

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 rice paddies and reed beds. The site is bordered by hills (elevation 30-50m) covered with pine and broadleaf trees. Native plants grow in the freshwater pond, such as Water cheasnut 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 been a number of ponds like this in this area previously, however, most of them were reclaimed for rice paddies. The Katano-kamoike is one of the few remaining ponds.

A Pond of Ducks:

Thousands of ducks and geese visit this pond from November to March every year as their wintering and stopover site. This is a wintering habitat for raptors such as Northern Goshawk and White-tailed Sea

Eagle. The Kamoike Observation Centre at the lakeside is a core facility to organize many activities involving local people for public awareness, environmental education and conservation & management of the wintering habitat.

Traditional Water Management:

For centuries, Katano-kamoike has been used as a reservoir to irrigate surrounding farmlands, and is managed by the local people. During summer, pond water is distributed to surrounding rice paddies. After the rice harvest, irrigation is stopped to allow the pond to be replenished, thus providing a good 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, increasing the wintering grounds for birds. This is known as “Fuyumizu-tambo”, practiced by local NGOs and farmers.

[Saka-ami Hunting] There is a unique hunting technique in Kamoike, which was developed about 300 years ago in the Edo period and still in use even now. It employs special net called “Saka-ami” to catch the ducks in the pond. Ducks rest

in Kamoike in daytime and fly to the surrounding rice paddies to feed at dusk. Taking advantage of this habits, the hunters hide in the pine woods on the hills around the pond and cast a nest over the ducks when they are about to fly over the hills. The hunters have formed a union to regulate the hunting season, hunting area and the number of catch strictly. They work for the maintenance and conservation of the environment in and around the pond as well.

Contact Information:

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