

Kuju Bogatsuru and Tadewara-shitsugen Intermediate Moor

Geographical Coordinates: 33°06'N, 131°15'E (Bogatsuru); 33°07'N, 131°14'E (Tadewara) / Altitude: 1,230-1,270m (Bogatsuru); 1,000-1,040m (Tadewara) / Area: 91ha (Bogatsuru 53ha; Tadewara 38ha) / Major Type of Wetland: Intermediate moor / Designation: Special Zone and Special Protection Zone of National Park / Municipalities Involved: Kokonoe Town and Taketa City, Oita Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005 / Ramsar Criteria: 1



Bogatsuru-shitsugen

General Overview:

With volcanoes scattered throughout the Japanese Archipelago, Japan is appropriately called a "country of volcanoes". The Kirishima Volcanic Belt runs north to south through the country's third largest island, Kyushu. The Kuju Mountain Range, situated in the southwestern Oita Prefecture and bordering the Kumamoto Prefecture, is located at the northern end of the belt.

The two wetlands, Bogatsuru and Tadewara, are situated in this mountain range. Bogatsuru is nestled in a basin surrounded by Mt. Mimata and other volcanic mountains. Tadewara is located in an alluvial fan below with many springs. These are considered to be one of the largest mountainous intermediate moors in Japan. The two wetlands have a vegetation distribution which reflects the geographical and topographical features with shrubs of *Hydrangea paniculata* around grassland species such as reeds, *Moliniopsis japonica* and Japanese silver grass, and Japanese Black Pine on exposed sediments. These plants are typical of the vegetation of this type of wetlands in Japan.

Scenery and Tourism:

The two wetlands represent the main features within Aso-Kuju National Park, which attracts 5 million visitors annually to its breathtaking landscape of smoking

volcanoes, meadows, forests and inviting hot springs. The beginning of summer, when Kyushu Azalea blooms, mid-summer for trekking, and autumn, when the leaves change into brilliant colors, are all popular time to visit. A visitor centre is located at Chojabaru, the starting point of a boardwalk through Tadewara-shitsugen. Bogatsuru and Tadewara-shitsugen are linked by trekking routes. Bogatsuru also attracts tourists as a good camping site, and people who adore the Kuju Mountains sing a local song praising the mountains.

Meadow Burning:

In Bogatsuru and Tadewara-shitsugen, 74 species of fern and 493 species of seed plants have been recorded, as well as many rare plants such as the endangered *Geranium soboliferum* var. *Kiusianum* and the *Pterygopleurum neurophyllum*. Every spring, the local community conducts controlled burning in the meadow to maintain this vegetation and prevent the forest from spreading into the wetland.

[Intermediate Moor (mixed sphagnum bog)] According to the degree of development of peat strata, wetlands are classified into low moor, intermediate moor and high moor. Intermediate moors are midway in transition from nutrient-rich (characteristic of low moor) to nutrient-poor (characteristic of high moor) as peat strata ac-



Tadewara-shitsugen

cumulate in the water and eventually lose influences from groundwater. *Moliniopsis japonica* is the dominant species commonly found in intermediate moors.

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