

## JICA Training Course "Administration / Management and Wise Use of Natural Parks (Eco-tour)"

From October 2 to November 10, 2006, a JICA group training course on the "Administration/Management and Wise Use of Natural Parks," was held with the JICA Obihiro International Center as the administrative institution and KIWC as the hosting institution. In the current fiscal year, the last group training course was held, in which six people participated from four countries (Bhutan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Nepal and Rumania). The participants were all middle-ranking administrative officers involved in tourism and environmental conservation in their respective countries. The program included hands-on experience training of eco-tours primarily in natural parks in eastern Hokkaido, lectures on natural park systems and concepts of eco-tourism, and inspections of Hokkaido's environmental education programs. The participants also visited Kyoto and Tokyo to learn about eco-tours featuring places of cultural and historic interest. Based on what they learned through these programs, the participants prepared a plan of action for introducing and implementing eco-tourism in their own countries, presenting it in front of the others at the end of the course.

During the training, which lasted over a month, the participants also had opportunities to visit local households and elementary schools. Their host families, who developed close friendships with the participants, attended the closing ceremony to share in the joy of successfully completing the course.

One of the above training programs was joined by a participant of the Malaysia-targeted training program on the "Participatory Management in a Wildlife Reserve", which was implemented by the Japan Wildlife Research Center, and students of the Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine working as interns. It became a vigorous program, in which a large number of people were actively engaged in exchange of opinions and information.



## JICA training program of the wetland ecosystem conservation project for Mongol

A training program targeted for 4 participants from Ogii Nuur, a Ramsar site in Mongol, was conducted from November 21 to December 1, 2006. It aimed for conservation of the environment and ecosystem in Ogii Nuur, and was conducted as a part of activities to develop human resources needed to promote public awareness of the JICA's "Catchment Area Management Model Program" under preparation, in local communities. Participants from Ogii Nuur consisted of the chairman of the village assembly and officials of the relevant ministries and agencies.

Of all of the training programs implemented in the Kanto region and Hokkaido, KIWC took charge of implementing training programs in Hokkaido. We explained case examples of activities for wetland ecosystem conservation, which were conducted in wetlands in the Kushiro area and their related facilities, and introduced examples of promoting public awareness in local communities and collaboration between the public and private sectors.

KIWC implemented training programs in 2001, and sent experts of ornithology and wetlands in 2002, as a JICA project for conservation in Ogii Nuur.



In addition to the above entrusted training program projects in 2006, we offered a program on wetland conservation in training programs (targeted for Panama, Southern European Countries, Madagascar, and Ecuador) implemented by the JICA Tokyo International Center and the Japan Wildlife Research Center, as international cooperation activities through JICA.

## Ramsar Sites in Japan Series 15: Lake Furen and Shunkunitai

Lake Furen is located at the base of the Nemuro Peninsula, and is adjacent to Shunkunitai in the northeast. Lake Furen and Shunkunitai have diversified natural environments, where more than 280 kinds of birds have been confirmed. They have also provided habitats for various wildlife and places to live for people.

Shunkunitai is a long narrow sandbank between Lake Furen and the Sea of Okhotsk, which is made of sand accumulated by the tides in Okhotsk. Its area is about 600 ha, about 1.3 km wide at the maximum, about 8 km long to the tip. It consists of three sand dunes, which are respectively called the first dune, second dune, and third dune, from the ocean side. There are diversified environments on the dunes, which form unique landscapes with grassland, salt marsh, wetlands, coniferous forests, and defoliated forests, which have various animals and plants.

Lake Furen, the sixth biggest lake in Hokkaido, has been used as a fishing ground. Clams and Sakhalin surf clams are collected by hand digging in a vast tideland that appears at low tide. In winter, under-ice net-fishing, which is a fishing method of laying a net from a hole on the ice surface of the lake, is conducted. Catches of clams and Sakhalin surf clams are controlled by fixing a term and limiting catches by allowing only traditional hand digging. Wise use of marine resources is promoted to make them available in the future as well.

Lake Furen and Shunkunitai, where over 5,000 whooper swans and over 55,000 anatidae have been confirmed, meet five criteria for registration as wetlands of international importance, and are designated as wetlands under the Ramsar Convention.

Red-crowned cranes in search of food can be seen only 20 meters away from fishermen in Lake Furen and Shunkunitai. They engage in finding food without showing wariness. Lake Furen and Shunkunitai provide important habitats for wildlife as well as valuable space where people and wildlife can coexist.

