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The Treasure of Lake Shinji—Yamato Shijimi

Oliver Marshall



In the evening, I leave my house, and walk for ten minutes down to the lakeshore. Expanding to the left and right of me, nestled between two cities, lies Lake Shinji. Turning west, I follow the path along the shoreline until I reach a certain point, and—a dreamlike scene appears before my very eyes. The sun, dipping behind the mountains, casts a beautiful golden light on the sky and water. Although I've lived in Matsue City for almost four years, I never get tired of this view.

However, Lake Shinji isn't only a picturesque backdrop. For centuries, it has been a vital source of food for the people of the Izumo region. If you visit early in the morning, you can see fishing boats dotted around the lake. Through rain or shine, these fishermen strive to provide the highest-quality marine products, while carefully conserving natural resources.

Of all the marine life that inhabits Lake Shinji, there are seven species that are especially famous, known as the “Seven Delicacies of Lake Shinji”—Japanese seabass, greasyback shrimp, freshwater eel, Japanese smelt, Japanese icefish, common carp, and basket clam. One of these delicacies, basket clam, actually makes up over 90% of all the marine product harvested from Lake Shinji annually.

To learn more about the basket clams (shijimi) of Lake Shinji—an indispensable part of local food culture—we were guided by Mr. Masaki Kuwabara of the Lake Shinji Fishing Association. According to Mr. Kuwabara, there are three species of basket clam in Japan. Among those, yamato shijimi (*Corbicula japonica*), which only lives in brackish water, is



「宍道湖の宝物」～ヤマトシジミ～

夕方に家を出て、10分程歩いたら湖岸に着く。左右に広がる、町と町の間にはさまれた、宍道湖。西に向かい、湖に沿う遊歩道をしばらく辿ると、夢のような風景が現れる。目の前の太陽が山を背後に沈みながら、空と水面に美しい黄金色の光を投げかける。私は松江市に来て4年目になったものの、この景色に飽きない。

宍道湖は美景であるだけでなく、何世紀にもわたり、出雲地方に住む人々にとって重要な食料の源になっている。朝早く宍道湖沿いを歩くと、あちこちに漁船が見られる。その船の操縦をする漁師は晴れでも雨でも変わらず、資源管理を徹底しながら良質な魚介を私たちに提供し続けている。

宍道湖に生息する数ある魚類の中、「宍道湖七珍」と呼ばれるスズキ、モロゲエビ、ウナギ、アマサギ、シラウオ、コイ、シジミの7種類が特に名物だ。1年間で採れる水産物の90%以上がその中の「シジミ」である。

今回の取材は、出雲地方の食文化に欠かせない宍道湖のシジミについて、宍道湖漁業協同組合（宍道湖漁協）の桑原正樹さんに案内してもらった。桑原さんによると、日本には3種類のシジミが生息しているそうだ。その中、汽水でしか生

息しない「ヤマトシジミ」が一番美味しいことで知られている。日本海につながる宍道湖は汽水湖であり、しかもヤマトシジミの漁獲量に日本一恵まれている。宍道湖漁協では、この貴重なヤマトシジミが採れる漁師を約270名に制限している。さらに、乱獲にならないように、シジミを採っていい時間や採れる場所、一日で採れる量など、様々な漁業のルールに従わないといけないと桑原さんは説明した。

いつも遠くから漁船を見る私たちは、シジミ漁業にどれだけ体力が必要なのか、あまり想像がつかないかもしれない。そのため、桑原さんが自分の船に私たちを乗せ、漁師の活動を間近で見学させてくれた。

朝7時、松江市大橋川沿いの小さい船場に同僚と集合した。船に乗り込み、湖へ向かった。漁師の船にたどり着いたらスピードを落とし、そこで桑原さんが「おはようございます!」と呼びかけた。漁師は4～5人ぐらい乗れる小さい漁船に立ち、「ジョレン」というステンレス製網カゴの付いた長いポールを持っていた。上手にバランスを取りながら体重を使い、そのポールで湖底を掻いていた。「この漁法は手掻きと言います」と桑原さんが説明した。船のエンジンを使わず、約10

オリバー・マーシャル



known for being the most delicious. Connected to the Sea of Japan, Lake Shinji is a brackish lake, and is also blessed with the largest amount of yamato shijimi in the country.

