

## **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)**

Sado Island has made the protection of the crested ibis (*toki*) an integral part of its agricultural system, and as a result, was designated a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) in 2011. The GIAHS designation, managed by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is given to areas where the residents' way of life coexists peacefully with the nature that surrounds them.

The crested ibis was once nearly extinct in Japan due to overhunting and a lack of food, but the population has been recovering since 1999, when the first of these birds was successfully bred on the island. Most of the agricultural practices on Sado now revolve around the protection and livelihood of the species, and there were around 400 crested ibises living there peacefully as of 2020.

One major change in farming was that pesticides and chemicals that were used during the twentieth century have been replaced with organic and traditional farming methods that are less damaging to insect life. Additionally, fields are filled with water after the rice harvests to create habitats for insects and other small creatures so that the birds can find food throughout the year. Fishways have been built to let aquatic animals roam freely through the fields and into other bodies of water. These efforts of Sado residents to protect and live in harmony with their island's wildlife are reflected in the GIAHS designation, providing an example for the rest of the world.