30-50m) to the south, west, and north.

The area was previously a flood plain where the Kitakami and Hasama rivers met. In the 1930s, the vast, swampy area began to be reclaimed to develop rice paddies, thereby becoming one of the major rice croplands in northeastern Japan. Although a part of Izu-numa and Uchi-numa was reclaimed as well, approximately half of the original lake area still remains and functions as an irrigation pond and reservoir for flood control. The two lakes are approximately 1m deep and are regulated by a sluice in the east of Izu-numa.

Wintering Ground for Migratory Birds:

Because the area receives little snowfall, the lakes do not freeze even in midwinter. Surrounded by extensive rice paddies that serve as feeding grounds, the site is one of the largest wintering grounds in Japan,

attracting over 100,000 of Greater White-fronted Goose, Middendorff's Bean Goose and Whooper Swan.

Abundant biota:

Izu-numa and Uchi-numa are shallow lakes with a maximum depth of 1.6m. The area abounds in aquatic vegetation including reed, Manchurian Wild Rice, lotus and *Trapa japonica*. Approximately 700 species of plant have been recorded in the lakes and surrounding areas. In summer, lotus flowers cover the surface of the water. A "Lotus Festival" is held every year, and people enjoy viewing the lotus blossoms from a sightseeing boat. Forty species of fish including carp and crucian carp have been confirmed. Endangered species such as *Acheilognathus typus*, *Oryzias latipes*, and *Gymnogobius castaneus* also inhabit the area. In addition, 35 species of dragonflies have been observed, including *Paracercion plagiosum*, *Rhyothemis fuliginosa*, and *Deilolia phaon*.

[Bass Busters] The number of Largemouth Bass, an invasive alien species, increased around 1996 resulting in a significant decline in the numbers of *Acheilognathus typus* and other native fish that were

preyed upon. In 2004, the Miyagi Prefectural Izunuma-Uchinuma Environmental Foundation, a local public interest incorporated foundation, took the lead in forming the Bass Busters, a group of volunteers. Eradication activities began, with many NGOs, citizens, businesses, high school students, and others participating. Other projects to control Largemouth Bass by the Ministry of the Environment, Miyagi Prefecture, and other organizations have also been implemented, and there seems to be a trend toward recovery of native fish. Juvenile fish of *Acheilognathus typus* have also been observed.

Contact Information:

Izu-numa and Uchi-numa Sanctuary Center
<http://izunuma.org/>
Sanctuary Center (Kurihara City)
<https://ktnpr.com/kontyu/profile.html>
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<https://www.city.tome.miyagi.jp/kankyo/kurashi/sekatsukankyo/izunuma/sankutyuari.html>

