

Wetlands of Omihachiman

The wetlands of Omihachiman are a protected area of 354 hectares between Lake Biwa and the town of Omihachiman comprising an intricate landscape of waterways, reedbeds, rice paddies, and villages. These wetlands have developed over centuries as humans created waterways for transport and fishing and cultivated reedbeds.

The reeds here are famous for their durability and were traditionally used as a roofing material and to make screens and blinds. They also perform important natural functions, such as cleansing the water of pollutants, protecting the lakeshore from erosion, and providing a habitat for waterfowl and fish.

The wetlands are called “water home” (*suigo*) in Japanese, expressing the close relationship between the natural landscape and people’s everyday life. The wetlands of Omihachiman have been named a National Important Cultural Landscape.