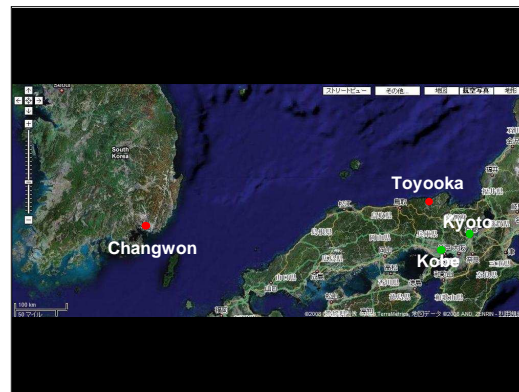
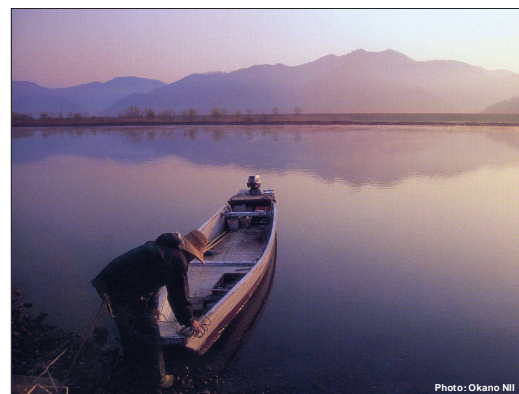


Thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell you a story regarding the extinction and restoration of Oriental White Storks in Japan.



The Maruyama River runs through the middle of the city.

The slope of the river is very gentle, with an inclination of only one-ten thousandth.



The surface of the river is as beautiful and calm as a mirror when there is no wind.



However, its weak current also means that the river has poor drainage.

5



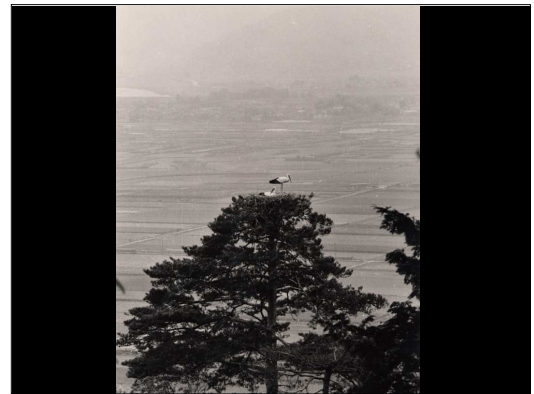
In 2004, Typhoon No. 23 hit Toyooka, and it swelled the river causing extensive flooding. The basin stretching along the Maruyama River is low and swampy, and Toyooka has suffered many floods as a result. Although these geographic features are inconvenient for humans, some other living things love wetlands.

6



A typical example is the oriental white stork. The stork is a carnivorous big bird with a 2 meter wingspan. Wetlands and rice paddies are its favorite feeding grounds.

7



Oriental white storks used to be common throughout Japan. However, the number declined due to hunting during the 19th century, followed by the felling of pine forests during World War II which deprived storks of their homes.

8



In the post-war era the number of storks further diminished due to environmental destruction, including the use of pesticides, and the reduction of wetlands as a result of the modification of rivers and lands.

The last wild oriental white stork died in Toyooka in 1971.

Oriental white storks thus became extinct in Japan.

Prior to their extinction, the Hyogo Prefectural Government had undertaken the captive breeding of storks in 1965. But no eggs hatched for many years.

It was not until the spring of the 25th year of our desperate efforts that the first chick was hatched.

9



The first chick was hatched in 1989

Since this first hatching in 1989, the number of storks has been increasing steadily.

Now there are 129storks in Toyooka and 29 storks are flying free in the skies.

It took us enormous energy, cost and time to return them to the wild, and the same will continue in the future.

Why should we pursue the reintroduction of storks?

10

Aims of returning storks into the wild

1) Promise to storks

2) Contribution to the preservation of wildlife

3) Creation of a rich environment in which even storks can live

We have three reasons.

First: when we put them into cages 43 years ago, we promised them to let them fly again.

We have to keep our promise to them.

Second: the population of the Oriental White Stork is estimated to be about 3000. We want to make a contribution to preservation of endangered species.

Third: we want to create a rich environment in which even carnivorous big birds such as storks can live.

It also must be good for human itself.

We are pushing forward with various measures to realize these goals.

11



Hyogo Prefectural Homeland for the Oriental White Stork

In 1999 the Hyogo Prefecture Government established the Homeland for the Oriental White Stork, a facility for reintroducing storks.

12



In 2000 the Toyooka Municipal Government established the Ecomuseum Center for the Oriental White Stork.



You can see the storks near by.



Promoting duck farming using hybrid ducks instead of pesticides.



Developing rice paddy biotopes using fallow fields.



Promoting rice paddies containing water for wildlife, even during the winter season.

