

出水市ツル観察センター

Izumi City Crane Museum

I. Address: 10 Bunka-cho, Izumi, Kagoshima 899-0208 Japan

II. Available Internship Period: From 1 December 2026 to 28 February 2027.

To align with the crane counting season and related photography exhibitions, the recommended internship period is: 1 December 2026 to 14 December 2026

III. Official Website: <https://www.izumi-navi.jp/spots/post-953/>

IV. Site Resources and Background

Located in the northwestern part of Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan, Izumi City is internationally renowned as one of the world's most important wintering grounds for migratory cranes. The site's distinctive resources and background include:

1. Exceptional Biodiversity

Between October and March each year, more than 10,000 cranes migrate to Izumi. Of the world's fifteen crane species, seven species can be observed in the area. Approximately 80% of the global population of Hooded Cranes and 40% of the global population of White-naped Cranes winter here. The area is also an important birdwatching destination, with nearly 300 of Japan's approximately 600 recorded bird species observed in the region, including the Black-faced Spoonbill.

2. A Unique Human–Crane Coexistence Landscape

The wintering grounds are situated within reclaimed coastal agricultural lands developed since the seventeenth century, including the Arasaki area. One of the most distinctive characteristics of the site is the close coexistence between large migratory waterbirds and local communities, where cranes winter in close proximity to residential areas and farmlands. Local residents have maintained long-standing conservation traditions, including adjusting railway alignments to avoid critical habitats and leaving secondary rice ears in paddy fields as a food source for cranes.

3. Internationally Recognized Conservation Status

The site was designated a National Special Natural Monument in 1952. In 2021, the Izumi Crane Wintering Grounds were officially designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. In 2022, Izumi City became one of Japan's first municipalities to receive Ramsar Wetland City Accreditation.

4. Integration of Conservation and Local Industries

The area is also an important center for agricultural production and seaweed cultivation. Under the branding concept of “Living in Harmony with Cranes and

Connecting to the Future,” Izumi City has successfully transformed its conservation achievements into value-added agricultural products and ecotourism initiatives.

V. Environmental Education Programs and Activities

Environmental education in Izumi City is deeply rooted in local crane conservation traditions and has evolved into a comprehensive and systematic educational framework.

1. Student Participation and Professional Certification

(1) Children's Crane Census

Local junior high school student clubs have conducted annual crane population surveys for more than sixty years, carrying out five surveys each year. The accumulated data have become an invaluable resource for international crane conservation efforts.

(2) Crane Guide Certification Program

Elementary and junior high school students participate annually in the “Crane Certification Examination.” Successful candidates are awarded the title of “Crane Guide Specialist” and serve as volunteer interpreters during weekends and school holidays.

2. Ecotourism and Interpretive Programs

(1) Guided Ecotourism Programs

Through the Izumi Ramsar Navigation platform, visitors can participate in early-morning, half-day, and full-day birdwatching tours. These fee-based programs promote sustainable ecotourism while enhancing environmental awareness.

(2) Field-Based Learning and Biosecurity Education

During designated access periods, visitors entering the wintering grounds receive biosecurity guidance and may borrow cameras, binoculars, and other equipment for environmental observation and learning activities.

3. Cultural Creativity and Public Engagement

(1) Ramsar Wetland Photography Competition

The Izumi Ramsar Wetland Photography Competition encourages participants to reflect on the relationship between people, nature, agricultural landscapes, and local communities through photography.

(2) Crane City Fairy Tale Award

Creative works centered on environmental themes such as human–crane coexistence are collected annually, with award-winning entries published as

illustrated storybooks to promote environmental values among future generations.

4. International Exchange and Experiential Learning

The city actively promotes birdwatching exchanges with international organizations, including those from Taiwan. By integrating farm-stay experiences with environmental education, Izumi strengthens its identity as a “City Dedicated to Nature Conservation.”

VI. Achievements in Environmental Education

1. International Recognition and Leadership

The Izumi Crane Wintering Grounds were designated as a Ramsar Site in 2021 and received Ramsar Wetland City Accreditation in 2022. The site has also been protected as a National Special Natural Monument since 1952.

2. Long-Term Youth Education and Capacity Building

For more than sixty years, local students have participated in crane population monitoring, generating data that contribute significantly to international conservation research. The city’s highly regarded Crane Guide Certification Program further encourages students to become active environmental interpreters.

3. Cultural Innovation and Public Awareness

Through initiatives such as the Crane City Fairy Tale Award and the Ramsar Wetland Photography Competition, environmental conservation concepts are communicated creatively to residents and visitors alike.

4. International Cooperation and Exchange

Izumi City has established formal cooperation with the Wild Bird Society of Taiwan, marking the organization’s first agreement with a foreign governmental authority. The city has also organized photography exhibitions throughout Taiwan to promote conservation and ecotourism exchanges.

5. Public Participation and Sustainable Branding

The city successfully implemented a controlled access management system for the wintering grounds, with approximately 95% of visitors voluntarily contributing to environmental conservation funds. In addition, the Ramsar Brand trademark has been developed for use on local agricultural and industrial products, strengthening community support for conservation initiatives.

VII. Internship Responsibilities

1. Ecological Monitoring and Data Collection

Participate in the long-running Children's Crane Census and assist with data

collection that contributes to international crane conservation efforts.

2. Environmental Interpretation and Education

Learn from certified Crane Guides and assist with visitor interpretation services, helping communicate conservation and ecological knowledge to the public.

3. International Exchange and Partnership Activities

Support the reception of international delegations, assist in organizing international photography exhibitions, and contribute to collaborative initiatives with organizations such as the Wild Bird Society of Taiwan.

4. Ecotourism Operations Support

Assist with birdwatching tours offered through the Izumi Ramsar Navigation program, support visitor services at the observation center, manage equipment lending services, and promote environmental conservation contribution programs.

5. Brand Promotion and Cultural Heritage Initiatives

Support the promotion of the Ramsar Brand for local agricultural and fisheries products and assist with events such as the Izumi Ramsar Wetland Photography Competition and the Crane City Fairy Tale Award. Through these activities, interns will gain firsthand experience in how Izumi City achieves sustainable coexistence among nature, local communities, and visitors through its innovative conservation management approaches.

VIII. Accommodation

1. Yamato Ryokan (One Night with Two Meals Included)

- (1) Address: 186-3 Okubo, Takaono-cho, Izumi City, Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan
- (2) Telephone: +81-996-82-0202
- (3) Nearest Railway Station: Takaono Station, Hisatsu Orange Railway
- (4) Website: <https://r.goope.jp/yamatoryokan/>



IX. Photos of Internship Sites

