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知床国立公園

Shiretoko National Park

National Parks in Japan 2

Shiretoko National Park

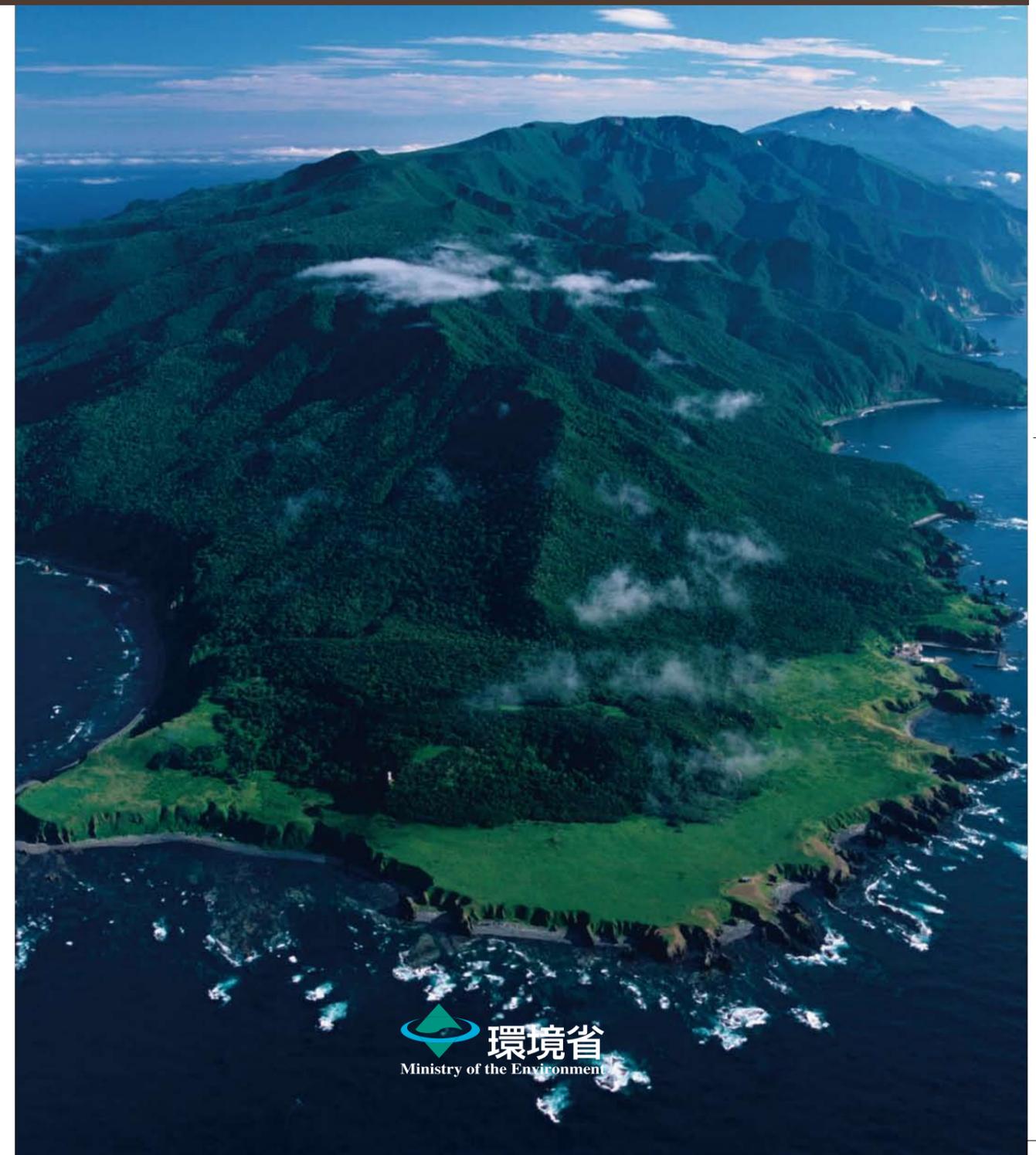
Shiretoko violet (Violaceae)



Painted by Ajiro Nihashi

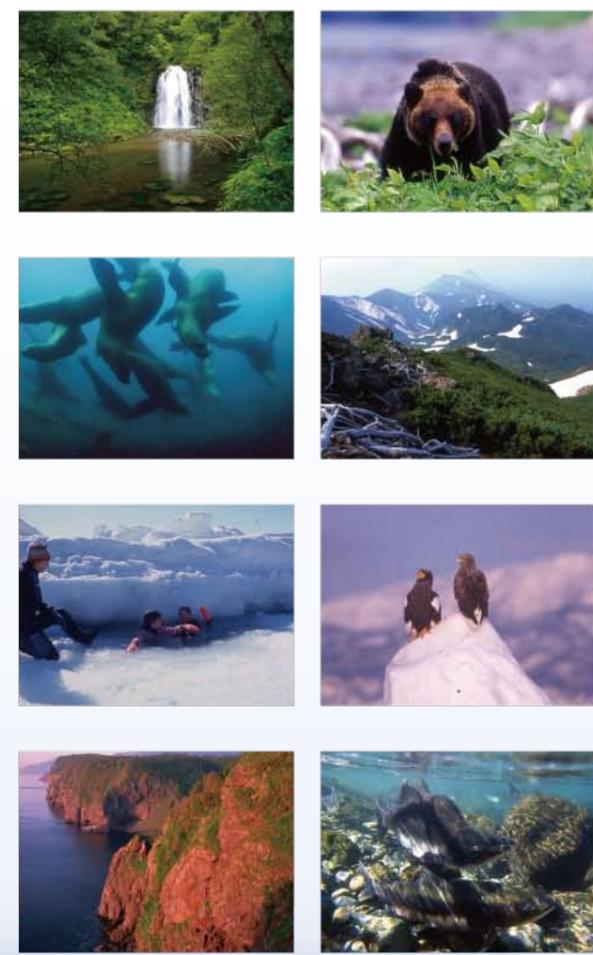
Shiretoko violet grows in the sand-gravel land of the Shiretoko Range. It is below 10 cm in height. The flower, approximately 2 cm in diameter, is white with its center being vivid yellow. The leaf is glossy dark green, which makes a beautiful contrast with the whitish land bleached with sulfur. The plants live close to rocks dotting the landscape as if to cuddle up to them.

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環境省
Ministry of the Environment

National Parks in Eastern Hokkaido



知床国立公園 Shiretoko National Park

Shiretoko has its origin in an Ainu word *sir-etok*, which means "the end (*etok*) of the Earth (*sir*)" or a promontory.

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Welcome to Shiretoko National Park

Forest and sea nourishing many wildlife

The Shiretoko Peninsula called *sir-etok* (end of the Earth) by the Ainu people
In the land still abundant in primeval Nature,
brown bear and Blakiston's fish owl *called* kamuy (god) by the Ainu people live.
The Sea of Fertility, owing to drift ice, is brought further to seas, rivers and forests.
In summer 2005, Shiretoko was registered as a World Natural Heritage site for
its irreplaceable wildlife habitats and biodiversity.



Exuberant energy of wildlife

Animals living in magnificent nature

Shiretoko National Park introduced with photos



Brown bears walking on the seashore

A brown bear is the biggest terrestrial animal in Japan. It usually eats plants, nuts and mushrooms and also catches salmon which swims back up the rivers in autumn, for hibernation.

