

Katano-kamoike

Freshwater Pond, Rice Paddy

Geographical Coordinates: 36°19'N, 136°17'E / Altitude: 2.5-8.0m / Area: 10ha / Major Type of Wetland: Freshwater pond, rice paddy / Designation: Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area, Special Zone of Quasi-National Park / Municipalities Involved: Kaga City, Ishikawa Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: June 1993 / Ramsar Criteria: 3 / EAAFP Flyway Network Site



Saka-ami hunting (a demonstration)



Full view of Katano-kamoike from the east



Waterfowl at Katano-kamoike

General Overview:

The Katano-kamoike in Kaga City, Ishikawa Prefecture, is a wetland located about 1km inland from the Sea of Japan. It consists of a 2.5ha freshwater pond, and 7.5ha of surrounding marshland including reed beds, Manchurian wild rice and rice paddies. The site is bordered by hills with 30-50m elevation covered with pine and broadleaf trees. Native plants grow in the freshwater pond, such as *Trapa japonica* and Manchurian Wild Rice.

"Kamoike" means "duck pond" in English. As the name implies, the area has been especially important as a wintering and stopover site for ducks, geese, and other waterfowl. It is said that there had previously been a number of ponds such as this in this area, however, most of them were reclaimed for rice paddies. The Katano-kamoike is one of the few remaining ponds, so is of special importance.

A Pond of Ducks:

From November to March every year the pond is used as a wintering and stop-over site by thousands of ducks and geese. The habitat is also used by raptors such as Northern Goshawk and Mountain

Hawk-eagle for wintering. The Kamoike Observation Centre on the lakeside is a core facility for the organization of many activities involving local people for public awareness, environmental education and the conservation and management of the wintering habitat.

Traditional Water Management:

For centuries, Katano-kamoike has been used as a reservoir by the local people to irrigate surrounding farmlands. During the summer months, the pond water is distributed to the surrounding rice paddies. After the rice harvest, irrigation is stopped to allow the pond to be replenished, thus providing an excellent roosting area for wintering migratory birds. In recent years, the rice paddies surrounding Katano-kamoike, which are commonly left dry in winter, are being flooded as well, increasing the wintering grounds for birds. This is known as "Fuyumizu-tambo" and practiced by local NGOs and farmers.

[Saka-ami Hunting] There is a unique hunting technique in Kamoike that was developed in the Edo period about 300 years ago and is still in use even now. It employs a special net called "Saka-ami" to

catch the ducks in the pond. Ducks rest on the surface water of Kamoike in the day-time and fly to the surrounding rice paddies to feed at dusk. Taking advantage of this habit, the hunters hide in the pine woods on the hills around the pond and cast a net over the ducks when they are about to fly over the hills. The hunters have formed a union to regulate the hunting season and the hunting area and the number of duck caught is strictly controlled. The duck hunters are deeply involved in the maintenance and conservation of the environment in and around the pond as well.

Contact Information:

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