(Nature Conservation Section, Agriculture and Forestry Division, Nemuro City)



Fishermen collecting clams by hand digging in sight of red-crowned cranes (Photo credit: Wild Bird Society of Japan)

For further information, please contact:  
(KIWC)

KIWC Bureau:  
7-5 Kurogane-cho, Kushiro City, Hokkaido 085-8505, Japan  
Tel: +81-154-31-4594 Fax: +81-154-23-4651  
E-mail Address: kiwc@kiwc.net  
URL: <http://www.kiwc.net/english/main.html>



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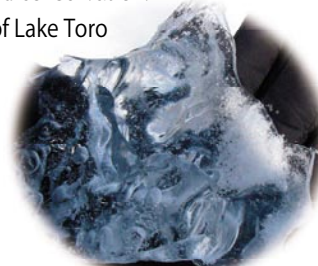
# KIWC Annual Review

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Ice of Lake Toro



## Wetland eco-tour "Kushiro Wetlands seen from spring water and ruins"

An eco-tour targeted for local residents was conducted on December 10, 2006. 22 participants visited the Hosooka district in Kushiro Town, and carried out experiments to measure the amount of discharge and water temperature at the site where water from peripheral forests flows into Kushiro Wetlands. We were surprised to find that more than 10 tons of water came from a small spring every day, and we realized that such water moistened vast wetlands.

Then, we went out to the ruins from the Jomon Period and observed pit dwellings and shell mounds. Standing in front of the remaining pit dwellings covered with snow, we imagined about life of people at the time when the climate was warmer than at present and Kushiro Wetlands were a big brackish-water lake.

Although it was a cold day with light snow fall, all participants walked around briskly in forests and enjoyed the view of trees and wetlands dusted with white snow. Finally, we were offered hot green tea at the Hosooka Visitors Lounge, and enjoyed "wetland water" at our leisure.



## "Eco-tour in winter" commemorating World Wetlands Day

On February 3, 2007, an eco-tour for local residents to visit wetlands in winter was conducted to commemorate World Wetlands Day on February 2. Twenty-three participants went to Lake Toro by the SL train "Fuyunoshitsugen-go" which runs on the eastern side of Kushiro Wetlands for a limited season, enjoying the wetland landscapes in winter from the train window, including the snaking stream of the Kushiro River. Then the participants took a trip to the lakeside to observe overwintering plants in a sphagnum bog and gray heron's colonies in the surrounding forests, and looked for wildlife footprints.

The visitors then walked on the ice surface of the lake, and observed "omiwatari (the upheaval of ice across the lake due to difference in temperatures)" and spring water flowing into the lake. After that, they enjoyed tasting fried surf smelt caught in the lake, and received guidance on ice observation from the staff of the Lake Toro Eco-Museum Center.

All participants had a great time on this tour, not only by seeing spring water flowing into the lake from the surrounding forests and the surface ice of the lake but also by hearing the sounds, feeling the coldness, and tasting the fried surf smelt grown in the water environment. The experience to utilize all five senses made us think about a role for wetlands in fisheries in light of the theme for World Wetlands Day 2007, "Wetlands and Fisheries".



## World Wetlands Day (February 2)

The day was established by the Standing Committee of the Convention, commemorating the date of the adoption of the Ramsar Convention (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat) on February 2, 1971. Around the World Wetlands Day, government agencies and non-governmental organizations hold various events to raise public awareness of wetland values in Contracting Party countries in the world every year.

## Publication of "Kushiro Wetland Guidebook" in English

The English guidebook "Kushiro Wetlands" (55 pages), which covers tourist information, relationships among animals, plants, climate, and human beings, and conservation systems, was published in January, 2007. It is an English version of the "Kushiro Shitsugen Kokuritsukouen (Kushiro Shitsugen National Park)" published by the Kushiro Shitsugen National Park Liaison Association in 2004.

It is available to the public for 600 yen (tax included) per copy at the KIWC Bureau (also available by mail order) and facilities around Kushiro Wetlands. For more details, please contact the KIWC Bureau.

It is also available via Internet. (URL: <http://www.kiwc.net/>)



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## Activities of the KIWC Technical Committee

In order to promote conservation and wise use of wetlands more effectively, KIWC organizes a technical committee consisting of experts for research on a specific theme established every three years. A report of three-year research activities is compiled and is widely used in related organizations for case reports on conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Kushiro area.