🗨️ *Kim-un-kamuy* (god of the mountain) for brown bear in the Ainu language

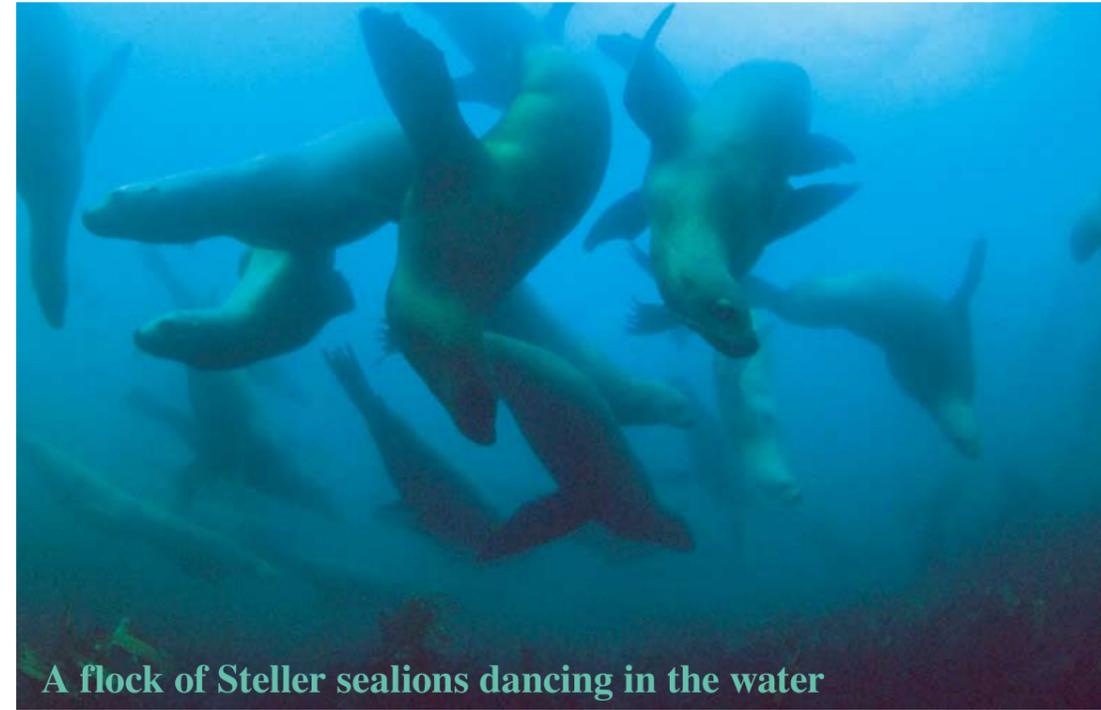
Drift ice and Steller's sea eagle & white-tailed sea eagle



Steller's sea eagles and white-tailed sea eagles are large birds of prey, quite rare in the world, and have a wingspan of over 2m. While many sea eagles come for wintering from the Russian Far East, white-tailed sea eagles also breed partly in Japan and can be seen at any time of year in Shiretoko.

🗨️ *Kapatcir* or *kapatcir-kamuy* for Steller's sea eagle and *onneu* for white-tailed sea eagle in the Ainu language

L : Steller's sea eagle
R : White-tailed sea eagle



A flock of Steller sealions dancing in the water

A Steller sealion called *todo* in Japanese is bigger than any other sea lion. During December to January, a dense flock of Steller sealions swims in the coastal water on Rausu side. While listed as a Vulnerable (VU) in the Red List of threatened species compiled by the Ministry of the Environment, they cause damage to fishing nets and marine products. Coexistence with Steller sealions is now a challenge.

🗨️ *Etaspe* (meaning "creature that snores") for Steller sealion in the Ainu language



Killer whale swimming sedately

Killer whales appear at any season of the year in the sea off Shiretoko. A killer whale is nearly 10 m, weighs 10 tons and can swim at 80 km per hour.

🗨️ *Rep-un-kamuy* (meaning "god of the sea") for killer whale in the Ainu language



Dolly Varden trout in mountain stream

The Dolly Varden trout resemble iwana mountain trout and can be seen at any time of year in the rivers of Shiretoko. This naiaid has red and white polka dots that make a beautiful contrast with orange on the belly. It is also important food for large birds of prey like Blakiston's fish owls.

🗨️ *Osor-ko-oma* for Dolly Varden trout in the Ainu language

Wildlife from time immemorial

Cycles of life hundreds or thousands of years old

Shiretoko National Park introduced with photos



Blakiston's fish owl with glaring eyes

Blakiston's fish owl is one of the world's biggest owls and has a wingspan of over 1.8 m. It is called *kotan kor kamuy* (god who owns the village) and respected by the Ainu people. It is a rare species and there are only 120 in Japan.



Young male sika deer

Sika deer in Hokkaido is the biggest deer in Japan. Antlers are used by males as weapons against rival males in autumn for mating. The number of sika deer has rapidly increased in Shiretoko and their eating vegetation causes a serious problem of damage to it.

🗨️ *Yuk* for sika deer in the Ainu language



Sperm whale dives raising its flukes in air

The body length of a sperm whale is 12-18 m. In summer, its spectacular spouting and tail lobbing can be seen in the sea off Rausu. It eats squid etc. and is said to dive to the depth of 3,000 m.

🗨️ *Humpe* (meaning "creature that sounds 'hum'") for whale in the Ainu language



A run of pink salmon

In autumn, after migration in northern seas, pink salmon swim back up the rivers in which they were born to spawn. Sometimes being food for brown bears and birds of prey, pink salmon also nourishes the rivers and the forests of Shiretoko.

🗨️ *Emoi*, *hemoi* or *topiu* (meaning "hump") for pink salmon in the Ainu language



Spotted seal on drift ice

Spotted seals are charming in lying on drift ice or popping up out of the ice water. Together with drift ice, they visit Shiretoko for wintering and breeding. Pups born on drift ice in late March have pure white fur.

🗨️ *Tukar* (seal in general), *pokir* or *kesh-pokir* (meaning "spotted") for spotted seal in the Ainu language

Rich and varied natural landscapes

Nature's severity and inaccessibility gives the landscapes an unimaginable beauty

Shiretoko National Park introduced with photos



Cliff in Iwaobetsu reflecting the sunset

The shoreline of the Shiretoko Peninsula has a series of craggy landscapes. Especially, on its Shari side, Iwaobetsu has a range of cliff of 100-200 m in height. Eroded by water and drift ice, the cliff has a unique form.

(📍: Observatory at the Furepe Waterfall)



Kashuni Waterfall plunging into the sea

The flank of the ridge from the seashore of the Shiretoko Peninsula is precipitous. As it is said "there is no mid-stream or downstream river" in Shiretoko, sometimes, a waterfall is, as it were, at the river mouth.

(📍:View from an Utoro-Shiretoko Cape sightseeing boat)



Shiretoko-goko Lakes in late autumn & Mt. Rausu having its first snowfall

The fantastic five lakes are scattered over a stretch of virgin forest. They reflect deep woods and the Shiretoko Range. The landscape is one of the best in Shiretoko.

(📍: First Lake of Shiretoko-goko Lakes)



Shiretoko Range running straight in the Peninsula

The Shiretoko Range was formed by volcanic activities about 250,000 years ago. Its varied landscapes include paradise-like fields of flowers and swamps as well as still active volcanoes.

(📍: View from the ridge near Mt. Iou)

Rich ocean helps maintain terrestrial ecosystems

Marine blessings that come with drift ice nourish wildlife and human life

Shiretoko National Park introduced with photos



Kelp forest on the foreshore of Rausu

High-quality "Rausu kelp" is shipped for the Kansai region and used at traditional Japanese restaurants. The kelp forest spreading over the seabed contributes to the life of fish juvenile.



Kelp forest & a shoal of pink salmon

Coming close to the shore for spawning, pink salmon swim over the swaying giant kelp (*Laminaria diabolica*). In autumn, as chum salmon also swim back up the rivers, all the rivers of Shiretoko teem with runs of salmon.

Landing a catch of chum salmon

Shiretoko prides itself on its having one of the greatest catches of fish in Hokkaido, mainly salmon and trout in addition to walleye pollock caught in winter in Rausu. During peak season, dozens of ships enter the port and fill it with activity.



Clione: angel of drift ice or sea angel

Together with drift ice, Clione comes to Shiretoko from northern seas. It is a symbol of abundance in marine life. Clione is a shell-less snail.