The Lake Shinji Fishing Association restricts the number of fishermen who can catch these prized yamato shijimi to about 270 people. In addition, Mr. Kuwabara explained that to prevent overfishing, these fishermen must follow various rules such as when and where they may fish, as well as how many clams they can catch in one day.

For those of us who always view fishing boats from afar, we may struggle to imagine the sheer physical strength required with such an occupation. With this in mind, Mr. Kuwabara offered to take us onto his boat, in order to see the action up close.

At seven o'clock in the morning, my colleagues and I gathered at a small dock by the Ohashi River in Matsue City. In turns, we boarded Mr. Kuwabara's boat, and headed out to the lake. Upon nearing one of the fishing boats, he shouted "good morning!" Standing in the middle of the boat, a fisherman held a long pole with a stainless steel basket on the end (called a "joren"). While carefully shifting his body weight, the fisherman used the pole to scrape the bottom of the lake. "This method of catching clams is called 'tegaki' (hand catching)," explained Mr. Kuwabara. With the boat's engine switched off, this physically intensive method involves moving the approximately 10 kg pole back and forth a number of times to collect the clams. Making sure to not block their operation, we rode around the lake, speaking to a number of fishermen. They all kindly spoke to us, despite being hard at work.

Before being brought to market, the clams must be sorted according to size and quality. Thanks to Mr. Kuwabara, I was also able to view this sorting process myself.

At the mouth of the Sada River where it connects to Lake Shinji,

we visited Mr. Motoki Ibara, a fisherman with over 12 years of experience catching basket clams. Upon entering a bright, airy room facing the river, Mr. Ibara was already busy sorting. Swiftly picking up a handful of clams from the pile, he scattered them onto a stone tablet, as if throwing dice. He then proceeded to pick a few out, discarding them and throwing the rest into a net. "Sorting clams... by throwing them on a stone?" I wondered. Without even pausing his work, Mr. Ibara turned to me and explained. "We listen to the sound the clams make when they hit the stone, to determine if there are any empty shells to be discarded. By the way, us locals say that the clams make a 'gapo' sound if they are empty."

I was impressed that a single day's catch may contain up to 30,000 clams—and yet Mr. Ibara carefully sorts each one by hand.

Lake Shinji is an inseparable part of the lives of the people of Shimane Prefecture. For this reason, the fishermen of the Lake Shinji Fishing Association strictly follow rules to protect this precious resource, while bringing the lake's delicious gifts to our tables.

Whether in a miso soup or as a topping for pasta, I highly recommend trying these healthy and succulent Lake Shinji basket clams.



感心した。

宍道湖は島根県民の生活にとっては切っても切れないものだ。そのため、宍道湖漁協の漁師はきちんとルールを守り、貴重な資源を管理しながら湖の美味しい贈り物を食卓に届ける。

みそ汁でもパスタのトッピングとしても、ぜひ宍道湖の健康的で美味しいシジミを食べてみてください。

キロのジョレンを前後に動かし、これを何回も繰り返してシジミを採るという、かなり人力が必要な作業であることが分かった。邪魔しないように気を付けながら、漁師何人かのところを回ってみた。大切な作業時間なのに、みんなが親切に話をしてくれた。

漁師が採ったシジミは、売る前に大きさや品質で選別しないといけない。私は運よく、桑原さんの協力でこの選別の作業も見学できた。

宍道湖の北側にある佐陀川の河口で、12年以上漁業を努める井原志樹さんを訪問した。川に面した、風が通る明るい部屋に入ったら、井原さんが選別に取り組んでいた。そばにある山積みになっていたシジミを何個か手に取り、目の前にある石板にサイコロを投げるようにシジミを散らした。そして、いくつかを捨て、残りを網に入れた。「石板にしじみを散らして、これが選別...?」と気になった。井原さんは手っ取り早くシジミを触りながら、丁寧に説明した。「シジミを石板に当てて、その音で身が入っているかどうか分かるので、身のない殻をどんどん捨てていく。ちなみに私たちは、その音をガボという。」

漁獲量の多い日には約3万個も選別するのに、一個一個手で仕分けることに



An Experience of Nature—and an Aquarium with “Gogi”

Lee Jung-Hyun

Matsue City, the capital of Shimane Prefecture, is also known as the “City of Water”—it sits between Lake Shinji to the west, Nakaumi to the east, and the Sea of Japan to the north. In addition, Lake Shinji and Nakaumi are registered wetlands under the Ramsar Convention—not only are they visited by many waterfowl, but they are also recognized as “important nurseries for endemic and other species of fish.” In particular, both lakes form the largest brackish water area in Japan (where sea water mixes with fresh water), which makes them home to a variety of aquatic wildlife.

