**The Lake Towada Ecosystem and Himemasu Salmon**

Lake Towada is a double caldera volcanic lake created by multiple volcanic eruptions. Due to its unique environment and wildlife, the lake has been designated a Special Natural Monument of Japan, as well as a scientifically valuable site within the Towada Hachimantai National Park.

Initially, there were no edible fish inhabiting the lake. During the Meiji era (1868–1912), a man named Wainai Sadayuki had a dream that locals would be able to eat fresh fish. Attempts at cultivating carp and *masu* salmon were unsuccessful, but in 1905 Wainai succeeded in breeding *himemasu* salmon. This place marks the ruins of the original Wainai Hatchery, built in 1906. Wainai’s fish cultivation supported the lives of those living by the lake, and the adjacent modern day hatchery carries on that tradition today.

The *himemasu* salmon (also known as landlocked *kokanee* salmon) was originally a sockeye salmon that bred in fresh water lakes and rivers but spent its adult life in the ocean. It has evolved into a species that lives its whole life in fresh water. The fish mature at age 4 and grow to approximately 25 centimeters long.