17



Establishing fish ladders between rice paddies and waterways.

18



Expanding wetland area around rivers.

19



Mayor's Official Car. A stork.



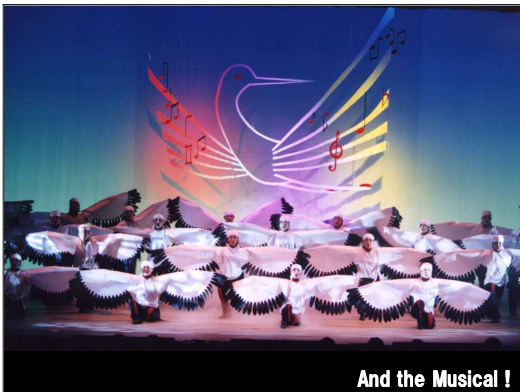
The Sightseeing Bus

Storks.



The Plane

Storks.



And the Musical !

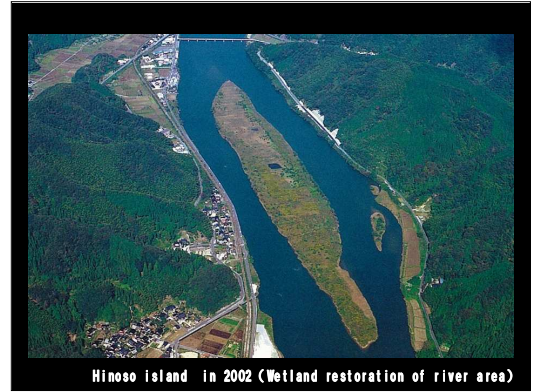
A Stork Musical!



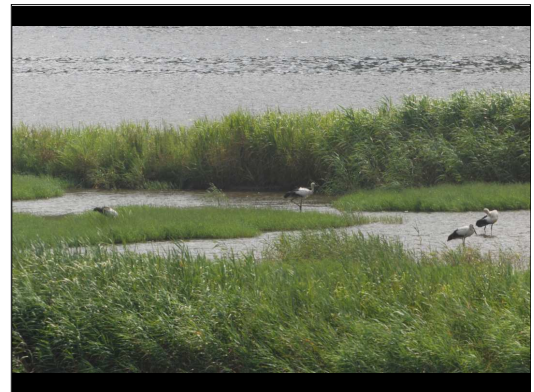
In September, 2005, people gathered around the Homeland for the Oriental White Stork.



And the historic moment had come.
After an absence of 34 years, the wild Oriental
White Storks came back to the sky of Japan.



The National Government excavated half of
Hinoso island for flood prevention and
restoration of wetlands.



There, Oriental White Storks started to use it
as their foraging site.



There were damp rice paddies unsuitable for cultivation waiting for modification of lands near the Maruyama River.



Photo: Yuichi yuri

The Endangered water plants flourished in the fallow paddy fields, and Oriental White Storks visited the place every day.



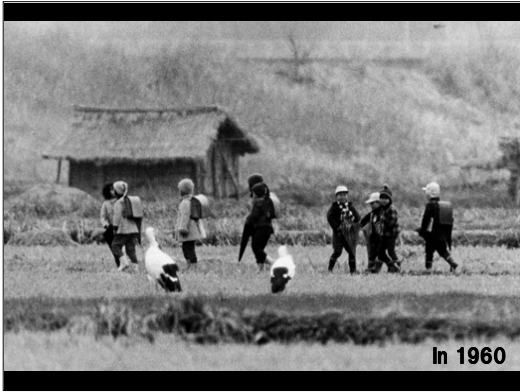
Photo: Hideo Arakawa

We recognized that these rice paddies were home to not only beautiful scenery but also to a vital natural feeding place.



Wetland park under construction

The Toyooka Municipal Government has bought part of these rice paddies and has started construction work on a wetland park.



This is a photograph taken in Toyooka in 1960.



A photograph taken in 2006. The scene with storks returned once again.



Last year a chick was born in the wild for the first time in 43 years in Japan,

and left the nest.

**We are now
ready to move on
to the next step...**

**Sustainable cooperation
between environment
and economy.**

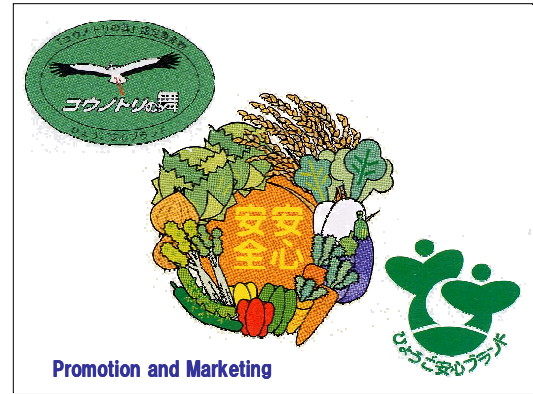
And we are now ready to move on to the next step, enhancing connections between economy and environment.