Drift ice covering a great extent of the seas

Shiretoko is located around the southernmost region of drift ice and an abundance of phytoplankton brought by drift ice helps maintain the ecosystem of Shiretoko.

Shiretoko National Park on the Map

As the novelist Ryotaro Shiba describes it as "the drawn sword projecting over the sea," the Shiretoko Peninsula is a long narrow peninsula jutting about 70 km into the sea. And along the central line of the sword from tip to base, there is a range of steep mountains of 1,200-1,600 m in height. In the area within approximately 20 km from the tip, there is no road but just a lighthouse of Shiretoko Cape and fishers' cottages dotting the shores.

Shari Town is situated in the northwest of the mountains and Rausu Town in the southeast.

Having most of hotels and information centers, Utoro in Shari Town and Rausu in Rausu Town provide access to the Shiretoko National Park.

The road connecting Rausu and Utoro is called "Shiretoko Crossing Road." Its highest point, Shiretoko Pass, commands a wonderful panorama of the mountains and the sea when it's fine. In winter (from early November to late April), however, the road is blocked because of snowfall and hard weather. Instead, travelers have to take the Pass of Konpoku at the base of the Peninsula. It takes over two hours.

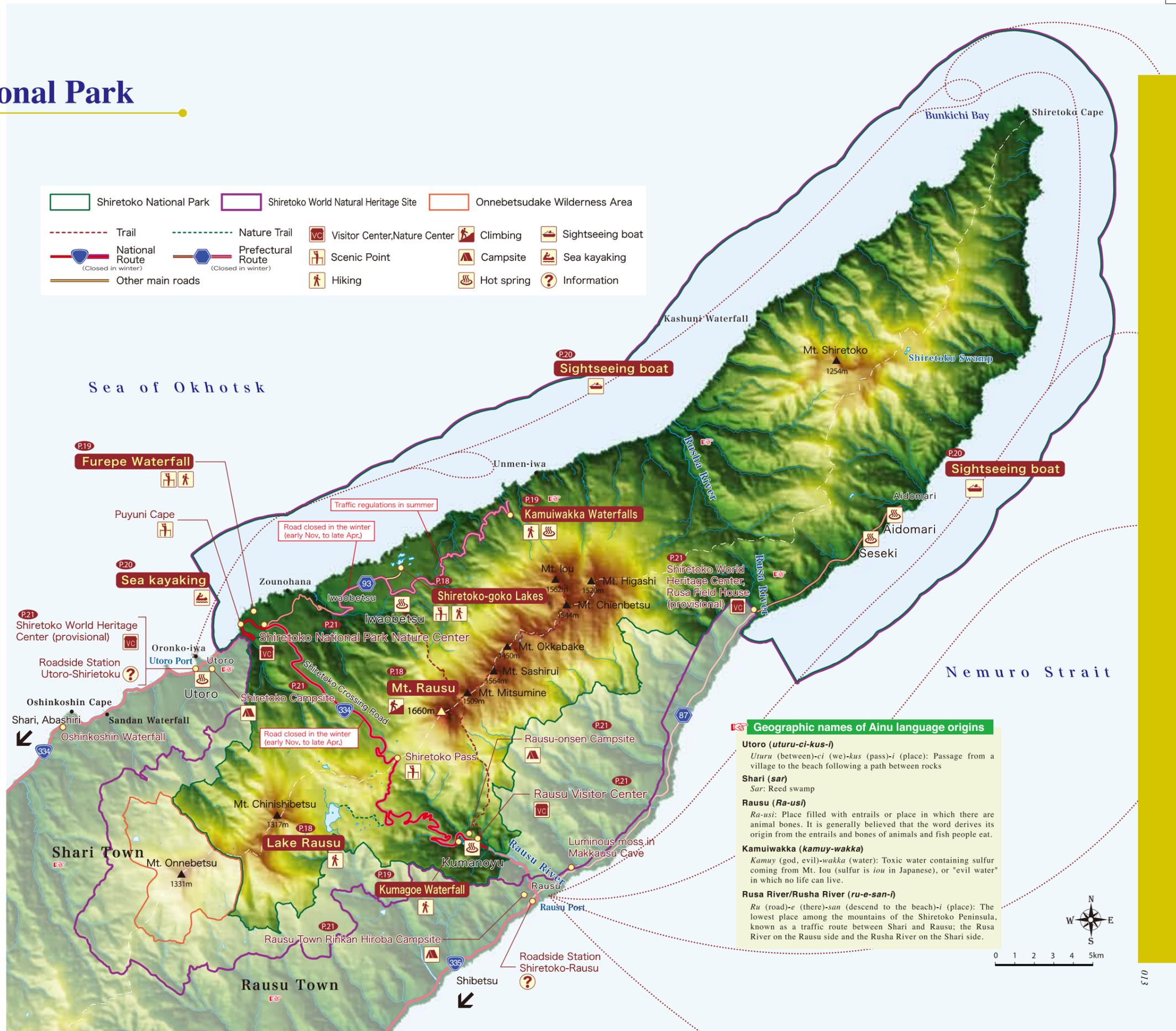
Tourist spots on the Utoro side include the Cape Puyuni commanding a fine view of the Sea of Okhotsk, the calm and beautiful Furepe Waterfall over a cliff, the Shiretoko-goko Lakes reflecting mountains, and Kamuiwakka Waterfalls.

Tourist spots on the Rausu side include Lake Rausu, the largest lake in Shiretoko, in the east of Mt. Chinishibetsu, and the Kumagoe Waterfall on the Rausu River.

Climbers can also enjoy Shiretoko by single-day climbing Mt. Rausu, one of the 100 Famous Japanese Mountains, both from Utoro and Rausu.

Both Utoro and Rausu have ports for cruise ships. Cruising from Utoro provides austere and splendid landscapes of cliff stretching far to the Shiretoko Cape with many sea birds flying around, while passengers from Rausu can enjoy views of marine mammals such as dolphins and whales from spring to autumn and those of Steller's sea eagles, white-tailed sea eagles and seals as well as drift ice in winter.

There are also hot springs on both Utoro and Rausu sides. With their unique, rustic atmosphere, they will help relieve the weariness of the travel.



Description of the Shiretoko National Park

The Shiretoko National Park has one of the richest ecosystems in Japan and was registered as a World Natural Heritage site for its precious natural environment. The Nature of Shiretoko now attracts worldwide attention. What are the features of the Nature? How has it been preserved?

Features of the Shiretoko National Park

The Shiretoko National Park has four features: 1) it provides habitats for many wild animals including large mammals such as brown bears and killer whale as well as endangered Blakiston's fish owls; 2) the ecosystem is based on harmonious interactions between the sea having drift ice and the land having virgin forests; 3) there are austere and magnificent natural landscapes created by volcanism and erosion; 4) people live with the Nature while preserving it.



