

## Kabukuri-numa and the surrounding rice paddies Freshwater Lake, Rice Paddy

Geographical Coordinates: 38°38'N, 141°06'E / Altitude: 5.7m / Area: 423ha / Major Type of Wetland:

Freshwater lake (dammed lake), low moor, rice paddy / Designation: Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area / Municipalities Involved: Kurihara City, Tome City and Osaki City, Miyagi Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005 / Ramsar Criteria: 5, 6 / EAAFP Flyway Network Site



Bean Goose



Greater White-fronted Goose and Whooper Swan in Fuyumizu-tambo



Geese taking off from Kabukuri-numa

### General Overview:

The Ramsar site includes the Kabukuri-numa flood controlling basin and the surrounding rice paddies that are closely linked to each other. They are situated in the river basin of the Hasama River, a tributary of the Kitakami River, in northern Miyagi Prefecture in northern Honshu, the largest island in Japan. While Kabukuri-numa currently has an area of 150ha, the lake used to be a 1,000ha dammed lake in the Kitakami Plains, a floodplain of the Kitakami River, before the lake was reclaimed to be rice paddies. However, since repeated heavy floods hit this area, rice paddies were partially reconverted and became the current state as a reservoir basin.

The lake has a gradation of plant communities found in low wetlands, ranging from Manchurian Wild Rice to reeds and to willows. In addition, rare plant species such as *Penthorum chinense* and *Monochoria korsakowii* can also be found here.

### Wintering Grounds for Ducks and Geese:

Kabukuri-numa is a shallow lake with

an average depth of 0.5m. There are almost no trees around the lake and it is surrounded by vast rice paddies. These characteristics make it a perfect wintering environment for migratory birds. Every winter, over 100,000 ducks and geese visit the area to winter. In addition to Greater White-fronted Goose, Middendorf's Bean Goose, Aleutian Cackling Goose, Snow Goose also winter here. This number is gradually increasing: many ducks including Baikal Teal, Common Teal, and Northern Pintail are now using the area as a wintering ground and/or a stopover site.

To maintain the ecological character of this wintering ground, the local municipalities and NGOs conduct various efforts to maintain the wetlands, monitor the local fauna and flora, maintain water channels, and improve water quality.

As a result, summer birds such as herons can be seen in larger numbers, who feed on the creatures in the lake and rice paddies.

Izu-numa and Uchi-numa, located

approximately 9km north of this lake, and Kejo-numa, approximately 12km west of the lake, enjoy a complementary relationship as roosting areas for geese and ducks. They choose the wetlands they use based on the number of birds using them and the availability of food such as fallen ears around the wetlands.

**["Fuyumizu-tambo"]** Rice paddies are filled with water during the winter and these winter-flooded rice paddies are called "Fuyumizu-tambo". This creates a roosting site for waterfowl and a habitat for a variety of organisms, including waterfowl, fungi, and earthworms, and enhances the function of the rice paddies as wetlands. Sludgeworms and bird droppings have fertilizing and weed control effects. As such, the rice produced here is often sold as brand-name rice. Moreover, farmers are actively surveying the living creatures in the rice paddies to create environmental education programs for children based on the lake and surrounding rice paddies.

### Contact Information:

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