We strive to create a sustainable city in which activities for conservation of environment accelerate local economic growth and vice versa.

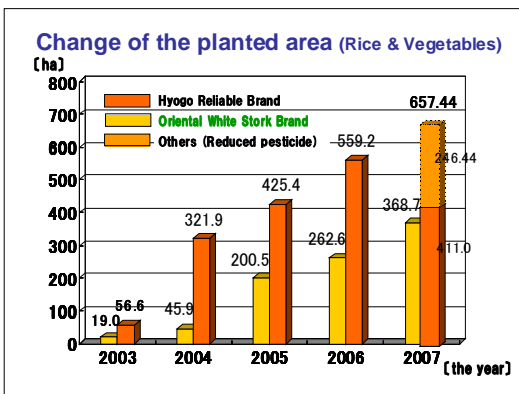
Let me show you some examples.



There is a manufacturer of solar batteries in Toyooka.
 The more people buy solar batteries, the more people can diminish carbon dioxide emissions, and the company prospers.



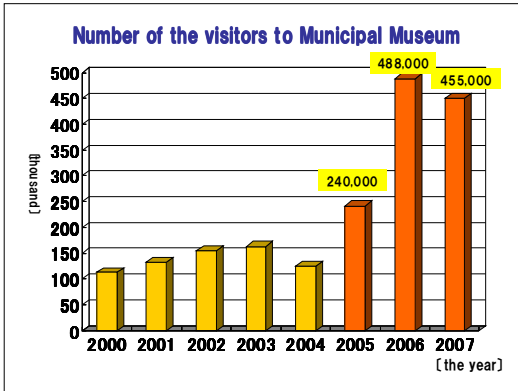
We are promoting organic farming, and consumers highly appreciate the added value of "Oriental White Stork Brand".



Organic farming is rapidly spreading.



Compared to other rice brands, Oriental White Stork rice sells at a premium of 80% to 110%.



The number of visitors to the ecomuseum center for the Oriental White Stork has dramatically increased.



Farmers came from Changwon, Korea.



University students came from China.



Researchers came from Europe.



Let's see a film of the first chick in the wild.

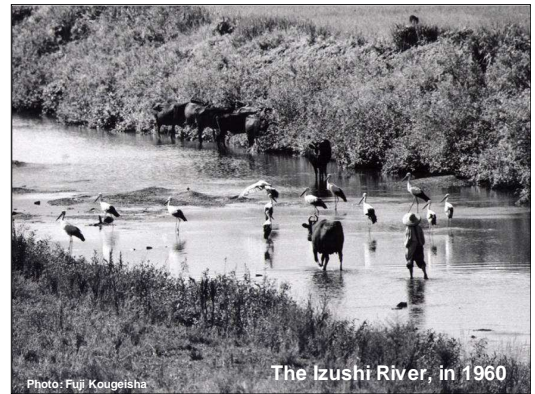


Through numerous efforts, many living things such as frogs, fishes, and Oriental White Storks have returned to the paddy fields.

However, what we feel the most proud about the positive change brought to the paddy field scenery is this.



Children,
Children have returned to the paddy fields.



This is a photograph taken in Toyooka 48 years ago. It shows the back of a female farmer, seven Tajima cows and twelve storks.

They are close to each other.

Sixteen years ago, we searched for this lady and interviewed her.

During the interview she recalled "I'm not sure if it's me from the back only. But it should be, because the cow next to the figure was mine."

She didn't mention the storks, but continued to talk about the cows.

In the end, she said, "We were rich at heart in those days."

This photograph symbolically shows what we have lost, and what we are going to restore.

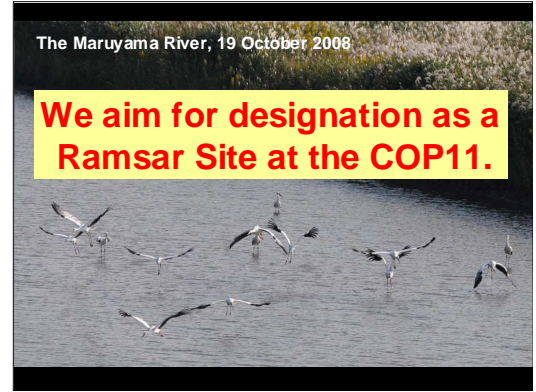
And this photograph, together with that of the terrible flood in 2004, seems to pose us a question, "How should we co-exist with nature?"



Photo : Kobe Newspapers

The Izushi River, October, 2007

The same place in 2007.
We have come a long way here.
But we still have a long way to go.



The Maruyama River, 19 October 2008

We aim for designation as a Ramsar Site at the COP11.

We are striving for the downstream area of the Maruyama River to be designated on the List of Wetlands of International Importance in 2011.

Thank you very much.