

Shizugawa-wan

Geographical Coordinates: 38°40'N, 141°30'E / Altitude: 0m / Area: 5,793ha / Major Type of Wetland: B: Marine subtidal aquatic beds (Underwater vegetation) / Designation: Marine Park Area of National Park / Municipalities Involved: Minamisanriku Town, Miyagi Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: October 2018 / Ramsar Criteria: 1,2,3,4,6



View of Shizugawa-wan from the southeast

General Overview:

Shizugawa-wan is located on the southern Sanriku Coast facing the North Pacific. The environment of the bay is maintained by three well balanced sea currents: the nutrient rich Oyashio, a cold current, as well as Kuroshio and Tsugaru, two warm currents bringing warm water from the south. These currents sustain extensive seaweed beds of two major and valuable Kelp species flourish in the bay: Makombu (*Saccharina japonica*), which grows in the cold sea, and Arame (*Eisenia bicyclis*), which grows in the warm sea. The bay has several islets such as Areshima Island and Tsubakishima Island, along with rock reefs, sandy silt shore, and tidal flats on the coast.

More than 100 Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla orientalis*), a national natural treasure classified as Vulnerable on the Red List by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan, arrive here every winter. To spend winter here, they need food like eelgrass and rock reefs for resting. Fish-eating raptors such as White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and Steller's Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*) also visit this area in winter.

There is a station monitoring the representative seaweed beds in Japan (Monitoring Sites 1000 Project conducted by the Ministry of the Environment) near Tsubakishima Island approximately 4km away from Shizugawa Port. The monitoring has been carried out continuously since 2008. Although the tsunami after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 caused serious damage, the seaweed bed is recovering now.

Diverse Types of Seaweed Beds:

A seaweed bed is also known as seaweed

forest or seagrass meadow. There are 4 types of seaweed beds in the bay; Kombu (*Saccharina japonica*), Arame (*Eisenia bicyclis*) and Garamo *Sargassum* sp., respectively. The other bed consists of eelgrass. More than 200 species of sea grass and seaweed have been identified in the eelgrass bed, including *Zostera marina*, *Zostera caespitosa*, *Zostera caulescens* and *Phyllospadix iwatensis* as well as several endangered species. It is rare to find such diverse seaweed beds in the world. In addition, the bay also supports the marine biodiversity of more than 700 species as their feeding ground and habitat.

Sustainable Aquaculture:

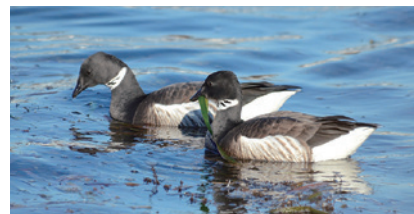
The bountiful Shizugawa-wan supports fishery, the main industry of Minamisanriku Town. The aquaculture of Oyster, Wakame and Silver Salmon in this bay has been supporting local livelihoods for a long time. The local community aims to propagate sustainable aquaculture with proper management. Oysters produced here are ASC-certified, an eco-label for aquaculture products issued by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council.

Centers of Nature Experience:

Minamisanriku Marine Visitor Center is located at the Sanriku Fukko (reconstruction) National Park. The visitor center provides information about the National Park and the Ramsar site and offers opportunities to enjoy outdoor activities, such as kayaking.

In addition, the Minamisanriku Nature Center, which was damaged in the Great East Japan Earthquake, was rebuilt and opened in February 2020. The center implements research, study, education, and public awareness activities related to natural environment of Minamisanriku Town.

Seaweed Bed



Brent Goose eating eelgrass leaves (Photo: Minamisanriku Nature Center)



Aquaculture of oysters (Photo: WWF Japan)



Seaweed bed (Arame *Eisenia bicyclis*)

Introduction video:

Shizugawa-wan
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCU6njGXioY>

Contact Information:

Minamisanriku Town Office
<https://www.town.minamisanriku.miyagi.jp/>

