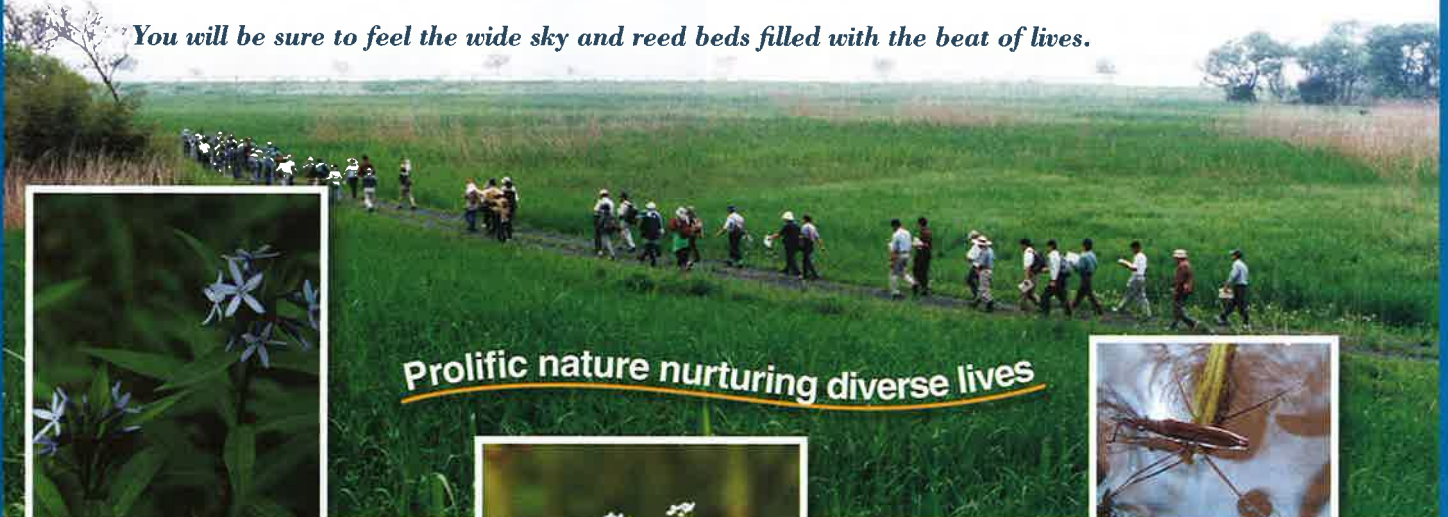


WELCOME TO WATARASE MARSH!!

Watarase Marsh is a wetland in central-northern Japan with an area of 3 300 ha. Reed beds of the Marsh have the largest area in Japan except for those in Hokkaido Island. It belongs to four prefectures of Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama and Ibaraki. It is just 60 km north of Tokyo.

The Marsh bears a history of a small village called Yanaka Village, wiped out from maps because of contaminated mining pollution from Ashio Copper Mine. The area has now come back to a nature of a high diversity, a nature characterised also by traces of villagers.

You will be sure to feel the wide sky and reed beds filled with the beat of lives.



Choji-sou, *Amsonia elliptica*,
Japanese Bluestar

Prolific nature nurturing diverse lives



Hanamugura, *Galium dahuricum*



Esakiamenbo,
Aquarius paludum, Water strider

The marsh supports about 1 700 species of insects. Among them are many threatened wetland species. 18 species are recognised as nationally threatened. Four precious species has "Watarase" in their Japanese name.

PLANTS
Reaching
1000 species.

About a thousand species of plants have been identified mainly in the reed beds. Among them, 59 species are recognised by the Japanese Government as threatened. Not so many of sites have so many valuable species of plants. In 2005, a new species belonging to Balsaminaceae was found. It was named in Japanese with a name of habitat site as Watarase-tsurifunesou, though species name is not yet fixed.

The site is so precious and full of possibility.

INSECTS
About
1700 species



Watarase-hammyoumodoki,
Elaphrus sugai



Nourushi, *Euphorbia adenochlora*



Koyoshikiri, *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*, Black-browed
Reed Warbler



A flock of herons with Ashio Mountains
at the back / Photo: HORIUCHI Yosuke



Haiirochuuhi, *Circus cyaneus*,
Hen Harrier

**WILD
BIRDS**
230 Species

About 230 species of birds uses the Marsh. Major species in the marsh are those of wetlands and grasslands such as Harriers, Buzzards, Falcons, Egrets, Ducks, Rails, and Warblers.

An observation of 25 raptor species on top of food chain means affluent food web of the marsh exceptional in Japan. It is a breeding ground for Water Rails and Chinese Little Bitterns, and staging ground for swallows and shorebirds. It is a paradise that brings the lives of birds together.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, PART OF THE MARSH WAS **Yanaka village.**

From late 1800s, mine waste from Ashio Copper Mine upstream of Watarase River started to cause a serious damage to agriculture and fisheries on both sides of the river, especially to Yanaka Village. People of the village stood up to fight against pollution under a legendary leader, TANAKA Shozo. To pressure the movement, widely known as Ashio Mining Contamination Case, the then Government decided to change the village at the down most stream of Watarase River to a retarding pool. The villagers accordingly had to leave away from their inherited land from their ancestors. The village was closed in 1907, and wiped off from public documents. The villagers had to fight more against hardships thereafter. The Marsh now has roles of flood control and water supply to the urban area downstream with a reservoir built at a part of it.



TANAKA Shozo



Eco-museum, TO LEARN AND USE WISELY THE NATURE AND HISTORY OF THE MARSH!

There used to be a wonderful nature in the Watarase Marsh up until 40 years ago: Large and small ponds located here and there in the limitless reed beds, there were flora and fauna of wetlands. The marsh supported lives of people with small industries and/or fisheries using reed vegetation there. Original landscape of Watarase Marsh is that of reed beds extending to the horizon and of flora and fauna living together on the water front. However, developments have changed the landscape of reed beds to something different. We propose to stop the destructive developments on the natural process in the Marsh and to make it an eco-museum i.e. an outdoor museum to exhibit rich nature and history in the area. We hope that this proposal would make a chance to re-evaluate the significance of the Watarase Marsh and energise people of cities and townships around the marsh.



Image of Eco Museum



Cropping of Reed Stems
/Photo:HORIUCHI Yosuke



Fishery Catch abundant from the Marsh
/Photo:HORIUCHI Yosuke

DESIGNATE WATARASE MARSH TO **Ramsar**, TO LIVE TOGETHER WITH THE LIVES THERE!

Why don't you join us to appeal the value of Watarase Marsh beyond comparison? Let's work together to list Watarase Marsh to the List of Wetlands of International Importance, or Ramsar List. It is the best way to protect its nature and to use it wisely.

Contact:

**The Council of the Inhabitants of the Tone River area
for the Protection of Watarase Marsh**

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