

Lake Biwa Guidebook



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Foreword



With a history dating from time immemorial spanning 4 million years, Lake Biwa is one of the oldest lakes in the world and is home to an abundance of thriving life forms, including over 60 endemic species/subspecies. Moreover, Lake Biwa is a valuable water resource that not only serves Shiga Prefecture, but also supports the lives and industries of 14.5 million people in the Kansai (Kinki) region (the region including Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe megalopolis). Blessed with the bounteous gifts of Lake Biwa, people here have lived in harmony with nature over the years and created a unique lifestyle, culture and scenery.

Shiga Prefecture has published this “Lake Biwa Guidebook” with the aim of introducing Lake Biwa far and wide in an easy-to-understand format, giving people a chance to get to know about the lake, and sharing our experiences in watershed management of lakes and reservoirs with the world.

Although representing valuable fresh-water resources and a veritable ecological treasure house, many of the world’s lakes and reservoirs are suffering advancing environmental deterioration. We hope that this guidebook will serve to contribute to the preservation of other lakes and reservoirs facing the threat of similar problems both in Japan and overseas.

Lake Biwa is a truly beautiful, bountiful lake and every effort has been made to convey this in the guidebook. In the spirit of the proverb “a picture is worth a thousand words,” we hope that you will visit Lake Biwa and experience for yourself the living, breathing environment of the lake and its environs.

March 2014

Yukiko Kada, the Governor of Shiga Prefecture