Upon hearing that there is an aquarium where you can see these aquatic creatures, we decided to visit. Called the “Gobius” Lake Shinji Nature Museum, it is located in Izumo City on the western shore of Lake Shinji. We learned that the aquarium’s nickname “Gobius” comes from the Latin word “gobio,” referring to the gobies and other small fish found in Lake Shinji and Nakaumi. Here, you can meet 10,000 aquatic animals from the 200 species that inhabit Shimane. At the entrance, visitors are welcomed by a spectacle

of migratory fish called ayu (sweetfish), and then the waterside journey of Shimane begins. From inside the hallway, you can see little outdoor ponds. Transparent sections of floor also let you peer below at Japanese tortoises and freshwater fish swimming about.

Proceeding through the hallway, you can meet aquatic creatures from brackish waters. A special feature of this area is that it contains the



「ゴギ」の居る水族館と自然

島根の県庁所在地である松江市は西に宍道湖、東に中海があり、北の方には日本海もあり、海と湖に囲まれた水の都とも呼ばれる。また、宍道湖と中海はラムサール条約の登録湿地にも認定され、多くの水鳥が利用するだけでなく、「固有魚種及び魚類の生育場として重要な湿地」として認められている。特に、両水域は海水と淡水が混ざる日本最大級の汽水域なのでさまざまな水中生物がすんでいる。

その水中生物を観察することができる水族館があることを聞いて訪れることにした。「島根県立宍道湖自然館ゴビウス」という場所で、宍道湖の西側にある出雲市園町の宍道湖沿いに位置している。水族館の愛称である「ゴビウス」は宍道湖・中海に住む「ハゼ」などの小さな魚をあらわす「Gobio」というラテン語から由来したようだ。ここでは島根に生息する200種1万匹の水中生物に会うことができる。入口では回遊性魚類である「アユ」が訪問客を歓迎し、島根の水辺の旅がはじまる。水族館に入る廊下から屋外にある池を見ることができるようになっている。床に設置された透明な窓から在来種のカメや淡水にすむ魚たちが泳いでいるのも観察できる。

イ・ジョンヒョン

廊下を過ぎると汽水の生き物たちに出会う。こちらの特別なところは、世界で唯一といわれる「1年中シラウオが観察できる水槽」があることだ。シラウオは繊細で飼育がとても難しいそうだ。程よく照明を当てられた水槽で色鮮やかにキラキラ泳いでいるシラウオは生き物ではない、芸術作品のようだった。

次の旅、川の生き物に会いに行く前には、宍道湖と中海をイメージして作ったジオラマ水槽がある。塩分が平均海水の約1/10である宍道湖と平均海水の約1/2である中海は海水の塩分の濃度が異なるため、生息する生き物が違う。それを一目で比較することができるので面白い。

川のなかまたち展示コーナーには、川の上流から中～下流に生きている魚が比較できるように河川ジオラマ水槽がある。その中に一番印象的だった魚がいた!!名前は「ゴギ」という魚。韓国語で魚を「ムルゴギ」、「ゴギ」とも呼ぶ。「『ゴギ(魚)』取りに行こう!」と言うと「釣りに行こう」という意味がある。正確には分からないが、ゴギの名前はたたら製鉄が盛んだった古代、韓国の半島からやってきた技術者がそのように呼んだ名残かもという話が伝わっているそうで親近感を感じた。他にも100年ぐらい生きるといわれている清水でしか生きた



only tank in the world where you can observe shirauo (Japanese icefish) all year round. We learned that icefish are very delicate and difficult to raise. With just the right amount of light shining into the tank, the icefish shimmered with dazzling colors as they swam about—appearing not as living creatures, but as works of art.