### Publication of the 2004-2006 Technical Committee Report

FY 2006 was the final year of the “Research Study on Communication, Education, and Public Awareness of Conservation and Wise Use of Wetlands” as the KIWC Technical Committee’s activity that started in FY 2004.

As a summarization of activities for three years, the report was compiled focused on CEPA (Communication, Education, and Public Awareness), for which the Ramsar Convention aims. It includes methods practiced by each committee member to deepen local residents’ understanding of wetlands and raise their awareness. It made proposals based on case studies which had been conducted over the past two years. The “2004-2006 Activities Report”, which includes these reports, is scheduled to be distributed to related organizations in spring of 2007.

### Dispatch of KIWC experts to Korea

In the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands held in November, 2005, it was decided that the next meeting will be held in Korea in 2008. The next host city, Changwon City in Gyeonsangnam-Do Province, immediately started information-gathering activities in preparation for the meeting by sending local government officials and news media to Kushiro City, where the 5th meeting was held, to visit the conference site.

In December, 2006, three representatives from KIWC, including an expert and a technical committee member, were invited to Changwon City. They made presentations in a seminar organized by the city and visited wetlands in the city, telling local concerned parties and citizens how important local residents’ participation is for wetlands conservation.



Photo credit : Pusan News.

### Report on visit to Changwon City by Koichi Wakayama, KIWC Technical Committee Member (instructor, Kushiro Shitsugen Onnenai Visitor Center)

In the afternoon of December 26, the day after an overnight stay in Sapporo, we arrived at Gimhae Airport in Korea, where the autumn flavor was still in the air. It took a little less than an hour to get to our destination, Changwon City, from the airport. A city official came to pick us up and gave us the schedule which listed some spots, including Junam Reservoir, to visit between lectures. It included some discussions with environment officials of Changwon City, and I felt that they had a strong will to absorb much information from the previous host city of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention.

The lecture meeting was held in the civic hall, where panels of wild birds were displayed. Mr. Hisashi Shinsho from KIWC presented the principles of the Ramsar Convention, how the meeting was held in Kushiro, and conservation activities of Kushiro Wetlands. I introduced the natural environment in Onnenai and volunteer activities.

In the afternoon, we visited the latest water purification plant utilizing infiltration percolation on the Nakdong River flowing in the northernmost part of the city. Then, we went to Junam Reservoir, to which I had been looking forward. Junam Reservoir is known as a stopover or wintering spot for several tens of thousands of migratory birds, including over 20 species, mainly anatidae, and is scheduled to be recognized as a designated site of the meeting to be held in 2008. A wild bird ecology study center, monitoring tower, and observation path were established, and bird tours targeted for schools were conducted. We were allowed to go up the monitoring tower for a full view of the reservoir, which only specialists are permitted to enter, to observe spoonbills sheltering behind reeds to avoid the wind and ducks floating on the waves. I fully realized that it was an important wetland to many wild birds.

The reservoir surface is covered with lotus flowers in summer. In not only the migration period but also at any other time, visitors can enjoy walking along the trails leading to Mt. Beekwolsan and Mt. Mageum Hot Springs in the area, and it has tourism potential. They told us that there is a plan to establish a boardwalk for nature observation and sightseeing on this reservoir. The idea of a boardwalk on the reservoir might be inspired by Onnenai’s boardwalk, and they often asked us for practical advice. I could easily imagine how great it would be to walk on boardwalk bridging over a lotus flower carpet. However, I suggested that it would be best to avoid the construction of artificial structures that might affect the habitats of wild birds. And I advised them to give careful consideration to the form and installation site of structures, such as selecting floating bridges that can be removed in the migration period and avoiding the area used by migratory birds, if constructing them. I would like to check on developments when I next visit.

On the night of the final day, after a visit to the convention center, the site of the next Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, we enjoyed a beautiful Christmas tree in front of City Hall and a short walk through “a tunnel of illumination” together, concluding our impressive stay in Changwon City.

This was the second time for me to visit Korea, and I was surprised to see magpies in urban areas and energetic people and feel the joy of having contact with people, same as my previous time. I hope the same thing will happen on the third visit in October 2008. I look forward to observing the natural environment as well as visiting historical heritage and cultural assets closely linked to Japanese culture and enjoying folklore performances like pansori and samulnori.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Mayor Park Wan Su, Director of Welfare & Environment Bureau Mr. Choi Nag-Seon, all staff at the Environmental Policy Division, all technical staff, and interpreter Ms. Kang Ju Ri.



