

### **Wetlands—Iriya's Water-Filled Rice Fields**

The Iriya district of Minamisanriku contains a number of *satoyama*, areas where the edges of mountain forests overlap small-scale agricultural communities and particular emphasis is placed on living in step with nature. Iriya once boasted flourishing gold mines but today focuses on rice cultivation—evidenced by its lovely terraced rice fields—and cattle farming.

Rice is planted in spring, and the paddies are filled with water in early summer. The plants mature at the end of summer, and the rice is harvested in autumn. From season to season, Iriya's rice fields also serve as a habitat for various species of wildlife. Japanese tree frogs, Japanese brown frogs, toxic Japanese fire-belly newts, and leeches are all typical summer residents. A range of insects, notably diving beetles, water scavenger beetles, and water stick insects, can be found in the flooded rice fields as well.