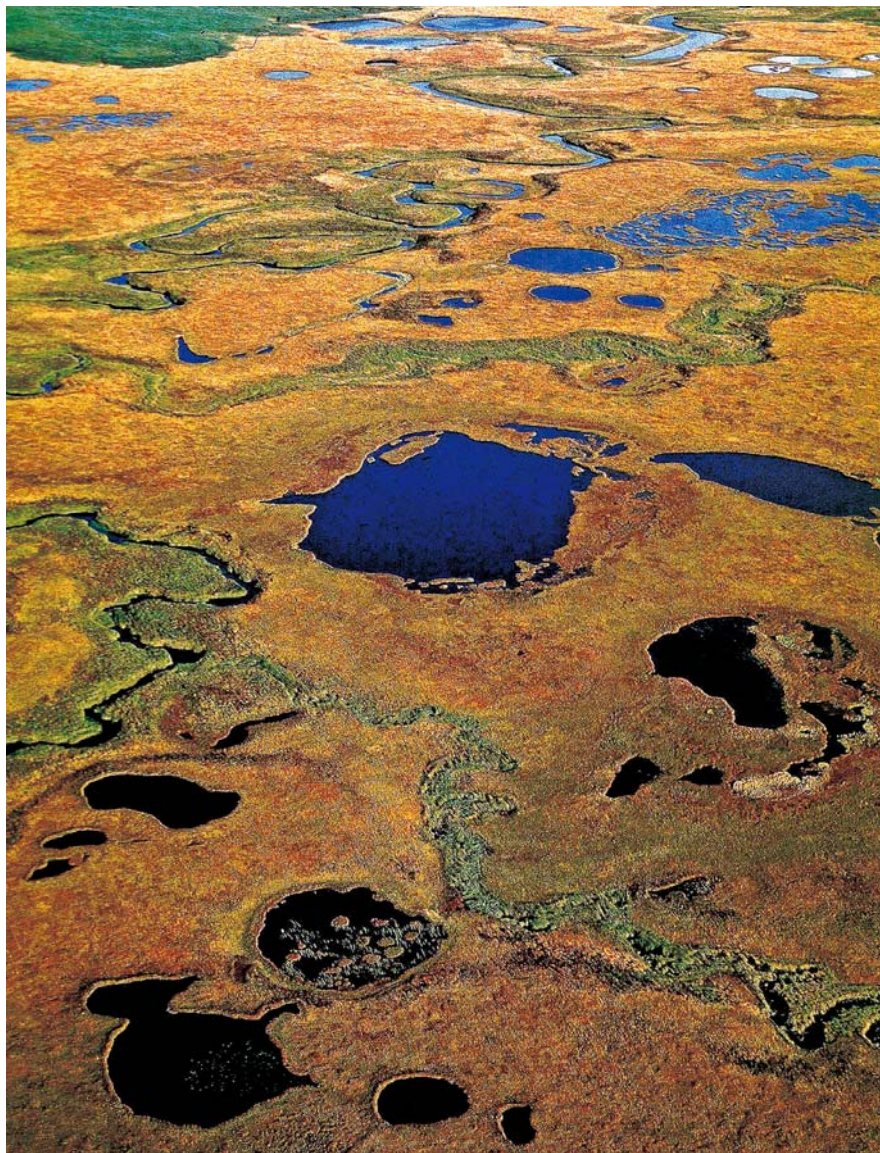


One of the largest highland high moors in Japan at the altitude of 850m with a unique pond cluster

Uryunuma-shitsugen

High Moor

Geographical Coordinates: 43°41'N, 141°36'E / Altitude: 850-900m / Area: 624ha / Major Type of Wetland: High moor / Designation: Special Protection Zone of Quasi-National Park / Municipalities Involved: Uryu Town, Hokkaido Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005 / Ramsar Criteria: 3



Uryunuma viewed from the east (Photo by H. Okamoto)

General Overview:

Uryunuma-shitsugen is located at an altitude of 850m on the eastern slope of Mt. Shokanbetsu, 70km north of Sapporo, the capital city of Hokkaido. This wetland covers an area of approximately 100ha, stretching 4km from east to west and 2km from north to south. It developed on a large basin created from volcanic lava flow. It inclines slightly from northwest to southeast and a river named Penkepetan meanders in the middle, flowing down the eastern cliff into a narrow gorge. Although the height of the Shokanbetsu mountain range is relatively low at less than 1500m, this area receives one of the heaviest snowfalls in Hokkaido because the mountain range directly faces the Japan Sea. This wetland is closed due to snow of

more than 3m deep over half of the year. Over many years, the abundant water from the melted snow caused the wetland to develop into the second largest highland high moor after Oze.

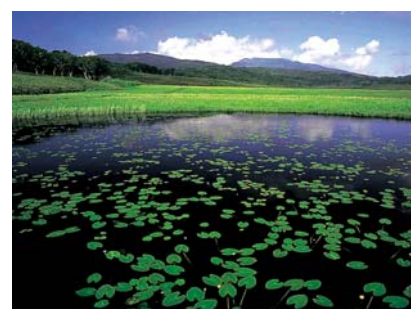
Diverse Wetland Plant Communities:

Diverse vegetation of approximately 150 species of plants is observed in Uryunuma wetland in its pristine condition, including the spatterdock, peat moss and *Moliniopsis japonica*. The summer months of June-September would be an excellent season to appreciate the flower garden of Broad Dwarf Day-Lily, Arctic Iris and Plantain Lily.

The most remarkable characteristic of this wetland is the pond clusters consisting of over 100 small ponds scattered in the wetland and the small floating islets



A pond cluster of Uryunuma (Photo by H. Okamoto)



Uryu Spatterdock in a pond (Photo by H. Okamoto)

of water plants in the ponds. These pond clusters support a unique habitat for a variety of wildlife including the rare Ezoruridamselfly, and Japanese Argus.

Protection of Native Species:

Local people are engaged in various efforts to protect the natural condition of this wetland. They periodically remove the invasive alien species like Tall Goldenlods, and they encourage visitors to wash the soles of their shoes before entering the area.

[Pond Cluster] Pond cluster refers to a unique formation of ponds that develop in a high moor. When the dead plants accumulate to compose a peat bog with some gaps in it, the water gathered in the gaps eventually forms a number of ponds.

Contact Information:

Uryu Town Office
<http://www.town.uryu.hokkaido.jp/>