A view of Junam Reservoir



Junam Reservoir Ecology Study Center

### Welcome for a sister wetland delegation

On April 21, 2006, we welcomed 11 delegation members of the sister wetland committee from Port Stephens in Australia, which forms a sister wetland affiliation with Kushiro, and organized a welcome reception in a local hotel jointly with the Kushiro City Government. It was attended by about 80 participants, including the international exchange organization in the Kushiro area and host families of the delegation members, as well as children who sent their work in from Kushiro for the “International Exhibition Commemorating the Return of Migrant Birds to New Castle” held in the Hunter Wetlands Centre Australia” in 2005.

The reception site exhibited works sent in for the “International Crane Art Exhibition” held in March in 2006, and handmade quilts by citizen volunteers in Australia, which were enjoyed by visitors. There were some attractions to introduce nature and culture in the Kushiro area, including a slide show of wetlands and performance of local entertainment.

A relaxed atmosphere filled the reception site, where most of the participants from both countries talked cheerfully.

\*The name changed from the Wetlands Centre Australia to the Hunter Wetlands Centre Australia in 2005.



### UNITAR Training Workshop in Kushiro

A training workshop was held from August 27 through 31, 2006, under the auspices of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research Hiroshima Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNITAR HOAP) and the co-host of the KIWC. This was the sixth joint workshop in Kushiro hosted by the UNITAR and the second joint workshop hosted by UNITAR HOAP.

The theme of the workshop was “Ecosystems, Water and Biodiversity.” Aiming to acquire new knowledge and techniques in the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity, with a focus on the water environment, 44 administrators and experts participated from 27 countries, primarily developing nations in the Asia-Pacific region.

In addition to lectures and hands-on training provided at the main venue, the Kushiro Tourism and International Relations Center, an overnight field tour to Kushiro wetlands and Lake Akan was organized to learn from actual cases related to the management and use of wetlands registered under the Ramsar Convention, and to interact with local residents. Participants are expected to play a leading role in conservation activities in their own countries by disseminating and extending what they have learned through the workshop and follow-up activities.

In between training activities, Kushiro Ezo Drum performances and Kado (flower arrangement) demonstrations were held with the cooperation of local cultural organizations, winning great popularity with the participants.



### JICA Training Course “Conservation, Restoration and Wise Use of Wetland Ecosystems and Their Biological Diversity”

From May 22 to July 4, 2006, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) group training course on the “Conservation, Restoration and Wise Use of Wetland Ecosystems and Their Biological Diversity” was held. JICA Obihiro International Center was the administrative institution, and the Nature Conservation Bureau of the Ministry of the Environment and the KIWC were the hosting institutions.

This course, which was the third session for this theme, was provided for six participants from six countries (Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Mongolia, Solomon Islands, Vietnam and Zambia) who were researchers and mid-level administrative officers involved in environmental and nature conservation. Various case examples were presented in the course, illustrating approaches to the restoration and rehabilitation of damaged environment in Japan, from the Kushiro wetlands in Hokkaido to the tidal flats on Japan’s mainland and to the coral reefs and mangrove coast in Okinawa, in order to conserve ecosystems and biological diversity in wetlands. Participants took part in many practical training programs such as environmental education and eco-tours, and learned sustainable use of natural resources in wetlands through firsthand experience.

During the training, the participants were able to interact with many citizens through home visits, and discussions with university students studying about eco-tourism and environmental conservation.



### JICA counterpart training on the wetland conservation project along the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico

From June 27 to July 28 in 2006, two experts from Ria Celestun Biosphere Reserves in Yucatan State in Mexico stayed in Japan to learn about sustainable use of the natural environment, focused on eco-tourism and fisheries. These training programs were implemented as a part of the wetland ecosystem conservation project, which was launched by JICA in the above area in 2003. Experts of wetland conservation from KIWC were also sent to Mexico in 2005, and provided guidance on the “monitoring method” for wetland conservation.

Of all training programs implemented in various regions in Japan, KIWC was entrusted with training programs implemented from July 16 to 25 in Hokkaido. We conducted on-site training, such as eco-tour programs, which has been implemented in Kushiro Wetlands and Kiritappu Wetlands, and “cooking experience of fish dishes in fishermen’s lodging” under guidance of local fishermen, for the purpose of showing case examples of eco-tours closely linked with local industries.

