

Nakaumi

Brackish Lake

Geographical Coordinates: 35°32'N, 133°09'E / Altitude: 0m / Area: 8,043ha / Major Type of Wetland: Brackish lake / Designation: Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area / Municipalities Involved: Yonago City and Sakaiminato City, Tottori Prefecture; Matsue City, Yasugi City, Shimane Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005 / Ramsar Criteria: 5, 6 / EAAFP Flyway Network Site (Yonago Waterbird Sanctuary)



Northwest view of Nakaumi; birds pictured, from left to right: Little Grebe, Osprey, Common Moorhen, Tundra Swan

General Overview:

Nakaumi is a lagoon located at the boarder of Tottori and Shimane prefectures in the western part of Honshu Island. Isolated from the Japan Sea by the Yumigahama Peninsula extending northwest from Yonago City to Sakaiminato City, it drains into the sea via a narrow waterway in the north. It is the fifth largest lake in Japan, with an area of 9,200ha, an average depth of 5.4m, and a maximum depth of 8.4m.

Due to the influx of seawater flowing in from the Sea of Japan, the salinity of Nakaumi is approximately one-half that of seawater — higher than the salinity of Shinji-ko, a brackish lake in the same water system, which has just one-tenth the concentration of seawater. The two lakes have their own characteristics and diverse natural environments with both freshwater and saltwater fauna and flora.

Discontinued Reclamation Project:

In 1963, a reclamation project to develop new farmlands was initiated in Nakaumi, with the aim of transforming it into a freshwater lake as part of the reclamation. However, the opposition from the local people and the acreage-reduction policy of the

government resulted in the farmland project being called off and the desalination plan eventually being cancelled in 2002. Nakaumi is now designated as a Ramsar site.

A lake was created in the process of the reclamation project on the eastern shore of Nakaumi, which now attracts many waterfowl. Yonago City established the Yonago Waterbird Sanctuary in the 30ha reclaimed area to promote bird watching and environmental education.

More than 200 species of wild birds have been identified in Nakaumi. It is not only one of the leading wintering spots in Japan but also an internationally important waterfowl habitat visited by approximately 20,000 birds belonging to the Anatidae family annually. In particular, Nakaumi supports more than 1% of the East Asian population of Tundra Swan, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck, and Scaup. In particular, along with Shinji-ko, Nakaumi is one of the largest wintering spots for Tundra Swan in western Japan.

[Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)]

Tundra Swan has a white body and a black pointed yellow bill. Its body length is 120cm and it is smaller than Whooper

Swan (*Cygnus Cygnus*). It inhabits areas throughout Eurasia and North America. It breeds in the tundra, and then flies to Japan to spend the winters in lakes, marshes, and rivers mainly along the Japan Sea. Nakaumi and Shinji-ko are its southernmost wintering grounds.

Contact Information:

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