**Crested Ibis (*Toki*) and Other Birds**

More than 360 types of birds can be seen on Sado Island, and the crested ibis (*toki*) is the most famous of them all. The Japanese crested ibis nearly became extinct in the Taisho era (1912–1926) due to overhunting and a lack of food. By 1981, no *toki* were living in the wild, and the last five birds in the species were all kept in captivity on Sado. A breeding process was initiated to save the *toki*, but this proved very difficult, and the first crested ibis bred on Sado was not born until 1999. In 2008, a group of birds bred on Sado was released into the wild for the first time. Now more than 400 crested ibises live freely and peacefully on the island, where they can be seen resting in trees and foraging in fields near Toki no Mori Park and the adjacent breeding facility.

The crested ibis can be identified by the colors of the feathers, which change seasonally: pink in autumn, gray during winter’s mating season, and white at other times of the year. The birds are wary of humans, and when spotted in the wild should only be viewed from inside cars or from a significant distance. A closer look can be had at Toki no Mori Park, where visitors can peek at the birds through observation windows. To protect the *toki*, organic and environmentally friendly agriculture and farming practices have been implemented, as well as measures to ensure that there is food in their natural habitat year round.

Most of the other birds on Sado are migratory and can only be glimpsed in certain seasons. Spring is the peak season for migration, and bird-watchers flock toward the northern tip of the island, around the cliffs of Futatsugame and Onogame, to catch a glimpse of passing visitors. The birds stop on Sado Island when flying from Honshu, Japan’s main island, toward mainland Asia.