

of the Ministry of the Environment and Tsuruga City, and many others involved with Nakaikemi and other wetlands around Japan. A statement calling for designation of Nakaikemi to the Ramsar List was adopted.

- **Translation and dissemination of information on the Ramsar Convention:** To ensure that resolutions and other documents coming out of the Ramsar Conferences of the Parties are put to use in furthering the conservation and wise use of wetlands in Japan, JAWAN has cooperated with the Ministry of the Environment in translating them into Japanese. JAWAN also holds study meetings to explain the resolutions and guidelines in a way that non-experts can understand.
- **Publishing information through the JAWAN newsletter and website**

Overseas NGOs and JAWAN

We also place importance on links among wetlands of the Pacific Rim, and particularly with Korea and other East Asian countries.

We continue to maintain particularly close relations with a citizens' group in San Francisco that sent a speaker to JAWAN's International Wetland Symposium in 1992. We have learned a great deal from the movement to protect and restore San Francisco Bay.

JAWAN works with Korean groups in surveying tidal flats and migratory birds, and in the movement to save Saemangeum wetland. We hope to continue and strengthen our ties with Korean wetland protection movements in future.

Message to JAWAN from Florence and Philip LaRiviere

(Citizens' Committee to Complete the Refuge, San Francisco Bay)

The people of the San Francisco Bay Area have struggled for 40 years to protect from further destruction our remaining wetlands and to work for restoration of lost ones.

We admire our partners in Japan and vow to work with them in our mutual goal of maintaining and enhancing the wetlands of the Pacific Rim as they supply the values of flood control, clean air and clean water to the human population and life itself to a myriad of fish and wildlife species.

JAWAN – Japan Wetlands Action Network

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Present status of Japan's wetlands

Aiming for 100 Ramsar Sites by CoP16 in 2026

(Map: 500 Important Wetlands of Japan)

The 9th Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (CoP9) is now being held in Kampala, Uganda in November 2005, and there Japan added 20 new Ramsar sites to the List, bringing its total up to 33. One of these sites is Kabukuri Marsh – the Ramsar site includes neighboring rice paddies that are deliberately flooded in winter to provide a resting ground for geese. This designation of rice paddies, a characteristically Asian wetland, is of great significance.

All the new Ramsar sites were chosen from the list of "500 Important Wetlands in Japan," compiled by the Ministry of the Environment. To further promote wetland conservation in Japan, these 500 important wetlands need to be protected, but the reality is that protection measures are not even being planned for many of these important wetlands.

Comparing the 500 important wetlands (shown as black dots on the map) with Ramsar sites (shown as red stars on the map) highlights the small number of Ramsar sites, and also reveals an imbalance in their geographic distribution. Since its establishment, JAWAN has been calling for protection and Ramsar site status for four tidal flat wetlands of extreme international importance – Isahaya, Wajiro, Fujimae and Sanbanze. Of these, only Fujimae has been designated to the List, and the land reclamation project at Isahaya continues unabated, and is now nearing completion. Listing has not been achieved for the internationally important mire wetland at Nakaikemi, or the artificial flood control wetland at Watarase, largest of its type in Japan and having the second largest extent of reed marsh in the country after Kushiro Marsh.

JAWAN is calling for designation of at least 100 Ramsar sites, starting with these important wetlands, and for the organization of river-basin based networks covering these 500 wetlands and linked to central Ramsar sites.

The tidal flat wetland protection movement and JAWAN

Tidal flat protection groups from around Japan held a "National Tidal Flat Symposium" in 1975 at Shiokawa in Aichi prefecture ; this meeting confirmed the destruction and degradation of Japan's coasts through landfill and other development, strengthened the national wetland protection movement, and promoted national surveys of birds and other species. National Tidal Flat Symposia were subsequently held in Chiba in 1976 and in Isahaya in 1977.

In 1989, the International Wetland Research Bureau (IWRB),

Japan Committee, published “Inventory of Wetlands in Japan.”

Also in 1989, an “International Wetland Symposium” was held in Nagoya, which recognized the significance of the Ramsar Convention, and proposed formation of a national network, which was established at an International Wetland Symposium held in Isahaya in 1991. This was the start of Japan Wetlands Action Network (JAWAN).