Next on our journey, before visiting some river wildlife, we came across a large divided tank simulating the water environments of both Lake Shinji and Nakaumi. The concentration of salt differs between the two lakes; Lake Shinji contains one tenth of the salt found in the sea, and Nakaumi contains one half—therefore, different creatures inhabit each lake. It was interesting to see this stark difference in one place.

In the “River Creatures Corner,” there was a large tank where visitors can compare the various fish living upstream, midstream, and downstream of the river. It was here that I saw the most memorable fish! Its name is “gogi” (char). In fact, fish are called “mulgogi” or “gogi” in Korean; saying “let’s go catch gogi” actually means “let’s go fishing.” Although the



れないという国の特別天然記念物の「オオサンショウウオ」もあり、写真だけで見たり、聞いたことだけの生き物をその大きさを直接確認できて好奇心が満たされた。

川のなかまたち展示コーナーから出ると、外来種の生き物の水槽、毎週土日・祝日に飼育員による生き物についての話を聞ける「学習カウンター」、そして生き物に直接触りながら観察ができる「タッチプール」などがある。「タッチプール」には以前、エイが居たそう。生き物のストレス度を気にしながら入れ替えるそうで、今回はザリガニが旅人を待っていた。

ラストは両面の壁まるごとの大型水槽があり、そこを抜け出すと旅が終わる。大型水槽はまるで湖の中にいるような感覚になり魅了され、みんなしばらくその場を離れられなかった。

水族館ゴビウスを訪ねる前には宍道湖の七珍、中海の七珍(イサザアミ、サッパ、ヒイラギ、タイワンガザミ、マハゼ、コナガニシ、クロソイ)を思い浮かべながら「美味しい魚がいっぱいいるだろう。」と単純に思っていた。しかし、多様な生物と生態系を調べながら直接見ると、単なる七珍ではなく、生物として感じるよ

origin is not certain, I have heard that the name “gogi” may come from the name given by early Korean engineers who traveled from the Korean peninsula to Japan in ancient times, when tatara iron manufacturing was flourishing. I felt close to home by hearing this familiar name in Shimane as well. In addition, there were ōsanshōuo (Japanese giant salamanders) on display—these creatures are protected as “Special National Monuments,” only live in fresh water, and are said to live for around 100 years. My curiosity was satisfied as I saw firsthand the size of a creature that I had only seen in pictures.

Upon leaving the River Creatures Corner, there are water tanks containing non-native species, the “Learning Counter” where visitors can listen to talks by the staff (every weekend and public holiday), and the “Touch Pool” where you can directly touch some of the creatures. We learned that in the past, the Touch Pool even had batoids (commonly known as rays). The staff regularly switch out the animals, taking care to monitor their stress levels. While we were there, a crayfish was waiting to greet visitors.

Last on our journey, there was a large tank that wrapped right around the hallway. It felt as if we were actually inside a lake. We stayed for a while, mesmerized at the sight around us.

Before visiting Gobius, I remembered the locally famous “Seven Delicacies of Lake Shinji” and the “Seven Delicacies of Nakaumi” (Japanese opossum shrimp, Japanese sardinella, spotnape ponyfish, flower crab, yellowfin goby, Fusinus ferrugineus [sea snail], and Korean rockfish), and simply thought that “there must be plenty of delicious fish on display.” However, upon learning about the variety of organisms and ecosystems, and by seeing them up close, I began to feel that they were not only “Seven Delicacies,” but that they were living creatures. I also saw the reality that many species are in danger of disappearing. In order to preserve these creatures and ecosystems for future generations, we must take care of our natural environment. So I wonder—what can we do now, no matter how small, to protect our natural world?



うになった。また、絶滅危惧種が多いという事実も自分の目で確認することもできた。後代の人々になるべく私が見てきた自然の生物や生態系を残していくために自然環境をもっと大切にしなければならないと思うようになった。小さなことでも自然のために今私にできることにはどんなことがあるだろう。





Strawberry Picking in Yasugi

Khakimova Liliya

It has been two and a half years since I started living in Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture. I have visited all the cities in the prefecture and tried various experiences. But I had rarely been to Yasugi City, even though it is the closest city to Matsue. I had been to the Adachi Museum of Art, continuously ranked the number one Japanese garden in Japan since 2003, and Kiyomizu Temple, the only three-storied pagoda in the San'in region—but I didn't know much about other places of interest in Yasugi. In fact, I passed through Yasugi each time I went to Yonago City, and I had the impression that Yasugi farms must grow a great variety of vegetables.