▲ Shiretoko Range viewed from the Second Lake of Shiretoko-goko Lakes; one of the advantages of Shiretoko lies in its ecosystems layered from the sea to the alpine zone.

i) Dense wildlife population

An animal that typically characterize Shiretoko is brown bear, the biggest terrestrial animal in Japan. Approximately 200 brown bears live in the Shiretoko Peninsula, one of the world's densest populations. On careful observation, the bear's footprints, feces, eaten plants and claw marks on tree trunk are found everywhere. Fantastically, sika

deer and red fox often appear on the roadside. In the sky, a white-tailed sea eagle flies spreading its 2-meter wings. Especially in winter, Steller's sea eagles and white-tailed sea eagles come from Russia and over 100 may be found in a single day. In the sea, killer whale and other whales swim sedately and seals and Steller sealions also come to Shiretoko in winter.



ii) Interactions between sea and land

Interactions between sea and land in Shiretoko greatly contribute to the dense wildlife population because runs of salmon bring blessings from drift ice to the land. In late January, drift ice arrives at the coast of Shiretoko, together with phytoplankton called ice algae. When drift ice melts in winter, ice algae bloom and produce an explosive growth of phytoplankton. Juvenile salmon eats the phytoplankton, leaves Shiretoko and come back to the Peninsula after migration for years. When salmon swim back up the rivers, they become food for

◀ Food Web in Shiretoko

▼ At the mouth of a small river near the tip of the Peninsula, two young brown bears were eating the carcass of a minke whale cast ashore. It is an example of the food web from sea to land.



brown bears and Blakiston's fish owls. Then, the feces become nourishment for the forests. Also, when Steller's sea eagles and white-tailed sea eagles eat fish, or when brown bear eat whales cast ashore, marine life nourishes terrestrial life. In this way, the cycle of nourishment starting from the arrival of drift ice underlies the wildlife and ecosystem of Shiretoko.

iii) Magnificent landscapes

Mountains and lakes such as Mt. Rausu, Mt. Iou, the Shiretoko-goko Lakes and Lake Rausu are formed by volcanic



◀ From Utoro, a magnificent cliff runs along the western coast of the Peninsula. It is lava eroded by water and drift ice.

activities and hot springs are also volcanic as their source of heat. The 120-meter coastal cliff and strange-shaped rocks are lava and volcanic deposits eroded by waves and drift ice.

iv) History of Nature Conservation

In 1964, Shiretoko was designated as a national park for its magnificent landscapes and dense wildlife population, 30 years later the first designation of national park in Japan in 1934.

While the designation of national park at that time was generally on local requests of a local government and granted for its tourism promotion efforts, the Shiretoko National Park was exceptional: Prof. Misao Tatewaki and other botanists conducted a survey of Shiretoko in 1953 and insisted that its primeval landscapes be preserved. A strictly protected site called Special



▲ The Shiretoko National Park represents approximately 86% of the World Natural Heritage Site. There are also the Wilderness Area, the National Wildlife Protection Area and the Forest Ecosystem Reserve and the Nature of the site is legally conserved.

► In the Sea of Okhotsk, sea ice is formed from ocean water that freezes. Shiretoko is located in the southernmost region of drift ice on the Northern Hemisphere.



Protection Zone representing then 50% (now 60%) of the total area, the Shiretoko National Park places a higher priority on nature conservation than any other national park in Japan.

In the early 1960s, the construction of the Shiretoko Crossing Road connecting Utoro and Rausu started and that of the Shiretoko Forest Road running from Iwaobetsu to Rusa via Kamuiwakka was also under way. In the 1980s, part of a national forest was cleared, the Special Protection Zone was expanded (in 1984 and 1995), and designations followed in an effort to protect the Nature, such as the Wilderness Area (1980), the National Wildlife Protection Area (1982) and the Forest Ecosystem Reserve (1990).

Local people's and governments' general awareness of nature conservation also characterizes Shiretoko. In 1974, the local governments of Shari and Rausu towns jointly signed the Shiretoko Charter that declares the conservation of Shiretoko.

In 1977, the Shiretoko 100 Square Meters Movement started in Shari Town as a pioneering project in Japanese national trust movement. In 1988, Shiretoko Nature Foundation was established in a bid to promote surveys and researches on Shiretoko and communicate and implement the ideas of Nature conservation. Since Rausu Town joined the Foundation as an investor in 2006, both towns have been dedicated to promoting environmental preservation in Shiretoko.



Getting rid of sika deer carcass

The staff of the Shiretoko Nature Foundation is getting rid of sika deer carcass found on a walking trail in the Shiretoko-goko Lakes. It is important because the carcass may attract brown bear and that tourists take a walk on the walking trail. Local staff's hard-working efforts contribute to coexistent relationship between Nature conservation and tourism.



▲ Along a road near the Shiretoko-goko Lakes, there are still cottages abandoned by the pioneers who gave up farming and left the land.

World Natural Heritage

Shiretoko was registered as a World Natural Heritage site for the following four reasons:

- (1) Shiretoko is located in the southernmost region of drift ice on the Northern Hemisphere; the productivity of its ecosystems is greatly influenced by drift ice; Shiretoko provides the best example of interactions between marine and terrestrial ecosystems.
- (2) Shiretoko is important for many marine and terrestrial species including rare species such as Blakiston's fish owl and Shiretoko violet (*Viola kitamiana*).
- (3) Shiretoko is globally important for many kinds of salmon and marine mammals such as Steller sealion and



▲ Blakiston's fish owl makes its nest in a hole of a large tree and catches fish in mountain stream in Shiretoko. This explains Shiretoko still has sound forests and rivers.

many kinds of whale.

(4) Shiretoko is an important habitat for globally threatened sea birds and a globally important habitat for migratory birds.

It is not only for these advantages but also for the systems and local efforts for securing them that Shiretoko was registered as a World Natural Heritage site. And, as a result, the Japanese government and local people are committed to protect the values of Shiretoko.

Nature conservation from a local viewpoint

In response to the registration as a World Natural Heritage site, two organizations were established: the Shiretoko World Natural Heritage Candidate Site Regional Liaison Committee (the present Shiretoko World Natural Heritage Site Regional Liaison Committee) and the Shiretoko World Natural Heritage Candidate Site Scientific Council (the present Shiretoko World Natural Heritage Site Scientific Council). The Regional Liaison Committee is comprised of the relevant administrative organizations, local representative groups, fisheries cooperatives and other entities concerned to discuss how to manage the World Heritage site. On the other hand, the members of the Scientific Council include experts in marine and terrestrial ecosystems and give scientific advice as to the management of the World Heritage site. To focus its efforts, the Scientific Council also has three working groups: Sea Area Management, Improvement of River Construction, and sika deer Population Management.

In sum, there are discussions with local people and fishermen on one hand and

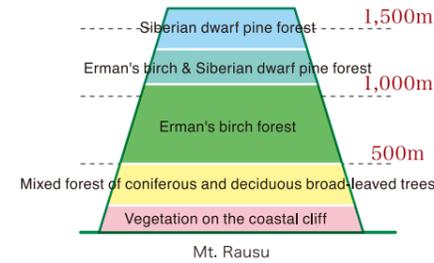
scientific discussions on management policies on the other hand.

Shiretoko Data Center

<http://shiretoko.env.gr.jp/>
Shiretoko Data Center's website provides information on the management of the World Natural Heritage Shiretoko including reports and documents of relevant conferences. <http://shiretoko.env.gr.jp/>

Coexistent Relationship between Nature Conservation and Tourism

One of the important roles the Shiretoko National Park has to fulfill is to ensure that many people can enjoy Shiretoko's wonderful Nature. On the other hand, the natural environments may be damaged by uncontrolled tourism. In view of the fact, Committee on the Promotion of Proper Use was inaugurated to promote and regulate the use of the National Park and the members include intellectuals, representatives of administrative organizations and the tourist industry as well as of local groups such as alpine clubs. The Committee has established basic plans for the proper use of the National Park in ways not to affect the natural environments and drawn up Visitor rules for the Use of the Shiretoko National Park. In 2004, tourist associations of Shari and Rausu established Shiretoko Eco-tourism Association so that visitors can understand and experience relations between the Nature and people in Shiretoko. Specifically, the Association has formulated rules for guided tours of the Shiretoko-goko Lakes and the



Diversity in Shiretoko's natural environments and vegetation

Between altitudes of zero to 1,600 meters of the alpine zone, Shiretoko has different natural environments in its small area: natural meadow on the beach, virgin forests such as mixed forests of coniferous and deciduous broad-leaved trees and Erman's birch forests on the mountain side, and Siberian dwarf pine forests and fields of alpine flowers along the mountain ridge.



▲ Fishing boats at Rausu Port in winter; Shiretoko is also known for its abundant marine resources.

Furepe Waterfall, developed tourism-fishery joint programs, and discussed how to prevent brown bear damage in terms of tourism.

