

Tour 2: Watarase Yusuichi: Ramsar Site – a bus trip to a Japanese local specialty with freshwater fish cuisine, and the largest retarding basin in Japan.

Duration: 9:30–18:00 Wed. 22nd Aug. (8.30 h)

Driving time: 3.00 h

Tour Size (Numbers): 20–45

Tour Description

Watarase Yusuichi is a retarding basin located roughly in the center of the Kanto Plains. The diverse wetland environment of Watarase Yusuichi supports habitats for many species. For example, more than 700 plant species including over 50 recognized as red list species have been recorded, and nearly half kinds of birds recorded in Japan can be observed in the area. “Watarase area ecological network council” was established on 2015 to develop a nature-rich water and green ecological network and to promote economic development and economic revitalization in the surrounding area of Watarase Yusuichi. In this tour, we’ll visit Watarase Yusuichi as the core area of ecosystems and biodiversity and a creature-friendly ecological paddy field having an important role for biodiversity. At lunchtime, you can enjoy local specialty freshwater fish cuisine at a Japanese-style restaurant established in 1897.

About Watarase Yusuichi

Watarase Yusuichi is a facility for storing water for daily use and for temporarily retaining river overflow to prevent flooding in the river basin. Its area is about 3,300 ha, and its perimeter is almost 30 km.

Approximately 100 years ago, contaminated water from the Ashio Copper Mine frequently spilled out during floods and damaged a large area in the lower reaches of the rivers. As this posed a serious societal problem, the government decided to construct a retarding basin to control flooding and mining pollution. In 1947, flooding caused by Typhoon Kathleen catastrophically damaged many places in the Kanto Plains. To control such disasters, river improvements, including constructing upstream dams and river channels, were undertaken in many rivers such as the Tone River and the Watarase River. Watarase Yusuichi plays an important role in flood control along with a number of dams upstream of the Tone River, a primary river that runs through the Kanto Plains. A Committee for Wetland Conservation and Restoration of Watarase Yusuichi was established in 2002 to improve flood control as well as promote wetland conservation and

restoration of this basin. In 2010, a “Basic Plan for Wetland Conservation and Restoration of Watarase Yusuichi” was formulated. Wetland conservation and restoration in this area will be promoted based on this plan, while making provision for conserving the existing environment and improving flood control.

Time	Program
9:30	Meet at Ikebukuro Station in Tokyo.
9:30–11:00	Departure and drive to Itakura
11:00–11:30	Arrival Itakura. Visit Raiden Shrine (Deity of Thunder)
11:40–12:30	Lunch (Japanese local specialty, fish and vegetables)
12:40–14:40	Watarase Yusuichi (retarding basin)
14:50–15:10	Ecological paddy field
15:10–18:00	Departure and drive to Ikebukuro Station. (Including short stop for toilet and shopping)