



Criteria for designating wetlands in Japan

In designating wetlands as Ramsar sites, Japan is able to:

1. Meet the international criteria set by the Ramsar Convention.
2. Conduct long term planning for nature conservation through natural legislation of laws such as the Natural Park Law and Wildlife Protection and Hunting Law.
3. Gain the approval and support of the local people.

International Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance

- Criterion 1: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it contains a representative, rare, or unique example of a natural or near - natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographic region.
- Criterion 2: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities.
- Criterion 3: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports populations of plant and/or animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity of a particular biogeographic region.
- Criterion 4: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.
- Criterion 5: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds.
- Criterion 6: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.
- Criterion 7: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports a significant proportion of indigenous fish subspecies, species or families, life - history stages, species interactions and/or populations that are representative of wetland benefits and/or values and thereby contributes to global biological diversity.
- Criterion 8: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.
- Criterion 9: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of wetland-dependent non-avian animal species.

Conservation Measures Taken

Shinji-ko and Nakaumi are both designated as a Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area by the Government of Japan. In November 2005 both lakes were added as Ramsar Sites. The following three activities are strictly prohibited at Special Protection Areas.

1. The reclamation of land by filling the lake with earth or draining water
2. Cutting of trees / bamboo
3. Installation of manmade structures

History of the Ramsar Convention and Revision of the Logo

The Ramsar Convention is apt to seem to be a convention for the protection of waterbirds, but is steadily evolving to include fish and shellfish, and the protection of all the many functions of a wetland ecosystem by various Resolutions and Recommendations which was adopted at the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) held once every three years.

It symbolizes such an evolution that the old logo of "a hastily departing bird of no known species" for the Ramsar Convention was replaced by the new logo of "the flowing of water and living matter" in 1999.



Prior to 1999

After 1999



1993 COP 5
Kushiro, Japan



1996 COP 6
Brisbane, Australia



1999 COP 7
San Jose, Costa Rica



2002 COP 8
Barcelona, Spain



2005 COP 9
Uganda, Africa

In addition, after the Fifth Meeting of COP (COP5) held in Kushiro, Japan in 1993, the logo for COP was made. As the above series of logos, the logo went through a rather involved evolution before reaching the logo for COP9: from the concrete logo of a water bird to fish and a water plant, and finally the abstract logo of the theme of COP9, "Wetlands and water: supporting life, sustaining livelihoods".