Tips to enjoy the Shiretoko National Park

Since the primeval Nature of the Shiretoko National Park is strictly preserved, there are not so many places everybody can feel free to enjoy. The National Park has, as it were, precious jewels that people are just allowed to see through a small window. Below are therefore two tips to enjoy them. Firstly, enjoy the Nature from different angles, that is, experience the Nature. Take a walk on the walking trail, take a cruise, participate in a guided tour, or visit a museum, and you'll experience the Shiretoko that a typical tourism could not show.

Secondly, use your imagination. You can imagine how brown bear lives, just at the sight of its footprints or claw marks. You can also imagine how brown bear catches salmon swimming back up the rivers while you eat sea food. When you happen to see Steller's sea eagle or a white-tailed sea eagle, you can imagine how it gets along with the austere Nature in the Russian Far East. Bathing in a hot spring, you can also imagine volcanic activities that formed Shiretoko and its Nature hundreds of thousands of years ago.

Enjoy a leisurely trip in Shiretoko and feel the profound power of Nature.

column

In ancient times, people lived in Shiretoko.

Shiretoko has primeval Nature and in effect there is an early Jomon site approximately 8,000 years old at the mouth of the Horobetsu River. After the period of Post-Jomon Culture (1st to 7th century A.D.), the Okhotsk people living by fishing and hunting came from the northern Sakhalin in the 6th to 11th century and lived in the Shiretoko Peninsula and on the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk. In the site on the coast of the Peninsula, tools made from whale bone and clay figurines in the shape of a seal or a brown bear have been discovered. Ancient people also enjoyed what the sea of Shiretoko gave them. It is believed that the Okhotsk people's view of Nature seen in their animal sculptures influenced the subsequent Ainu culture.



Clay seal figurine



Clay bear figurine

[Photo credit: Shiretoko Museum]



▲ Guided tours of the Shiretoko-goko Lakes are popular. Guides explain the Nature of Shiretoko to tourists.

How to enjoy the Shiretoko National Park

While the Shiretoko National Park has primeval landscapes and attractive tourist spots, there are some considerations tourists should take into account. In the following, we'll describe how to enjoy hiking and climbing in the Park.

Climbing & Hiking

The Shiretoko National Park does not have so many hiking or climbing trails and those for beginners are quite different from those for the advanced. Make sure to choose trails in consideration of your strength and skills.

Mt. Rausu Climbing (1660m)

[DATA] : Approximately 13 km from the central area of Utoro town to Iwaobetsu Hot Spring; approximately four hours to ascend to the summit & two and a half hours to descend

There are climbing trails from both Utoro and Rausu and the former is good for beginners. First, you'll climb through woodland and at the edge you'll find a bright path along a rivulet. Watch your feet as the valley has snow until mid July. Watch out also for falling rock while climbing from Rausudaira onward. You also should bring a portable toilet with you since there is no toilet along the trail. On the other hand, a climbing trail from Rausu is for the advanced because you may lose your way in snow lingering in the upper mountain until late in summer.



Kinoshita-goya (hut) at the starting point of the trail provides information on the trail and brown bear and is also available as an accommodation.



The craggy summit is rather spacious. It commands a vast panorama of Kunashiri Island when it's fine.



Shiretoko-goko Lakes Hiking

[DATA] : Approximately 14 km from the central area of Utoro town to Shiretoko-goko Lakes Parking; there are regular-route buses in summer; 15-minute walk on the elevated wooden path; 40 minutes for First Lake to Second Lake hiking; 90 minutes for 3 km trail that circles all the five lakes.

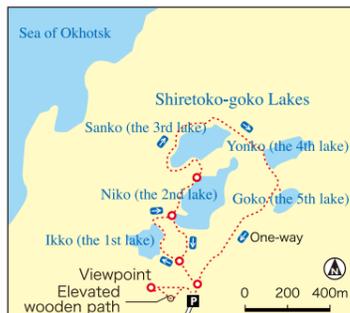
The Shiretoko-goko Lakes has the most popular hiking trail with a walking trail along the Lakes and an elevated wooden path running between electric fences set to deter brown bears. The wooden path is available also for wheelchairs. There is a paid parking lot but it is sometimes full on weekends and holidays. Consider also taking a bus. Contact the tourist office beforehand to check that the elevated wooden path is available since it may be blocked due to the danger of brown bear. There is still snow until early May and the trail is muddy. Each Lake affords its own views of the Shiretoko Range.



Elevated wooden path built to deter brown bears; 15-minute walk from the Parking to the observatory



Taking the walking trail, you can feel the Nature of Shiretoko directly. But make sure to be prepared against brown bears with, for example, a bear deterrent bell.



Lake Rausu Hiking

[DATA] : Parking is banned around the starting point. Park your car at Shiretoko Pass Parking and walk for approximately one hour to the starting point. Or take a regular-route bus and get off at the stop of Lake Rausu Entrance. A round-trip between the starting point and Lake Rausu takes approximately three hours.

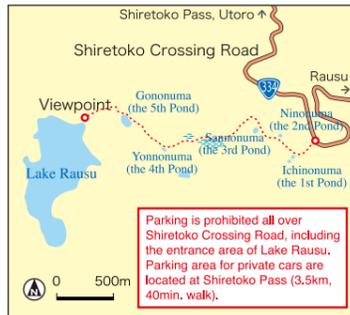
Lake Rausu Walking Trail goes through five different ponds and leads to Lake Rausu. It is rather even and you can enjoy ponds, plants and mountains all together. However, unusual for typical walking trails, it has dense brown bear population and the track can be misleading with lingering snow and thick fog. You need to supply climbing skills and outfits to enjoy the trail. Also, we recommend you to wear rubber boots as the trail gets muddy frequently. No parking around the starting point. Park your car at Shiretoko Pass Parking. Or, take a regular-route bus or a taxi. A guided tour to the starting point is recommendable.



Sannonuma (the 3rd Pond) midway to Lake Rausu; Mt. Rausu reflected in the water is fantastic.



Mildly undulating ridge of Mt. Chinishibetsu and calm water of Lake Rausu



Furepe Waterfall Hiking

[DATA] : Approximately 4 km from the central area of Utoro town to the Shiretoko National Park Nature Center; parking and regular-route buses available; 1 km to the Walking trail; 40-minute round-trip; accessible at all seasons.

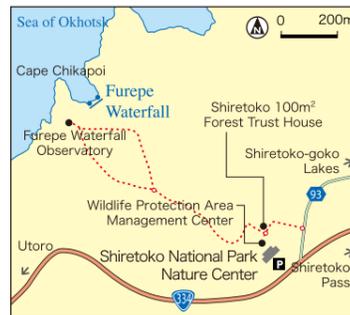
The Furepe Waterfall, also called "maiden's tears," is the underflow from the Shiretoko Range, cascading from the middle of a vertical cliff. A walking trail starts from the side of the Shiretoko National Park Nature Center. Follow the mild descent among saplings, and you'll see a bright meadow and a vivid blue stretch of the Sea of Okhotsk. A flock of sika deer often appears on the meadow and you may be able to see a newly-born deer in June. Look down the cliff from the observatory and you can see the colonies of Japanese Cormorants and slaty-backed gulls.



20-minute walk from the Shiretoko National Park Nature Center to the observatory on top of the cliff; a lot of sea birds fly around and it's spectacular.



Great icicles at midwinter; snowshoe walking or ski walking is also fun.



Kumagoe Waterfall Hiking

[DATA] : 15-minute walk from the starting point of the walking trail to the Kumagoe Waterfall; parking is banned along the Shiretoko Crossing Road; make sure to park your car in a parking close to the Kumanoyu Hot Spring.

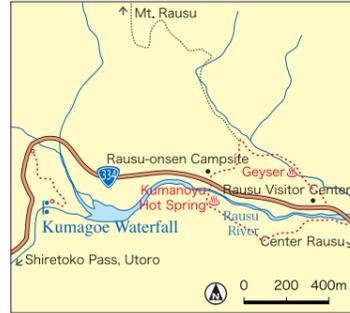
The Kumagoe Waterfall on the Rausu River has approximately 15 m in height. Legend has it that a hunter cornered a bear cub and its mother at the base of the fall and the mother desperately tried to push the cub up the fall. From a parking in Kumanoyu Hot Spring or Rausu-onsen Campsite, take a one-kilometer walk along the Shiretoko Crossing Road toward the Pass and you'll arrive at the starting point. Go further into the forest and you'll come across the Rausu River and see the Kumagoe Waterfall to your right. Although the trail is short, the clean, fresh stream with baikamo (ranunculus nipponicus) surrounded by deep greenery is impressive.