One day, I heard that there is a strawberry picking farm in Yasugi, so I was very intrigued. Originally, there were not many farms offering strawberry picking in Yasugi, but since demand exceeded supply, the number of farms offering strawberry picking has increased. Currently, there are five such farms, and most of them are open from around March. Detailed information about them can be found in the "Yasugi Strawberry Picking Guide."

We went to "Watanabe Tourist Farm," which is the only one that opens from January, and learned a lot in an interview with the owner, Mr. Watanabe. Watanabe Tourist Farm has operated its strawberry picking business for 18 years, and they have also produced pears, mandarin



安来のイチゴ狩り

島根県松江市に住み始めて2年半です。今まで県内の色んな街へ行かせてもらい、色んな体験をしました。その中で、松江に一番近い安来市に行った回数はとても少なかったです。2003年から日本庭園ランキングで一位に選ばれ続けている足立美術館や山陰唯一の三重塔の清水寺に行きましたが、他の安来の魅力についてはあまり知らなかったです。米子などへ行く時に安来を通ったことがあって、その時に周りの様子から「いろんな野菜を作っているんだろうな」という印象しかありませんでした。

ある日、安来市でいちご狩りができると聞いたので、とても興味が湧きました。

元々安来にいちご狩りを提供してくれる農園が多くなかったのですが、その供給に対して需要が大きかったので、いちご狩り体験を提供する農園が増えました。現在はそんな農園が5つもあり、だいたい3月から営業が開始されます。それらの情報は「やすぎの苺狩りガイド」にとても詳しく記載されています。

私たちは1月から唯一営業している「渡辺観光農園」へ向かい、園主の渡辺さんに色々面白くて詳しい話をしてもらいました。渡辺観光農園は18年間い

ハキモヴァ・リリヤ

ちご狩り体験農園を運営し、他にも昔から梨、みかんや葡萄なども作っています。それらの実が出来る時期がそれぞれ異なるので、ほぼ丸一年色んな果物を味わうことができます。1月から6月まではいちご、8月から10月までは葡萄、11月と12月はみかん狩りを渡辺観光農園で体験できます。

このいちごは紅ほっぺという品種で、7～28℃の温室で育てられています。冬の方が実が出来る期間が40日間と長引くため、その分甘くなるそうです。

しかし、渡辺観光農園も新型コロナウイルスの影響を受け、2020年の春のいちご狩り予約が95%キャンセルされました。その状況は8月の葡萄狩りの時期に少しずつ緩み始めたそうです。更に旅行など行けない今のご時世に来るお客さんが多くなりました。

私の子供の頃は家の前の土地で両親がイチゴ畑を作り、6月になると毎日好きなだけいちごを食べていました。お母さんが生いちごを潰し、砂糖と混ぜ、夏にしか食べられない美味しいデザートを、冬にもいちごを楽しめるためにジャムをよく作っていました。



oranges, and grapes for a long time. Since different fruits ripen at different times, you can taste a variety of fruits for almost a whole year. At Watanabe Tourist Farm you can enjoy strawberry picking from January to June, grape picking from August to October, and mandarin orange picking in November and December.

The strawberry variety at this farm is called “Benihoppe” (“red cheeks”), which is grown in a greenhouse at a temperature of 7°C - 28°C. In winter, the fruit-bearing period is longer. The fruit ripens in 40 days, but this actually makes the strawberries sweeter.

However, Watanabe Tourist Farm was also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic—95% of the reservations for strawberry picking in the spring of 2020 were cancelled. This situation seems to have begun improving little by little during the grape picking season last August. Furthermore, since people cannot easily travel afar, the number of recent customers has even increased.

