

# エコシステム

Ecosystem  
Conservation  
Society-Japan

11 No.160

November  
2018

## これからのゴルフ場

- ┆ 自然破壊の代名詞だったゴルフ場
- ┆ ゴルフ場は生きものにやさしい?
- ┆ 生物の多様性を守るゴルフ場とは?
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ドイツのゴルフ場
- ┆ 地域の人々に愛される自然豊かなゴルフ場

自然破壊の代名詞とも言われてきたゴルフ場。数十ヘクタール規模の広大な敷地は、その利用や管理の内容によって、地域の生態系ネットワークを強化するものにも、健全な地域づくりにも大きく貢献できます。

In the past, golf courses have been accused of being symbols for natural destruction. But they may be able to significantly contribute to enhancement of local ecosystem networks and local community development. That is, if new management and land use practices are brought to bear because of their relatively large size of 40-plus hectares.

# Golf Courses of the Future: We really want to play such courses!

In the past, golf courses were blamed and treated as synonymous with destruction of nature. This is because building them meant clear-cutting forests, drastically changing local topographies, and the spreading of tons of herbicides and pesticides that drained into streams and ponds polluting watersheds. We have calculated and made an estimate that in Japan, over the last 40 years, golf course development has wiped out more than 80,000 hectares of forests and wetlands. This is an area larger in size than the entire City of Tokyo.

On the other hand, there is an opinion asserts that because golf courses include trees, ponds, and grassy areas they resemble “satoyamas” (areas mixed with semi-nature and farming activities, many of which have been rapidly lost due to urbanization and life style changes); and, it is noted that golf courses are located relatively close to big cities where most of their natural areas have already been lost. Because of these points it is claimed that they are precious semi-natural places replacing satoyamas.

The other opinion asserts that golf courses cannot be good habitats for diverse wildlife even though they are covered with trees and grasses and have a varied topography, because those landscapes are ecologically quite simple. There are reports showing that 18 bird species have disappeared due to construction of a golf course and that the diversity of plant species in woodlands of golf courses is very poor.

What should be done? How should we go about developing a new type of golf course that can protect biodiversity and provide good habitat for wildlife? Germany known as an environmentally advanced country already has Federal Nature Conservation Act that demands that all new golf course development must maintain natural areas

as much as possible. A development project that may destroy precious nature does not get a permit. As a result, many of their new golf courses are developed on former farmlands thereby avoiding rich natural areas.

Additionally, many golf course owners implement various management practices more than legally required to increase biodiversity. For example, they create woodlands and grasslands that closely resemble local natural areas by planting various native species, establishing wetlands biotopes where ducks can live, and creating habitats for insects and small animals by piling up dead tree branches.

In 2016 5.5 million golfers in Japan played at least once a year. This is a drastic decline of two thirds from golfing’s peak years. This decline presents a difficult situation for course management into the future. To survive for many years to come, Japan’s golf courses should change to better and more attractive places with rich natural environment that will be loved by local people as well as players.

Tips for changing to better and more attractive golf courses:

- 1)New golf course development should be in the areas where natural values are low such as abandoned farmlands.
- 2)Use native trees and grasses in course plantings.
- 3)Create good habitats for wildlife by hiring specialists with ecological knowledge including knowledge of low-chemical course management.
- 4)Eliminate the number of holes to minimum necessary and restore natural areas as much as possible.
- 5)Adopt objectively measurable methods to evaluate increase or decrease of biodiversity values.
- 6)Provide environmental education programs for both employees and golfers.



Golf courses used to be synonymous for destruction of nature.



Both golf courses and satoyamas are maintained by human hands but the former has much less biodiversity



In many golf courses in Germany efforts have been made to increase biodiversity. An example of nest box for bumblebees. (Golf Club, Shoebuch)



In Japan where the golfing population has been declining, it is necessary for golf courses to be converted to ones with more natural areas that can be loved by local people not just by players.

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