Although in short distance from Route 334, the fall is rather a secluded spot. Another hiking trail downward from the fall is now inaccessible.



Kumanoyu Hot Spring downward from the fall; free of charge and unattended; make sure to follow the rules



Kamuiwakka Waterfalls Hiking

[DATA] : 11 km ride in a shuttle bus from the Shiretoko National Park Nature Center or the Shiretoko-goko Lakes; 15-minute walk from the terminal to the first fall called Ichi-no-taki; car drivers, cyclists and pedestrians not allowed at any time of year.

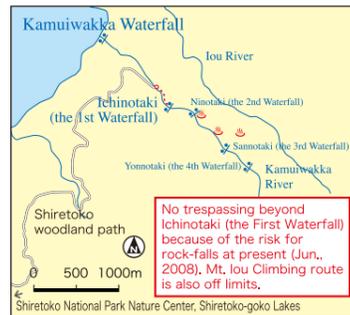
Hot springs from the mountain side of the active volcano Mt. Iou flow into the river, which cascades off the cliff. Get off the shuttle bus at the terminal and you'll find the starting point at the foot of a bridge. Be careful, if you have sensitive skin, since the water has strong acidity. Put on straw sandals or other slip-resistant shoes for river trekking or fishing as the path along the rivulet is slippery. Put everything in your backpack so that you can use both hands. Put on swimwear in bathing.



Hot springs from the mountain side flowing into the river; the basin of the fall is a hot water pool



Put on straw sandals or other slip-resistant shoes as the path is often slippery. Being barefoot or putting on ordinary sandals is prohibited.



Nature Tour

In addition to taking walks on walking trails, there are many other ways to enjoy the Nature of Shiretoko and you'll find some that please you. Well-informed and experienced guides are available in many sites.

Sightseeing Boat

[DATA] : Several companies have sightseeing boats at both ports of Utoro and Rausu. Cruising takes one to two hours (except for cruising between Utoro and Shiretoko Cape for three to four hours)

Tourist spots are also in the sea of Shiretoko. On board a sightseeing boat, you can enjoy different views of Shiretoko. It is available at the ports of Utoro and Rausu.



Utoro

On board a sightseeing boat, you'll see a cliff eroded by drift ice, different waterfalls from cracks in the cliff, strange-shaped rocks, and innumerable sea birds including rare species like spectacled guillemot. At the mouth of a river, you may find sika deer or brown deer. There are fishers' cottages at the tip of the Peninsula, which offer a glimpse of people's life with the austere Nature. In Utoro, it is generally fine in summer and the landscape of Shiretoko Cape and the cape plateau under the blue sky is wonderful.

Rausu

The Nemuro Strait near Rausu is now one of the best whale-watching spots in Japan. On board a sightseeing boat from spring to autumn, you can see whales spouting all around you. Interestingly, different kinds of whales appear depending on seasons, first, minke whale in spring, followed by killer whale, sperm whale and giant beaked whale. There is also a drift-ice cruise during which you'll see at short distance white-tailed sea eagles, Steller's sea eagles and spotted seals.



Sea kayaking

[DATA] : Sea kayaking tour for beginners takes approximately three hours and costs about 10,000 yen.

It is a tour with sea kayak paddle in hand on the sapphire sea along the rugged coastline. When you look up at the cliff from the sea surface, it looks overwhelmingly powerful as if to impend over you. And sea birds are taking care of their chicks. A tour around Utoro is good for beginners and includes visits to the Furepe Waterfall and Man's Tears. If you have not done kayaking, you do not have to be afraid, for you are supposed to paddle a kayak with a guide. A tour for the advanced will take days to go around the Shiretoko Peninsula.



Walking on drift ice

[DATA] : Available only when drift ice is fastened to the shore; it takes one and a half or two hours and costs about 5,000 yen.

Put on a special dry suit, walk on drift ice accompanied by a guide, touch it, or float in ice water in a crack. It's just exciting. Drift ice has a complicated layered structure and you'll hear creaking sounds or may see a seal, a Steller's sea eagle or a white-tailed sea eagle. You'll also learn about the formation and functions of drift ice.



Compliance & self-responsibility

At around Shiretoko Cape and the Apical Region of the Shiretoko Peninsula, there are no facilities for tourists and primeval Nature is conserved. For trekkers and sea kayakers, there are Visitor rules for the Apical Region of the Peninsula zone to emphasize the importance of self-responsibility, compliance and environmental conservation and they include local rules to ensure it.

Rules for the Use of the Shiretoko National Park



1 Don't feed wildlife

It could disrupt the natural ecosystems or attract brown bear. It's very dangerous.

2 Just follow the path

If you get out of the path, you may tread on the plants or do damage to the ground. It's dangerous too.

3 Don't pick up plants. Don't catch animals. Don't threaten or hurt them. Don't bring any plant or animal with you.

Nature is delicate. The smallest damage may have serious consequences.

4 Take your trash home with you

Your trash affects landscapes and wildlife and may attract brown bear.

5 Don't bring your pet with you

It may attract brown bear.

6 Don't eat while walking. Don't do outdoor cooking.

The smell or the rest of food may attract brown bear.

7 Keep brown bear away

Brown bear may attack you.

8 If you see a brown bear, leave the area immediately.

Once accustomed to humans, it may cause damage at others. Leave the area immediately.

9 Drive slowly

Watch out for deer or fox that runs into the roads. Hitting it may have serious consequences.

10 Be careful not to cause inconvenience to fishermen.

Don't touch marine products. Don't disturb fishing activities (kelp drying on the beach, etc). Keep away from fisheries equipments and facilities (fixed nets, fishers' cottages, etc.) They are of vital importance for the life of local people.

Facilities Guide

Facilities that provide information on plants and animals and climbing trails, Campsites deep in the Nature of Shiretoko and other facilities that help you enjoy the Shiretoko National Park are as follows:

Information

Shiretoko National Park Nature Center

The greatest feature is Dynavision theater projected on a huge screen of 12 m in length and 20 m in width. The impressive video with a lot of bird's-eye images shows the true Shiretoko inaccessible to humans. You'll feel like a bird flying over the Peninsula. An information counter managed by the Shiretoko Nature Foundation provides information on Nature observation and climbing. The Center also has a restaurant that serves snacks and a store.



[DATA] Address: 531 Iwaubetsu, Shari-cho, Shari-gun Hokkaido
Phone: 0152-24-2114
Open hours: 8:00-17:40 (9:00-16:00 from Oct. 21st to Apr. 19th)
Closed on: Dec. 31st
Admission: Free of charge (Dynavision theater: adult: ¥500; child: ¥200) ¥500; child: ¥200

Rausu Visitor Center

As a facility under Ministry of the Environment, remodeled and reopened in May 2007, the Center provides information on the Rausu side of Shiretoko and is engaged in the activities of Nature conservation. As a multipurpose facility, it also has a general services counter and a lecture room.



[DATA] Address: Yunosawacho, Rausu-cho, Menashi-gun, Hokkaido
Phone: 0153-87-2828
Open hours: 9:00-17:00 (10:00-16:00 from Nov. to Apr.)
Closed on: Mondays & year-end and New Year holidays
Admission: Free of charge

Shiretoko Museum

Situated at the center of Shari town, the Museum exhibits abundant material on the

history and natural environment of Shari town as well as the Shiretoko Peninsula. Especially, there are many exhibits showing wild plants and animals such as seals and eagles and a great variety of stuffed specimens.



