Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

As approved by Rec C.4.7. of the Conference of the Contracting Parties Montreux, Switzerland- July 1990

1. Country: Japan **2. Date:** December 1992 **3. Ref:** JP001

4. Name and address of compiler:

Yoshihiro NATORI,
Wildlife Protection Division,
Nature Conservation Bureau,
Environment Agency,
1-2-2 Kasumigaseki Chiyoda-ku,
TOKYO 100

5. **Name of wetland:** Kushiro-shitsugen

6. **Date of Ramsar designation:** 17 June 1980

7. **Geographical coordinates:** 43° 09'N 144°26'E

8. **General Location: (e.g. administrative region and nearest large town)**
In the eastern Hokkaido, approximately 5km north of Kushiro city

9. **Area: (in hectares)** 7,726 ha

10. **Wetland Type: (see attached classification, also approved by Montreux Rec C 4.7)**
M O S U W X

11. **Altitude: (average and/or maximum and minimum)**
The entire area lies between 3m and l0m (above sea level).

12. **Overview: (general summary, in two or thee, sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics)**
Most of the mire consists of fen and swamp, including swamp forest. Bog is dotted central area of the mire. The mire is the largest peat land of Japan which is one of the most important habitat of *Grus japonensis*.
The mire has about 10 tributary rivers of the Kushiro river and 3 lakes in eastern area.

13. **Physical Features:(e.g. geology; geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth; water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; catchment area; downstream area; climate)**

The formation of the mire started about 4,000 years ago by growing of sandbank and sand-dune facing the Pacific Ocean which blocked the way out of ancient gulf.
Hillsides which are 60-140m above sea level extend in the west, the north and the east of the mire.
The peat of the mire consists of Sphagnum, reed and sedge peat.
The pH of the water indicates between 6.8 and 8.5 in the rivers and 6.5 and 8.5 in the lakes.
A channel which is about 8km long was constructed towards the Pacific Ocean in the lower course of the Kushiro river.

The eastern Hokkaido belongs to the subarctic zone, the average temperature of the year is between 5°C and 6°C and the average precipitation of the year is between 900 mm and 1,200mm.
A lot of fog covers the mire from spring to summer and daylight time of the year is the shortest in Japan.

14. Ecological Features: (main habitats and vegetation types)

Vegetation of the mire is characterised in *Phragmites australis, Carex lyngbyei, C fedia* var.*miyabei* and *C.lasiocarpa* var.*occultans,* including sedge tussock with *C.caespitosa and C. augustinowiczii* in the fen area and *Nuphar pumilum, Nymphaea tetragona, Trapa japonica, Potamogeton natens, Menyanthes trifoliata, Zizania latifolia*, *Phragmites australis, Spiraea salicifolia* and *Alnus japonica* in the swamp and *Ledum palustre* var.*nipponicum*, *Chamaedaphne calyculata*, *Myrica gale* var.*tomentosa*, *Vaccinium oxycoccus, Andromeda polifolia* and *Sphagnum* in the bog.

15. Land Tenure/Ownership of:

(a) site	National Government owned land	6,224 ha
	Local Government owned land	673 ha
	Non-private owned lake	816 ha
	Private owned lake	13 ha

(b) surrounding area

16. Conservation Measures Taken: (national category and legal status of protected areas - including any boundary changes which have been made: management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it has been implemented)

Special Protection Area of National Wildlife Protection Area
Special Protection Zone and Special Zone of National Park
In this area, construction, modification of land, mining, reclamation, changing of the water level, tree felling, taking of wildlife are prohibited without the permission of the Environment Agency.

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: (e.g. management plan in preparation; officially proposed as a protected areas etc)

None

18. Current land use: principal human activities in:

(a) site
National Park
Fishing (pond smelt, shrimp)

(b) surroundings/catchment
Pasture land, agricultural land and golf course locate in the catchment area of the mire.

