

**Report on WWD2014 in Biwa-ko, Nagahama City, Shiga Pref., Japan**  
**Jun Ueda (Biwa-ko Waterfowl & Wetland Center(BWWC))**  
[http://www.biwa.ne.jp/~nio/eng/index\\_e.html](http://www.biwa.ne.jp/~nio/eng/index_e.html)

Lake Biwa (Biwa-ko) is the largest lake in Japan. It was designated as a Ramsar Site in 1993. In 2008 Nishino-ko which is a marshy lake attached to Biwa-ko was added to the site.

We held the meeting learning the values of tambo(rice field) connected to Lake Biwa, as activities for WWD2014's theme "Wetland and Agriculture" on 2nd February in Kohoku(Northern Lake Biwa)(Photo1).



**Photo1 The meeting learning the values of tambo(rice field) connected to Lake Biwa.**

**(1)The meeting was hosted by Biwa-ko Waterfowl & Wetland Center (BWWC), and Kohoku-Wild Birds-Center(KWBC), co-hosted by Nagahama Amenity Association(NAA), supported by Biwa-ko Wetland Study Group (BWSG <http://www.biwa.ne.jp/~nio/ramsar/projen.htm>) on 2nd February (from 9:30 to 13:00).**

**(2)Openign Speech Takehiro SAWAO President of Nagahama Amenity Association (NAA)**

**(3) Observation of the waterfowl.**

We were birding for about one hour around the Center, observed 37 species of birds.

A part of waterfowls living in Lake biwa including geese, swans, and some species of ducks, use agricultural field (mainly rice fields after harvest) as important foraging areas .

**(4) Report on KODOMO Ramsar Intra & International Wetlands Workshop**

First Jun Ueda explained Intra KODOMO(Children in Japanese) Ramsar Projects. He asked four chirdren (4-6th graders, Ryouta Fujii,Satoho Takahata, Yuuto Oohashi, Yukiho Kazama) to tell us their impressions of the project. In Aug. 2013, children from Nakaumi・Shinjiko (Blackish Lakes) & Toyooka (Maruyama River and adjecnt rice field.) (All of them are also Ramsar Wetlands.) came to Kohoku to experience observing water

weed in the lake and fishing (catching endemic Biwa Rock Catfish *Silurus lithophilus*). Children



enjoyed their first experience to swim in the lake(Photo2). In Oct.2013, four children from Kohoku area went to Shinjiko, and learned how seawater goes to Shinjiko, and observed white-fronted geese flew away in the morning.

**Photo2 Children enjoyed their first experience to swim in the lake.**

After that, Tomohiro Tomioka, and Souichi Ueda (both 8th Grader) talked about the international project. They joined the ESD-KODOMO(Children) Ramsar International Wetlands Workshop in Don Hoi Lot,



Thailand. The area has large mudflats and coastal mangrove forests (January 2014). Children observed freshwater plants, animals, and their way of conservation of the wetland. After the observation, they discussed what aspects of wetlands are important treasures for local people, and presented the results of the group discussion (Photo3) at the front of all participants.

**Photo3 They presented what aspects of wetlands are important treasures for local people.**

**(5) The fish in Lake Biwa connected to rice fields (Rice field as Cradle Project) Jun Ueda**



There was an exhibition of WWD 2014's theme "Wetland & Agriculture" in KWBC include Tambo (Rice field) poster (Photo4). The Tambo poster showed that rice fields in Japan are wetlands valuable for biodiversity, since 5,668 species of living creatures were found.

**Photo4** The Tambo poster showed that rice fields in Japan are wetlands valuable for biodiversity, since 5,668 species of living creatures were found.

The observation project held by BWWC was introduced. Participants of the project observed fish, shelfish and the living creatures in water routes connecting rice field and Lake Biwa. Rice fields are important for a part of living creatures in Lake Biwa. The fish like Catfish, Carp and Crucian use rice field as a safe place for egg-



laying and growth of fry.

We were impressed by watching short movies taken by fisherman Masatomi Matsuoka. It showed that catfish and crucian went to rice fields from water route and spawned in rice fields (Photo5).

**Photo5** A crucian went to rice fields from water route for spawning in rice fields. From Masatomi Matsuoka's movies.

(6) Seasonal change in rice field as a foraging site of Bewick's Swan in Kohoku, Shiga  
Shohei Ikeda(BWWC)

A lot of kinds of water birds in Lake Biwa are feeding themselves at cultivated land around the lake. It is Bewick's Swans which come to rice field after harvesting that are the most popular birds among the visitors to Kohoku(Photo6). Normally, they eat water plants at the shore of the lake. But a large number of them, it is known, come to rice fields to eat especially when the water level of Lake Biwa is high. They are also known to



glean and eat the second ear of rice. The three-year research in winter

Study over three consecutive winters showed that foraging areas of Bewick's swans were near the lake side at the beginning of winter, but it drew apart from the lake side at the middle of winter.

**Photo6 Bewick's Swans in rice fields, eating the second ear of rice.**

**(7) The wetlands comic and the Tambo (Rice fields) Poster Hisashi Sugawa(BWSG)**

Sugawa introduced the comic prepared for WWD2014 and the poster appealing the ecological importance of rice fields. He presented that Japanese version I had made was posted on the Ramsar Website.

[http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-wwds-ramsarmaterial-wwdadaptation2014/main/ramsar/1-63-78-441%5E26384\\_4000\\_0\\_#Japan](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-wwds-ramsarmaterial-wwdadaptation2014/main/ramsar/1-63-78-441%5E26384_4000_0_#Japan)

This comic appeals that using wetlands wisely without destroying them enhances agriculture, sightseeing and nature conservation.

The Tambo (rice fields) poster(Photo4) was designed by Aiko Furuya (Oryza Net). She also designed a guide which shows the creatures in the rice field in four seasons. The guide is a folded sheet, and full length of it is 2.6m.

**(8)Okou-jiru Party**



We were served traditional miso soup in Kohoku called Okou-jiru with seki-han (rice cooked with red beans)(Photo7). Sekihan is served at times of celebration. Yumiko Nomura, a school teacher, explained Okou-jiru. It is the traditional miso-soup served after monk's lecture in temples. Turnips and soybeans grown on footpaths among rice fields in Kohoku area are used for the soup.

**Photo7 Serving Oko-jiru**