

Otomo Marsh

Otomo Marsh (*Otomo-numa*) is a 55-hectare manmade lake completed in 1675. It was built at the order of Satake Yoshinobu (1570–1633), the daimyo of Kubota domain (now Akita Prefecture) as a source for irrigation in times of drought. Today, Otomo Marsh attracts hundreds of thousands of migratory waterfowl each year.

Designated a wildlife protection area in 1998, the wetland is a much-needed way-stop for birds migrating to and from Siberia between October and March. They use the marsh and surrounding rice fields to rest and feed, drawing birdwatchers and photographers from around the region, particularly when rare species are spotted.

As many as 200,000 greater white-fronted geese (*Anser albifrons*) and 10,000 swans can be seen at the height of the migratory season. Other regular visitors include cattle egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*), common pochards (*Aythya ferina*), white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), bean geese (*Anser fabalis*), great crested grebes (*Podiceps cristatus*), and falcated ducks (*Mareca falcata*).

The deepest point in Otomo Marsh is just under 2 meters. To maintain the lake's water level, water from the nearby Yoneshiro River is pumped in. A walking path borders part of the reservoir, and there is a raised observation platform that provides an excellent vantage point over the entire marsh. Near the parking lot is a grassy picnic area with benches, restrooms, and a water fountain.

Parking is free. Walking to Otomo Marsh from JR Higashi-Noshiro Station takes approximately 20 minutes.