19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects: (factors which may have a negative impact on the ecological character of the wetland)

(a) at the site

None

(b) in the surroundings/catchment

Excreta of cattle and agricultural chemical which is sprinkled over pasturage and golf course flow into the upper course of the tributary rivers in the mire.
Soil erosion of hillsides around the mire by tree felling. Population of introduced mink which escaped from ranch is increasing rapidly in the mire.

20. Hydrological and Physical Values: (groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilisation etc)

Control the water level of the lower course of Kushiro river.
Purify the water which flows through the mire.

21. Social and Cultural Values: (e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological site etc)

Water supply for living and industry.
Habitat supply for salmon which is the most important natural resources in this country.

22. Noteworthy Fauna: (e.g. unique, rare endangered, abundant or biogeographically important species; include count data etc)

One of the most important habitat of wildbird, *Haliaeetus albicilla, Ketupa blakistoni* and *Grus japonensis* whose population is approximately 560 only in Japan.
Breeding habitat of summer visitor *Gallinago hardwickii* which is endangered species in Australia.
One of a few habitat of threatened species, *Hucho perryi* in Japan.
Only one habitat of threatened species, *Salamandrella keyserlingii*, *Aeschna subarctica*, *Lercorrhinia intermedia ijimai* and *Erythromma najas baicalensis* in Japan.

23 Noteworthy Flora: (e.g. unique, rare, endangered, or biogeographically important species/communities etc)

One of a few habitat *Polemonium caereleum* var.*laxiflorum* and *Cardamine pratensis*.
The widest swamp forest of *Alnus japonica* and the widest habitat of *Phragmites australis - Carex* community in Japan.

24. Current Scientific Research and Facilities: (e.g. details of current projects; existence of field station etc)

Research on habitat condition of *Grus japonensis*, *Ketupa blakistoni* and *Haliaeetus pelagicus*.
Feed *Grus japonensis* for supplement food during winter,
Make breeding pond of *Salamandrella keyserlingii* in the mire.
Monitoring research on change of mire vegetation every five years.
Visitor Centre of National Park Office (management, education)
Wildlife Centre (data base, protection, management)
Natural History Museum (data base, education, research)
Japanese Crane Sanctuary (protection, research, education)

25. Current Conservation Education: (e. g. visitor centres, hides, information booklet, facilities for school visits etc)

Nature observation by National Park office
Training course for National Park volunteers
Nature observation in the mire by Natural History Museum

26. Current recreation and tourism: (state if wetland used for recreation/tourism; indicate type & frequency/intensity)

Horse-back riding hike on hillsides around the mire
Canoeing tour in rivers of the mire
Cross-country skiing hike in the mire
Hike around the mire for watching ruins of the prehistoric age

27. Management authority: (name and address of body responsible for managing the wetland)

Kushiro-shitsugen National Park Office, Nature Conservation Bureau,
Environment Agency, Koh-roku building
Saiwai-cho, Kushiro city, Hokkaido
085 Japan

28. Jurisdiction: (territorial e.g. state/region and functional e.g Dept of Agriculture/Dept of Environment etc) -

Territorial conservation jurisdiction:
Wildlife Protection Section
Nature Conservation Department
Health Environment Division
Hokkaido Prefecture Government
Functional conservation jurisdiction:
Wildlife Protection Division
Nature Conservation Bureau
Environment Agency
Japan

29 Bibliographical References: (scientific/technical only)

Kushiro City Museum 1977. Report on natural Historical research in the Kushiro mire

Hokkaido Prefecture Government 1985. Report on research in conservation measure of the Kushiro mire

Environment Agency 1986. Report on urgent research in conservation measure of the Kushiro mire

Hokkaido Prefecture Government 1991 Report on special research in habitat of Japanese Crane.

Environment Agency 1991. Report on research in vegetation of the Kushiro mire

30. Reasons for Inclusion: (state which Ramsar criteria - as adopted by Rec.C.4.15 of the Montreux Conference - are applicable)

1(a)
2(a), 2(b), 2(d)
3(b) (Family Gruidae, Family Accipitridae)

31. Map of site (please enclose the most detailed and up-to-date map available - preferably at least 1:25,000 or 1:50,000)