[DATA] Address: 49-2 Honmachi, Shari-cho, Shari-gun Hokkaido
Phone: 0152-23-1256
Open hours: 9:00-17:00
Closed on: Mondays from Apr. to Oct. (open on holidays); Mondays, holidays & year-end and New Year holidays from Nov. to Mar.
Admission: ¥300; elementary school & junior high school students: free of charge

Shiretoko World Heritage Center (provisional)

Since Shiretoko was registered as a World Natural Heritage site, this Center was designed as an information center scheduled to be completed in 2009, in Utoro, Shari town, base for Shiretoko tourism. As a gateway to the World Heritage site, it will provide information on its advantages and rules for visiting it.



On the other hand, Rusa Field House is to be constructed in Rusa, Rausu town, to offer lectures on rules for visiting the World Heritage site and to provide real-time information as to the tip of the Peninsula in an effort to prevent accidents and protect the environment. The House is also planned to be a facility for education in marine and terrestrial ecosystems and the precious Nature of Shiretoko.



Campsites

Shiretoko Campsite

15-minute walk from the center of Utoro town, it is situated on a plateau called Yuhidai, dotted with big trees whose leafy shade is pleasant. If it is fine, the sun setting in the Sea of Okhotsk is beautiful.



[DATA] Address: Utoro, Shari-cho, Shari-gun Hokkaido
Phone: 0152-24-2722 (closing period: 0152-62-2211)
Open: Jun. 20th to Sep. 10th
Camping charge: adult: ¥320; child: ¥200 for one night

Rausu-onsen Campsite

It is a Campsite in a forest, 3 km along the Shiretoko Crossing Road from Rausu toward Shiretoko Pass. Across the road, there is the Kumanoyu Hot Spring (open-air) that is available free of charge, and the Campsite is popular and is crowded during peak season. It is also near the starting point of a trail of Mt. Rausu and a geyser. Maintained by local volunteers, Kumanoyu Hot Spring is a place where local people can relax. Make sure to follow the rules when you bathe.



[DATA] Address: Yunosawacho, Rausu-cho, Menashi-gun, Hokkaido
Phone: 0153-87-2126 (Environmental Management Division, Rausu Town Hall)
Open: Jun. 1st to Oct. 31st
Camping charge: ¥300; pre-school child: free of charge

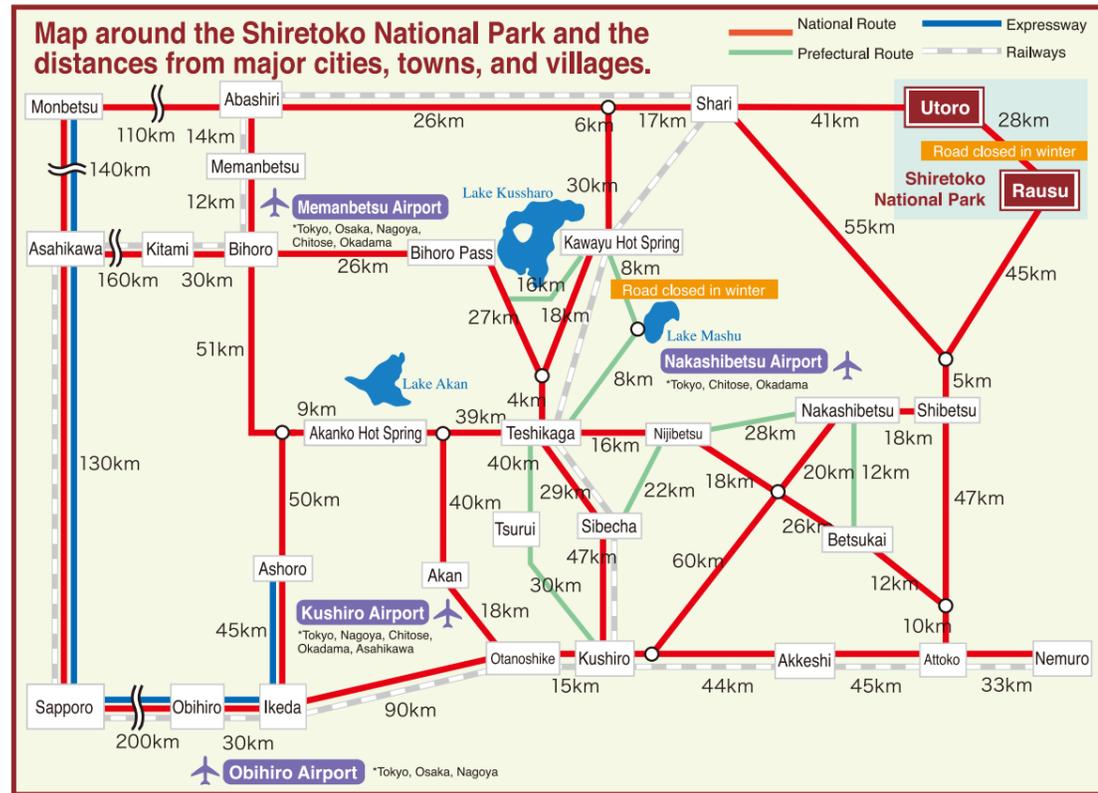
Rausu Town Rinkan Hiroba Campsite

It is a quiet Campsite in a forest far ahead of the ex-Rausu Municipal Ski Course. Maintaining natural geographical features, it is relaxing and not crowded in peak season. Follow the ascent further, and you'll find an observatory that commands a panorama of the central area of Rausu town, the Nemuro Strait and Kunashiri Island.

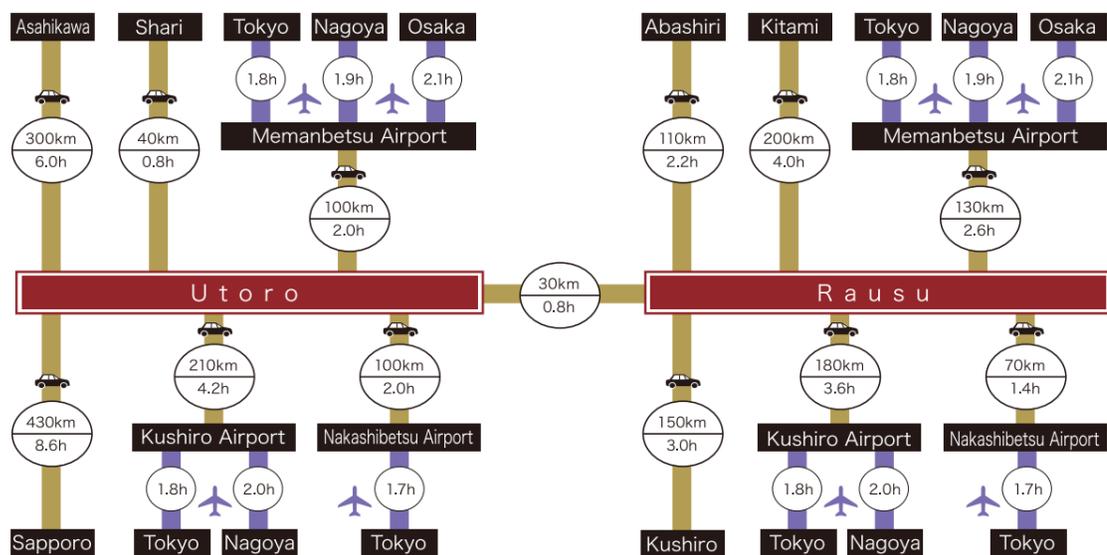
[DATA] Address: 31-1 Rebuncho, Rausu-cho, Menashi-gun, Hokkaido
Phone: 0153-87-2126 (Environmental Management Division, Rausu Town Hall)
Open: Jun. 1st to Oct. 31st
Camping charge: ¥300 for one night; pre-school child: free of charge

Access to the Shiretoko National Park

To go to Utoro in Shiretoko National Park, use a car or ride on a bus from Shiretoko-Shari Station on JR Senmo Line. To go to Rausu at the Nemuro side, a car is commonly used. In the case of air travel, Utoro is accessible from Memanbetsu Airport, while Rausu is accessible from Nakashibetsu Airport.