When I was a child, my parents made a strawberry patch on the land in front of our house, so I could eat as many strawberries as I wanted



私の実家の畑でさえ、いちごを使った美味しいものを作れるので、こんなにいちごに力を入れている安来なら、きっといちごの加工品も沢山あると考えられました。道の駅「あらエッサ」では毎年12月15日から5月31日まで「やすぎ 苺一緑フェア」が開催され、その期間の毎月15日をいちごデーとしています。

毎年このフェアのために道の駅「あらエッサ」では、様々ないちごの加工品が出され、新しい商品も取り入れられています。普段見かけない少し高価な品種のいちごが買えることもあります。

ちなみに、今年の新商品のいちごバターを私も買ってみてとても美味しく頂きました。



every day from June. My mother used to crush raw strawberries, mix them with sugar, and make a delicious dessert that can only be eaten in the summer. She also made jam to enjoy the berries in the winter, too.

Since we made delicious desserts using only the strawberries from our patch, I was sure there must be many strawberry products in Yasugi, since they put so much effort into growing them. At the roadside station “Ara Essa,” the “Yasugi Ichigo Ichien Fair” is held from December 15th to May 31st, and the 15th of every month is Strawberry Day.

“Ichigo Ichien” means “Matchmaking Strawberry,” which is a play on words; it sounds like the Japanese four-character idiom “one time, one meeting” which describes a cultural concept of treasuring the unrepeatable nature of a moment.

Every year during the fair, various strawberry products are displayed at the roadside station “Ara Essa,” and sometimes new products are also introduced. They even sell a limited amount of expensive varieties of strawberries that are difficult to find elsewhere.

By the way, I bought this year's new product—strawberry butter—and it was very good!



Swans of Shimane

Felipe Nascimento

Shinji-ko Green Park is located on the western shore of Lake Shinji (Shinji-ko), a 10-minute walk from Koyukan-Shineki Station on the Ichibata Electric Railway line. Simply put, it is a fun place to learn about the nature of Lake Shinji and the animals that live there. From the entrance to the bird observatory building, you can walk along the path called "Kinkuro Road" and enjoy the surrounding environment. On that path towards the bird observatory, you will find the "Nature Forest" and the "Memorial Forest" on the right. If you want to take your time, I suggest taking a stroll along the small path that runs through them. On the left side of the path leading to towards the bird observatory is the bird sanctuary, which is surrounded by walls allowing the birds to relax without having to worry about humans. But, in the wall there are four observation windows at different heights to match the heights of anyone from children to adults, making it perfect for observing as a family. Inside, there is a pond and a waterhole so you can enjoy watching birds drinking water and washing themselves.

Upon entering the bird observatory, you will realize it is divided into two floors. The first floor is the "Learning Floor" and the second floor is the "Experience Floor". The permanent exhibition on the learning floor features a wall covered with the pictures and names of the typical birds of Lake Shinji, and includes a monitor located in the middle of the floor that is always playing videos of these birds in flocks. Visitors can also learn about the Ramsar Convention, which lakes Shinji-ko and the Nakaumi are registered under. The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty that seeks to protect wetlands important for waterfowl and other plants and animals. And, wetlands that meet certain criteria are registered as Wetlands of International Importance.



The experience floor is the highlight of the facility. The wide glass windows offer a panoramic view of Lake Shinji, and the spotting scopes provide a clear view of the wild birds. Life-size silhouettes of birds are painted on the walls to give you a sense of their size. Furthermore, you can enjoy the birds not only visually, but also tactilely. There is a wooden bird that simulates the body temperature of a real bird, and when you hold it in your hands you will realize how much warmer they are than humans. There is also a life-sized tundra swan stuffed to simulate the weight of a real one, and you can lift it up to feel its weight. Despite it being called a "little swan" in Japanese, the tundra swan is actually a large bird; its wingspan is over two meters and weighs around five kilograms. Sometimes looking at the numbers is not enough, so it's fun to check them out in person because sometimes they can surprise you. Currently that exhibit is on hiatus to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, but when it is all over and can be displayed again, it would be nice to visit and experience it again as a way of celebration.

Most of the birds that come to Lake Shinji during the winter are waterfowl, with the most common being from the swan family. The tundra swan is the most commonly observed of these birds. Their white bodies and elongated necks make them look very appealing to the human eye, and watching them flap their wings through a spotting scope or with the naked eye is very exciting. Swans are migratory birds, so they lay their eggs in northern regions such as Siberia in the summer, and in the fall, fly about 5,000 km to Japan. The tundra swans fly to lakes Shinji-ko and Nakaumi in early to mid-October and stay until early-March, when they fly back. During their time here, they nest in areas like where the Hii River flows into Lake Shinji, and feed in the rice paddies around the western shore of the lake. Lake Shinji Nature Center Gobius, which is also featured in this issue of the magazine, is next door, so why not take a trip to both? In addition to the Lake Shinji area, the tundra swans also spend their winter in the Nakaumi area, and can be seen in the rice paddies of Yasugi City. When strawberries are in season, why not pair strawberry picking with swan watching in Yasugi City?



