Izumi Wintering Habitat of Cranes

Estuary, Seasonally flooded agricultural land

Geographical Coordinates: 32°6′N, 130°16′E / Altitude: -1.8-10m / Area: 478ha /Major Type of Wetland: Estuary, seasonally flooded agricultural land / Designation: Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area, River Area (River Law), National Special Natural Monument / Municipalities Involved: Izumi City, Kagoshima Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2021 / Ramsar Criteria: 2, 4, 5, 6 / EAAFP Flyway Network Site

Aerial view of the wintering habitat

Izumi City Crane Museum "Crane Park Izumi"

Flock of Hooded Cranes and White-naped Cranes

General Overview:

Izumi Wintering Habitat of Cranes is located at the end of the Izumi Alluvial Fan, where three rivers, the Takaono, the Noda, and the Euchi, converge after flowing through Izumi City. This estuarine site consists of reclaimed land, open water, and shoals that emerge during low tides.

This site, being a fertile rice field maintained as a farmland through the ages, has been established as an internationally important wintering site for cranes including 90% and 40% of the world population respectively of Hooded Crane and White-naped Crane, the cranes stay in the area from October to March every year.

By the time the cranes and a part of rice paddies in Izumi Plain were designated as a National Special Natural Monument of "Cranes and their Migration Grounds in Kagoshima Prefecture" in 1952, the population of the cranes had been decreased to 300 due to the influences of the war and other factors. Thereafter, as a result of crane conservation efforts conducted by local people for over half a century, Izumi Wintering Habitat of Cranes has become known worldwide as one of the most prominent crane wintering habitats, which is visited by more than 10,000 cranes every year.

Fauna and Flora of the Wetland:

Most area of Izumi Wintering Habitat of Cranes is occupied by farmlands. As a result of nature conservation efforts for various environments, including man-made wetlands such as rice paddies, along with reed beds and tidal flats, this habitat supports more than 20,000 waterfowl, including cranes, in addition to many other animals and plants.

Of the 15 species of cranes recorded in the world, 7 have been confirmed to migrate in this area, including Common Crane, Siberian Crane, Sandhill Crane, Red-crowned Crane and Demoiselle Crane as well as Hooded Crane and White-naped Crane, which respectively are the most and second most abundant cranes.

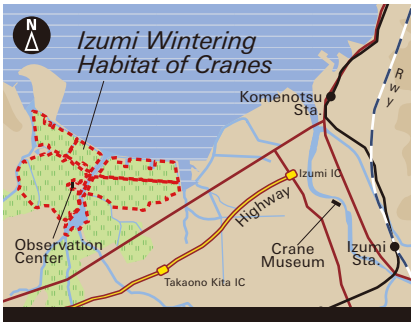
Meanwhile, as approximately 300 species of wild birds including ducks and geese have been observed here. Thus, this area has become one of the best bird-watching sites in Japan.

Facilities and Efforts for Conservation and Management:

Izumi City Crane Museum "Crane Park Izumi" is a museum specialized in cranes. This museum works as a core facility to raise public awareness and promote scientific research equipped with displays such as simulated experience booth for crane counting conducted by local junior high school and collections of valuable specimens and scientific data. This museum also organizes field watching along with lectures, talks, and themed exhibitions on the wetland.

Visitors to the Izumi City Crane Observation Center can watch cranes wintering in the vast farmland through the glass wall on the second floor. The students of the elementary and junior high school in Izumi City learn about the cranes and natural environment of their hometown. Further, the students who are certified to have sufficient knowledge on the ecology and conservation of cranes work at the center as volunteer guides named "Dr. Crane Guide".

Taking the opportunity that Izumi Wintering Habitat of Cranes was designated as a Ramsar site in 2021, Izumi City formulated the "Plan for Conservation and Wise Use of the Ramsar Site in Izumi" as a guideline for conservation. Izumi City's efforts and engagement for wetland conservation was highly evaluated, which is why the city was awarded the Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention in 2022.

Contact Information:

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