

Ramsar Convention Designation

The Ramsar Convention, also known as the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, holds the distinction of being the first modern treaty between nations aimed at developing and maintaining an international network of wetlands that are vital for the conservation of biological diversity and for sustaining human life. The signing of the Convention on Wetlands took place in 1971, in the Iranian town of Ramsar. Since then, the Convention on Wetlands has been known as the Ramsar Convention.

The Ramsar Convention's main aims are to halt the loss of wetlands globally, and to conserve, through wise use and management, those that remain. Under the Ramsar Convention, a wide range of natural and artificial habitat types, from rivers to coral reefs, can be designated as wetlands, and sites that are considered representative, rare or unique wetlands, or wetlands that are important for conserving biological diversity, are designated as Ramsar Sites.

Tadewara Marsh was designated as a Ramsar Site in 2005 in order to protect and preserve the distinctive wetland environment of the area. Created by the upwelling of fresh spring water from the surrounding mountains, Tadewara has abundant plant and animal life. The high altitude of around 1,000m above sea level, ancient volcanic geology, and cool climate of the marsh support a thriving ecosystem of rare and beautiful plants, endemic aquatic insects, and wild birds.

More than one hundred different species of wildflower bloom in the area from spring to autumn, attracting a large number of butterflies and other insects. The insects attract rare birds, such as the chestnut-eared bunting (*Emberiza fucata*), to the marshes. Many of these species are found only here in the conditions specific to these marshes.

Another special feature of the Tadewara Marsh, contributing to its designation as a Ramsar Site, is the highly-acidic Shiramizu River (literally, “White Water River” in Japanese), which has its source high up on Mt. Io. Mt. Io is the only volcano in the Kuju Mountain Range that has recently been active, releasing sulfur into the Shiramizu River and causing high acidity and a whitish hue to the waters. Few living creatures can survive in the inhospitable environment of the Shiramizu River, except for a few, very small fish.