島根のハクチョウ

フェリペ・ナシメント

宍道湖グリーンパークは宍道湖西岸にあり、一畑電車の湖遊館新駅駅から徒歩10分で着きます。簡単に言うと宍道湖の自然とそこに生息している生き物について楽しく学べる施設です。敷地の入り口から野鳥観察舎まで「キンクロ通り」を歩きながら周りの環境を楽しむことができます。野鳥観察舎に向かって右側には「自然の森」と「記念の森」があり、もっとゆっくりしたい人はその中を通る小さい園路を散策するのがおすすめです。左側にはバードサンクチュアリがあって、鳥たちが人間を気にせずくつろげるように塀で囲まれています、中の様子を覗ける観察窓が4つあり、子どもから大人までの身長に合わせ、それぞれ高さが違うので家族で観察するのにぴったりです。中には池や水場があるので、水を飲んだり体を洗ったりしている鳥たちの様子も楽しめます。

野鳥観察舎に入ると、1階は「学びのフロア」、2階は「体験のフロア」になっています。学びのフロアの常設展示では壁に、宍道湖の代表的な鳥の写真と名前が掲示してあり、真ん中に置かれたモニターにはそれらの鳥の群れの動画が常に流れています。宍道湖と中海が登録されているラムサール条約についても学べます。ラムサール条約は、水鳥などの動植物にとって重要な湿地を守るための国際的な条約で、一定の基準を満たした湿地が国際的に重要な湿地として登録されます。

体験のフロアは施設の見どころになっています。幅広いガラス窓は宍道湖を一望でき、設置してある望遠鏡で野鳥の姿がハッキリ見えます。壁には鳥の等身大のシルエットが描かれているのでその大きさが実感できます。しかも、視覚だけでなく、触覚で楽しむこともできます。手で触れたら本物の鳥の体温が感じ

られる木製の鳥があり、人間より温かいことが実感できます。また、実物大で本物と同じ重さのコハクチョウのぬいぐるみがあって、持ち上げるとその体重を確認することができます。コハクチョウは漢字表記の「小白鳥」に「小」がついているにもかかわらず、実は大きい鳥で、翼を広げると2メートル以上の個体もいて、体重も5kg前後あります。数字を見てもピンと来ないので、実際に確認すると驚けるので楽しいです。現在は新型コロナウイルス感染拡大防止のため、展示を休止していますが、収束してまた展示できるようになったら、お祝いの意味も含めてまた体験しに行くのも良いでしょう。

冬の宍道湖に来てくれる野鳥の多くが水鳥ですが、それらを代表するのがハクチョウの仲間です。その中で最も多く観察できるのはコハクチョウです。白い体で細長い首が人間の目にはとても優雅な姿に見えて、望遠鏡でも肉眼でもその羽ばたく様子を観察できると心が躍ります。ハクチョウは渡り鳥なので、夏にはシベリアなど、北の地域で卵を産み、秋になると日本までおよそ5000kmの距離を飛んで来ます。宍道湖・中海には10月上旬から中旬頃に飛来し、3月上旬頃までずっとまた飛び立ちます。その間は宍道湖周辺だと斐伊川河口などをめぐらし、西湖岸周辺の田んぼなどでえさを食べながらすごすので、宍道湖グリーンパークの野鳥観察舎から望遠鏡で観察できることもあります。本号でも取材されている宍道湖自然館ゴビウスが隣にあるので、両方セットでおでかけするのはいかがでしょうか。コハクチョウは宍道湖周辺の他に中海周辺でも冬をすごすので、安来市の田んぼでも見るすることができます。苺の旬の季節になったら安来市で苺狩りとハクチョウ観察をペアにしてみるのも楽しいでしょう。

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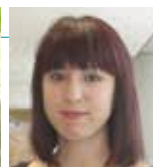
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