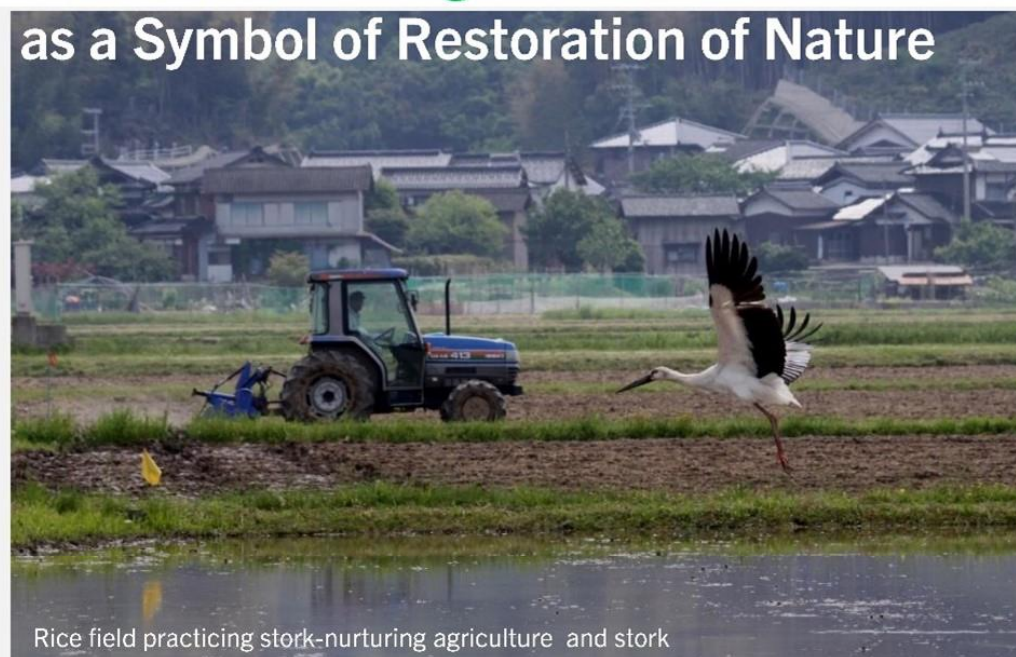


“Storks Returning to the Wilderness” as a Symbol of Restoration of Nature



Rice field practicing stork-nurturing agriculture and stork



Environmental learning for elementary school students using paddy field biotope



Kaya Wetlands developed as part of a large-scale wetland restoration project

Location of Initiative



Regional Challenges and Objectives

【Regional Challenges】

- We have lost much more than the rich natural environment due to our pursuit of a more convenient and efficient lifestyle. The decline of interest in nature has driven storks, which have coexisted in Satoyama since ancient times, close to extinction, and has even decimated the unique local food culture and traditions that have enjoyed the bounty of nature. Eventually, people lost confidence and even pride in their hometowns due to a sense of stagnation in the rural areas that began with the declining birthrate and aging population.

【Objectives】

- Through the “Storks Returning to the Wilderness,” we aim to create a society in which people and nature coexist in harmony and a rich environment (natural and cultural environment) where storks can live. The goal is to create a city (Local & Global City) that is respected and honored by people worldwide, making the most of the small but distinctive local characteristics.

Details of Initiative

- The rice paddies where wild storks used to forage before the field was developed into the “Hachigoro Toshima Wetland” now functions not only as a feeding ground for storks, an environmental learning center, and a wetland management experiment site, but also as a rice paddy-filled biotope of approx. 13 ha (established using fallow rice paddies and other fields in the city).
- To promote the natural regeneration of rice paddies, which are the stork’s largest feeding grounds, we established the “Stork Friendly Farming Method,” a pesticide-free and pesticide-reduced method that nurtures safe and secure rice as well as other living creatures, incorporating methods such as winter waterlogging and mid-drying postponement.
- The MLIT has developed an approx. 15 ha wetland (Kaya Wetlands) along the Izushi River, and the local community and government are working together to recreate the symbiotic relationship between people and nature symbolized by the photo of a Tajima cattle and stork, and to create a lively community center.
- In supporting the residents’ initiatives in Tai Wetlands to convert fallow rice paddies into wetlands, students, researchers, corporate volunteers, and others use the site as a center for environmental learning and research.



Effects of Initiative

- The rice produced through agricultural means to nurture storks and other living creatures is traded at a high price as brand rice, the area planted in FY2019 was 428 ha, expanding to 14.5% of the city’s arable land area. It is sold throughout Japan and exported to 6 countries and regions, including Hong Kong and Singapore.
- The “Hachigoro Toshima Wetland” and the “Kaya Wetlands Park” are visited by 7,000 to 8,000 people annually, including students, researchers, local government officials, and birdwatchers.
- In 2012, 560 ha of land, including the Tai Wetlands and the Maruyama River, were registered as a Ramsar wetland under the “Lower Maruyama River Basin and the surrounding rice paddies.” In 2018, the area, including rice fields and Kaya Wetlands around the artificial nest tower, was registered as an extension, expanding the area to 1,094 ha.