Schematic diagram of the access to the Shiretoko National Park



List of Related Facilities and Organizations (and Contact Info)

* See page 21 for contact list of recreational and information facilities of the National Park.

Air Travel (Memanbetsu Airport, Nakashibetsu Airport)

JAL	0120-25-5971
*For Mobile Phones	0570-025-071
ANA	0120-029-222
*For Mobile Phones	0570-029-222
AIRDO	0120-057-333

Bus

Shari Bus, Main Office	0152-23-2451
Shari Bus, Utoro Terminal (4/28/31)	0152-24-2054
Abashiri Bus, Abashiri Office	0152-43-4101
Akan Bus, Rausu Office	0153-87-2046
Akan Bus, Nakashibetsu Office	0153-73-4370

Trains (Stations)

JR Shiretoko Shari Station	0152-23-2634
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Hired Cars

Shari Hire (Shari Town)	0152-23-2100
Shiretoko Hire (Shari Town)	0152-23-2010
Utoro Tourist Hire (Shari Town)	0152-24-2121
Rausu Hire (Rausu Town)	0153-87-2002

Rental Cars (Ask at tourist information centers in airports and stations)

Memabetsu Airport	
Tourist Information Center	0152-74-4182
Nakashibetsu Airport	
Tourist Information Center	0153-72-3190
Shiretoko Shari	
Tourist Information Center	0152-23-2424
Abashiri Station	
Tourist Information Center	0152-43-4261

Tourist Information Facilities and Organizations

(Shari Town)	
Shiretoko Shari Town Tourist Association	0152-22-2125
Shiretoko Shari Tourist Information Center	0152-23-2424
Shiretoko Utoro Tourist Information (in Road Station Utoro-Shiretoko)	0152-24-2639
Road Station Shari	0152-26-8888
Road Station Utoro-Shiretoko	0152-22-5000
(Rausu Town)	
Shiretoko Rausu Town Tourist Association	0153-87-3360
Rausu Town Tourist Information Center (in Road Station Shiretoko Rausu)	0153-87-3330
Road Station Shiretoko Rausu	0153-87-5151
(Wide Area Tourist Related Facilities)	
Okhotsk Region Tourist Union	0152-45-1885
Nemuro Tourist Union	0153-29-2427

Facilities That Offer Information and Commentaries on Nature

(Shari Town)	
Shiretoko Forest Center	0152-23-3009
(Rausu Town)	
Rausu Town Folk Museum	0153-87-2004

Town Halls

Shari Town Hall (Information Desk)	0152-23-3131
Shari Town Hall, Utoro Office	0152-24-2200
Rausu Town Hall (Information Desk)	0153-87-2111

Police Stations, Fire Stations

Shari Police Station (Information Desk)	0152-23-0110
Shari Police Station, Utoro Substation	0152-24-2010
Shari Fire Station (Information Desk)	0152-23-2435
Shari Area Fire Union,	
Utoro Substation (Information Desk)	0152-24-2110
Nakashibetsu Police Station, Rausu Substation	0153-87-2151
Rausu Fire Station	0153-87-2119

Medical Facilities

Shari National Health Insurance Hospital (Information Desk)	0152-23-2102
Hokkaido Utoro Clinic	0152-24-2052
Rausu National Health Insurance Hospital (Information Desk)	0153-87-2116

Profile of National Parks in Japan

The Japanese Islands - 70% of the land is covered by forests and blessed with diverse biota from subarctic to subtropical zones. National park areas represent Japan's rich and beautiful nature.

National Parks in Japan, founded in 1931, has a history of over 70 years. Presently, from Hokkaido to Ryukyu archipelago, 29 areas have been designated as national parks nationwide, amounting to 5% of land area of the country. National parks contain the nation's representative natural environments and comprise the framework for conserving natural environments and biodiversity of Japan.

National parks in Japan include not only primeval forests and wetlands, but also agricultural lands, communities and their surrounding nature, places that developed through interactions of humans and nature, as well as historical and cultural sceneries. They are also intended for recreation, tourism, and educational activities, emphasizing the symbiosis with regional communities.

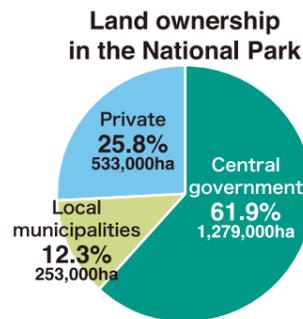
National parks are designated regardless of land ownership. Although enhancement of nature conservation has been considered, most of stateowned lands within parks are managed and utilized for other purposes as well, such as forestry or river-coastal management. Thus on a cooperative basis and the fostering of partnership with local communities and interest groups, the balance between conservation and sustainable use of natural resources is the foundation of national park management in Japan.

The management of national parks is carried out based on zoning. Park areas are divided into 3 zones according to their characteristics of the natural environment and scenery; most strictly protected Special Protection Zone, the main component Special Zone, and the Ordinary Zone as a buffer zone. Activities that may affect the scenery such as cutting down trees or construction works require permits or a notification from the authorities.

The management of national parks on site is carried out by the regional office of the Ministry of the Environment, with the aid from local governments. National Park Rangers (The Nature Conservation Officer) are assigned at each park, making adjustments for development deals, maintenance of facilities, promoting public awareness, conducting interpretation, and closely monitoring the natural environment.

National Parks in Japan

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu | 19 Ise-Shima |
| 2 Shiretoko | 20 Yoshino-Kumano |
| 3 Akan | 21 Sanin-Kaigan |
| 4 Kushiro Shitsugen | 22 Setonaikai |
| 5 Daisetsuzan | 23 Daisen-Ok |
| 6 Shikotsu-Toya | 24 Ashizuri-Uwakai |
| 7 Towada-Hachimantai | 25 Saikai |
| 8 Rikuchu-Kaigan | 26 Unzen-Amakusa |
| 9 Bandai-Asahi | 27 Aso-Kuju |
| 10 Nikko | 28 Kirishima-Yaku |
| 11 Oze | 29 Iriomote-Ishigaki |
| 12 Joshinetsu-Kogen | |
| 13 Chichibu-Tama-Kai | |
| 14 Ogasawara | |
| 15 Fuji-Hakone-Izu | |
| 16 Chubu-Sangaku | |
| 17 Hakusan | |
| 18 Minami Alps | |



Conservation of the Natural Environments in Hokkaido

Hokkaido retains the largest amount of primitive nature in Japan, which boasts abundant nature. There are various mechanisms for natural environment conservation in addition to national parks, in order to protect nature, coexist with it, and hand it over to the next generation.

Natural Parks

Japanese natural parks include 29 national parks, 56 quasi-national parks, which are natural scenic spots ranked second, and prefectural natural parks, which are natural scenic spots ranked third in addition to national parks. This is the Japan's largest conservation system.

Wilderness Areas and Nature Conservation Areas

The Japanese government designated the pristine regions that have not been affected by human activities and the regions that keep its natural environments as wilderness areas (5 areas) and nature conservation areas (10 areas).

World Natural Heritage

Pursuant to the "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," it was judged that these regions should be protected and preserved internationally as the heritages have universal values for humankind.

Ramsar Sites

In 1980, Japan signed on "the Ramsar Convention (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat)" for the purpose of promoting the conservation of internationally-important marshes and animals and plants inhabiting and growing there, and registered Kushiro Marsh. As of 2008, 33 sites (130,293 ha) have been inscribed in Japan.

National Wildlife Protection Areas

The purpose of these areas is to promote the protection and breeding of wildlife (wild birds and mammals). These districts are classified into the four categories: large-scale habitats, migratory birds' areas, breeding places, and rare wildlife habitats. In these areas, it is prohibited to capture birds and mammals, and some programs for protecting wild birds and mammals are carried out.

