

Nagura amparu

Estuarine Tidal Flat, Mangrove Forest

Geographical Coordinates: 24°23'N, 124°08'E / Altitude: 0m / Area: 157ha / Major Type of Wetland: Estuarine tidal flat, mangrove forest / Designation: Special Area of National Wildlife Protection Area, Special Protection Zone of National Park / Municipalities Involved: Ishigaki City, Okinawa Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005 / Ramsar Criteria: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7



Extensive mangroves in the tidal flat



View of the Nagura Amparu from the east

General Overview:

Ishigaki Island is situated 400km southwest of Okinawa Island and is found at the center of the Yaeyama Island group in the southernmost end of the 3000km long Japanese Archipelago. It is a subtropical island with an area of 22,200ha and a population of 48,000. The annual average temperature is approximately 24 degrees C with little fluctuation from month to month.

Nagura Amparu is a tidal flat with mangrove forests located on the west coast of Ishigaki Island, where the Nagura River flows into Nagura Bay. This estuarine tidal flat stretches 2km from north to south and 1.5km from east to west. This is a typical wetland found in subtropical regions, with a tidal flat, mangrove forest, beach and coastal forest. This type of wetland with a series of diverse subtropical habitats is uncommon and valuable in Japan. This wetland was developed in a basin-like terrain facing the sea. The accumulation of muddy sediment shaped the shallow lagoon and the sandbar on the coast.

Mangroves and Biodiversity:

Mangroves are found only in limited regions in Japan. Nagura Amparu is one of the major mangrove habitats in Japan with species in the family Rhizophoraceae characterized by their stilt roots and respiratory roots, such as *Bruguiera gymnorhiza*, *Lumnitzera racemosa*, *Rhizophora mucronata*, and *Avicennia marina*.

The tidal flat is a habitat for a variety of benthos, fish fry and crustaceans such



The Barred Mudskipper



Fiddler Crab

as lugworms and mud shrimps. Especially, shrimps and crabs are abundant including a number of endemic rare species. The species here are also a source of inspiration for locals. The behaviors of some crabs are humorously personified in a folk song.

A Stopover Point for Migratory Birds:

Supporting a rich feeding ground and safe environment, Nagura Amparu is an important stopover point for a variety of migratory shorebirds including Black-faced Spoonbill. This wetland is also home to the Crested Serpent Eagle, and Ryukyu Scops Owl.

[Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela perplexus*] It is an eagle with a body length of approximately 55cm, almost the same as that of the Common Buzzard. It is widely found throughout the tropical and subtropical zones of India, Southeast Asia, Taiwan, and the southern Ryukyu Islands. In Japan, it is a resident bird



Crested Serpent Eagle

distributed only in Iriomote Island and Ishigaki Island, the northernmost habitat of this species. Although it feeds mainly on snakes, it also preys on the abundant crabs in Nagura Amparu. It is a top predator in the ecosystem here.

Contact Information:

Ishigaki City Office
<http://www.city.ishigaki.okinawa.jp/>