JAWAN representatives have taken part as observers at all CoPs since (CoP5-CoP9). JAWAN is now extending its network to wetlands other than tidal flats.

JAWAN and other NGOs played a major role in securing the protection of Fujimae tidal flat. JAWAN’s annual International Wetland Symposium is also useful for attracting national attention to wetlands at the sites where it is held.

JAWAN is particularly known for its ability to work with local NGOs, national NGOs, the government and others in the pursuit of realizing wetland conservation and wise use as defined by the Ramsar Convention.

Major Activities of JAWAN

Wetland Surveys

Determining a wetland’s status on the basis of scientific data about its inhabitants is important when trying to protect it. JAWAN is putting energy into research on the migrations of shorebirds, wetland dwelling birds that often use tidal flats.

- **Shorebird counts:** From 1996 to 1998, JAWAN carried out national shorebird counts with the cooperation of other NGOs and birdwatchers. From 2003, we have been cooperating with World Wide Fund for Nature Japan in surveying shorebirds, etc. for the Ministry of the Environment project for monitoring important habitat sites (Monitoring Site 1000).

- **Migration Studies:** From 1996, JAWAN has been working with scientists, environmental activists, government officials and others in Japan and in countries along shorebirds’ migratory routes to learn more about their migrations by gathering and exchanging information from observations of small colored leg flags attached at shorebirds site on the flyway.

- **Breeding ground surveys:** Since 1999, surveys of shorebird breeding grounds and migrations focusing on Dunlin and Spoonbilled Sandpiper have been conducted with the cooperation of scientists, NGOs and others in Russia, the United States and Korea.

These surveys are also part of an international activity aimed at protecting waterbird flyways in the East Asia/Australasia region.

Working to influence the government and other organizations

JAWAN seeks opportunities to talk to, exchange opinions with, and make suggestions to the Ministry of the Environment and local

governments to encourage them to reflect in their policy and practices the concepts of wetland conservation and wise use as elaborated in the international Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, and in resolutions and guidelines adopted by the Conferences of the Parties to this Convention. In preparation for the 9th Ramsar Conference (CoP9), JAWAN submitted opinion statements on Japan’s national report, and on the selection of sites for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

In our opinion statement on site selection, JAWAN suggested that Japan should aim for a goal of 100 Ramsar sites by CoP16 in 2026, and we hope to make this mid-term goal one of the main objectives of our movement in future. We are also calling for conservation of a network of wetlands in Japan and the Asian region and a variety of specific policy measures for achieving wise use of wetlands. No wetland exists in isolation, but in a network of wetlands linked together by the water cycle of its home river basin.

Networks of wetlands are also needed to secure sites along the flyways of migratory birds. Conservation must apply not only to Ramsar sites, but Ramsar sites can act as centerpieces for networks of related wetlands, and conservation measures should be designed to protect these networks in their entirety.

To achieve the mid-term goal of designating 100 Ramsar sites in Japan and conserving their networks of related wetlands, everyone concerned with protecting both existing Ramsar sites and other wetlands around the country need to work together based on a common awareness. JAWAN works with a wide variety of organizations and groups to encourage this kind of awareness.

Education and Public Awareness

The Ramsar Convention recognizes that it is vital to use every opportunity available to communicate the value of wetlands to as many people as possible in an easily comprehensible manner in order to achieve wetland conservation and wise use. Many studies and information sources are available on methods for pursuing education and public awareness. JAWAN supports a variety of educational activities around the country.

- **Wetland Day in Japan:** The date of April 14th commemorates the day in 1997 that Isahaya Bay’s tidal flat wetland was closed off from the sea by a national land reclamation project. JAWAN and other NGOs have taken this day as “Wetland Day” in Japan, and every year a national wetland conservation campaign centers on this date. Nature conservation groups around the country participate by holding field trips and study meetings.

- **The International Wetland Symposium:** JAWAN held its first International Wetland Symposium in 1991. Leading domestic and international wetland experts are invited to speak, discussions of the most pressing wetland topics of the year are held, and the concepts of wetland conservation and wise use explored. In 2004, the symposium was held in Tsuruga City, site of Nakaikemi Mire; invited were a leading British mire wetland expert, representatives