

Trends of Environmental Education Programs and Activities within Japanese Ramsar Sites: A Special Attention towards Bird Focused Centers and CEPA standards

日本のラムサール条約登録湿地における環境教育プログラムと活動の現況

— 水鳥関連センターと CEPA 基準を念頭に置いて —

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【概要】

ラムサール条約のねらいは「地域・国の活動と国際協力を通してすべての湿地の保全とワイズ・ユース（賢明な利用）を促進すること」であり、CEPA 基準（対話、教育、参加、普及啓発）に沿ったプログラムの将来ビジョンは「人々が湿地のワイズ・ユースに向けた行動をとれるようになること」である。日本には現在、37カ所のラムサール条約登録湿地があり、それらは湿地の生態系・生物多様性に関する環境教育実践において適切なフィールドである。

本研究では、本州にある登録湿地のうちの13カ所（20センター）を実地訪問し、水鳥関連センターのスタッフや地域のボランティア等へのインタビューなどを通じて、登録湿地における環境教育プログラムと活動の現況を整理分類した。また、近年のCEPA会議で提言されているデモンストレーション・サイトの観点から、今後の参考となり得る事例について検討した。

実地訪問等の結果、13カ所の環境教育プログラムと活動は7つのカテゴリーに整理分類できた。7つのカテゴリーとは、①在来水生生物種に焦点を当てているところ、②動物の救護・リハビリを支援しているところ、③野鳥観察を基本としているところ、④青少年向けプログラムを中心としているところ、⑤ラムサール条約の普及を積極的に推進しているところ、⑥湿地回復プロジェクトに取り組んでいるところ、⑦鳥類の生息に資する農法を取り入れているところ、である。デモンストレーション・サイトの参考事例としては、登録湿地周辺の水鳥のエサ場（田んぼ）の保全に取り組んでいることや都市化の状況、地域の人たちの関わりなどの点から、今回訪問した中では「片野鴨池」「佐瀉」「蕪栗沼・周辺水田」の3カ所を挙げることができる。特に「蕪栗沼・周辺水田」は、水鳥関連センターがないけれども環境教育やCEPAによく取り組んでいる事例である。

Introduction

The Ramsar Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation." The vision of the Ramsar Convention's CEPA (Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness) Program is: "People taking action for the wise use of wetlands". There are 37 Ramsar Sites in Japan, all appropriate vehicles for Environmental Education (EE), especially in the arena of wetland and biodiversity appreciation. 13 Ramsar Sites and 20 Ramsar related Centers on Honshu Island were visited in this research. The Ramsar Sites, except "Kabukuri-numa and surrounding rice paddies", which has no centers, were categorized by analysis of EE programs and activities at their centers; Centers that highlighted native aquatic species, Centers that supported animal rescue and rehabilitation, Centers with bird observation as a primary focus, Centers with youth programs as a main focus, Centers with actively promoting the Ramsar Convention, Centers with projects for wetland restoration, Centers employing bird friendly farming methods.

Chapter 1

Of Japan's 22 Ramsar sites with freshwater bodies, 11 have rice paddies in the immediate area and in 2005 "Kabukuri-numa and the surrounding rice paddies" was designated as a Ramsar site, the first such designation for Ramsar. Considering the selection of 172 "Potential Ramsar Sites

in Japan” announced on September 30, 2010 by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, there is an incredible possibility to expand the number of centers, as well as environmental education programs. Should Japan also build more centers at those future sites? Are there existing centers that would serve as models? This research will address those questions and identify the trends of environmental programs and activities that currently exist.

Chapter 2

During this research, attention was directed towards bird focused centers, and although most of the centers that were visited did have dedicated areas for bird watching, there were centers that were primarily for bird watching. The staffing was quite different from center to center and for some programming is quite sparse for youth. All of the centers visited during this research did serve some form of educational purpose. Every center could and do serve youth, but I found some centers had programs specifically designed for youth. 6 of the 20 centers visited did have a primary focus on youth and youth programming. The youth programs at these centers had programs that focused on taxonomy, not just for the organisms that inhabited the sites, but in many cases the plant life as well. A program that stood out at the Yatsu-higata Nature Observation Center was a program is called the Yatsu-higata Junior Rangers. One trend that was witnessed is being used at most of the centers that was the use of quizzes. Participants were given questions to answer. Often the answers would be multiple choices as in choose from several possibilities. Nakaumi was unique in the fact that the center also used the “quiz format” in their outside displays. These questions involved the habitats and wildlife that could be seen from the location of the displayed question.

Three centers at the Ramsar Sites that were visited have youth programs on traditional practices. Each Ramsar Site and therefore the Ramsar Center at that site have species unique to that site, or at least unique to the region, or the country of Japan. Part of the process of educating the community in order to preserve the species of plant or animal is teaching the stakeholders to identify those said species.

Chapter 3

During the participation in the Kodomo, I learned of an organic bird-friendly brand of rice. Katano-kamoike, Miyajima-numa and Kabukuri-numa and surrounding rice paddies are practitioners in “fuyumizu-tambo”. The rice at these three sites is harvested in the fall and after the harvest certain paddies are left flooded through the winter. This flooding has created a feeding ground for waterfowl, as well as a boon for biodiversity.

A key point of CEPA is participation. Ramsar Japan held a series of workshops and conferences called Kodomo Biodiversity Conferences. Only 18 of 37 Ramsar Sites participated in one or more conference. Kabukuri-numa and the surrounding rice paddies sent 19 students to a total of 4 conferences. This is a demonstration of participation to the level of CEPA compliance.

Conclusion

This research demonstrated that all of the visited do meet the expectations of CEPA and the Ramsar Convention. The Ramsar Centers that were visited sufficiently met their purpose. According to the CEPA Convention in 2008, the latest desire for Ramsar Sites to be “Demonstration Sites”, there were three Ramsar Sites that stood out as exceptional, and the pinnacle for “demonstration sites.” These three Ramsar Sites would be Katano-kamoike, Sakata and Kabukuri-numa and surrounding rice paddies. This research translates to programs being recreated and being shown as “Demonstration Sites”. Japan can expand its role in the Ramsar Convention without regard to adding centers.