

Oku-Nikko-shitsugen

High and Intermediate Moor, Freshwater Lake

Geographical Coordinates: 36°47'N, 139°26'E / Altitude: 1475m (Yuno-ko), 1400m (Senjogahara), 1410m (Odashirogahara) / Area: 260.41ha (Yuno-ko 35.71ha, Senjogahara 174.68ha, Yukawa 5.3ha, Odashirogahara 44.72ha) / Major Type of Wetland: High moor, intermediate moor, freshwater lake / Designation: Special Protection Zone and Special Zone of National Park / Municipalities Involved: Nikko City, Tochigi Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005 / Ramsar Criteria: 1



Senjogahara

General Overview:

Oku-Nikko-shitsugen is located at an altitude of 1400m and 120km north of Tokyo. The wetland is in a valley surrounded by mountains over an altitude of 2000m including Mt. Nantai (2484m) and Mt. Shirane (2577m). The designated area has a volcanic lake called Yuno-ko with the Yukawa River flowing out from it, and the two major wetlands, Senjogahara and Odashirogahara.

Although Lake Yuno-ko is small with an area of 35ha, the natural condition of this freshwater lake is relatively good because there are no man-made buildings in its catchment area. The hot spring on the north shore of the lake supplies abundant hot water to the hotels on the waterfront. The lake drains into the Yukawa River through Yutaki Waterfall which is renowned for its scenic beauty and the pretty blossom of *Rhododendron degronianum*. The Yukawa River flows through Senjogahara and replenishes the wetland.

Senjogahara and Odashirogahara:

Senjogahara used to be a dammed lake formed by the volcanic eruption of Mt. Nantai. Layers of dead aquatic plants gradually accumulated over the lake to form a high moor. More than 100 species of wetland plants, such as Hare's Tail Cotton Grass and Japanese Azalea have been identified in the area. The plant commu-

nity is protected by electric fences because the overpopulated deer in this area damage the vegetation. Odashirogahara, adjacent to Senjogahara, is a wetland with a unique landscape in transition to grassland. Transient lakes appear after a rain and both wetland and grassland plants are found in the same area featuring the characteristics of both habitats.

Breathtaking Landscapes:

In addition to the diverse wetland vegetation, Oku-Nikko-shitsugen offers a magnificent natural landscape of mountains, rivers, and wetlands in each season. Many tourists from Tokyo metropolitan area visit here to enjoy the brilliantly colored autumn leaves. As the wetland is located in the neighborhood of famous tourist spots such as Lake Chuzenji-ko, Kegon-no-taki Waterfall, and the World Heritage Site, Toshogu, more than 6 million tourists visit the area every year.

[Autumn Leaves] Japanese people have been enjoying the distinctive features of four seasons since ancient times. One of them is the colorful autumn leaves. The leaves of deciduous trees such as beech, oak and maple turn into brilliant hues of red and yellow when the temperature drop below 8 degrees C in the end of autumn. Oku-Nikko shitsugen is famous for its autumn beauty and many people visit the area with their families to see the breath-

Autumn leaves at Yuno-ko



taking contrast of wetland and forest.

Contact Information:

Nikko City Office
<http://www.city.nikko.lg.jp/>

