

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

1. Country: Japan

2. Date:

3. Ref: 2JP006

4. Name and address of compiler:

Wildlife Protection Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Environment Agency, 1-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyodaku, Tokyo, 100 Japan

5. Name of wetlands: *Akkeshi-ko and Bekambeushi-shitsugen*

6. Date of Ramsar designation: June 1993

7. Geographical coordinates: 43°03'N 144°54'E; 43 09° 30'N 144 50° 30'

8. General location

In the centre of Akkeshi Town and at the mouth of the Bekambeushi River, in eastern Hokkaido.

9. Area: 4,896 ha

10. Wetland type: F, M, Q, S, W, X

11. Altitude: 0-20 metres above sea level

12. Overview:

Akkeshi Lake, a brackish water lake flown into by the Bekambeushi River, and Bekambeushi Mire formed at the mouth of this river, jointly create unique scenery in this region. Bekambeushi Mire is composed of extensive fens and some bogs along the basin of Bekambeushi River.

13. Physical features:

Akkeshi lake receives water from Bekambeushi River and is connected with the sea by a narrow channel. The lake is 11 metres deep at the deepest point; and is surrounded by low-level wetlands and plateaus. Bekambeushi Mire was developed at the alluvial plain along the slowly winding Bekambeushi River which slowly winds its way, and is mainly composed of fens of reeds and sedge and partially of bogs around its centre. The climate in this region can be typically featured with high humidity and cool temperatures in summer, with the annual average temperature being lower than other areas at the same latitude.

14. Ecological features:

Salt marsh vegetation is partially distributed around Akkeshi Lake. Bekambeushi Mire shows scenery typical of fens of extensive reeds and sedge and alder community. bogs have developed in the central area as well.

15. Land tenure/ownership of:

(a) site: National Government-owned land; public lake

(b) surrounding area: National Government-owned land 1,749ha; town owned land 3,147 ha; private land.

16. Conservation measures taken:

Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area 4,896ha; Special Zone of Akkeshi Prefectural Natural Park 11,611ha; Natural Monument 34ha.

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

Hokkaido Wetland Protection Master plan (in preparation).

18. Current land use:

(a) site: Akkeshi Lake - fishery, aquaculture; Bekambeushi Mire - forestry.

(b) surroundings/catchment: forestry, aquaculture, fishery

19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects:

(a) at the site: Possible deterioration of lake water quality by land reclamation and aquaculture.

(b) in the surroundings/catchment: Possible deterioration of water quality by tree felling and the inflow of raw sewage from livestock farms.

20. Hydrological and physical values:

Bekambeushi Mire, developed in the middle of Bekambeushi River, keeps the balance of underground water and functions to control floods. It also maintains and controls water quality in its ecological system.

21. Social and cultural values:

As Bekambeushi Mire maintains the quality of Bekambeushi River water, it supports fishery of oyster and clams in Akkeshi Lake. Primitive Bekambeushi River and surrounding wetlands can serve as a tourist attraction.

22. Noteworthy fauna:

Ardea cinerea, *Cygnus cygnus*, *Anas platyrhynchos*, *Haliaeetus albicilla*, *Grus japonensis*, *Picus canus*, *Sciurus vulgaris*, *Cervus nippon yesoensis*, etc.

23. Noteworthy flora:

Empetrum nigrum, *Ledum palustre*, *Sphagnum*, *Chamaedaphne calyculata*, *Calamagrostis canadensis*, etc.

24. Current scientific research and facilities:

Research on habitat condition of *Grus japonensis*. Research on condition of bogs.

25. Current conservation education:

None

26. Current recreation and tourism:

Canoeing tour in rivers of mire.

27. Management authority:

Wildlife Protection Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Environment Agency, Japan

28. Jurisdiction:

*Territorial conservation jurisdiction: Game Management Section, Nature Preservation Division, Department of Health and Environment, Hokkaido Government.

*Functional conservation jurisdiction: Wildlife Protection Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Environment Agency, Japan

29. Bibliographical references:

*"Excellent Natural Areas", Natural Environment Investigation Report, March 1992.

* Report of the Overall Investigation of Prefectural Natural Parks, Akkeshi Prefectural Natural Park, March 1986.

30. Reasons for inclusion: 1(a), 2(a), 2(b), 2(d).