

National Parks of Japan



National Parks

The National Parks, occupying 5.6% of the country's total land, plays a crucial role in protecting the Japan's wealthy ecosystems -- forests, wetlands, seashores and coral reefs and wildlife therein ... and preserving them for future generations. The National Parks also aims at providing opportunities for the experience, enjoyment and better understanding of the country's natural environment by visitors.

Please visit Japan's National Parks with this brochure as a travel guide.

While being advanced in science and industry, Japan is a country of scenic landscapes. To represent the Japan's natural beauty and the seasonal contrasts, 31 sites from Hokkaido in north to Okinawa and Ogasawara Islands in south, are designated as the National Parks.

National Park unit name

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu | 16 Chubusangaku |
| 2 Shiretoko | 17 Hakusan |
| 3 Akan | 18 Minami Alps |
| 4 Kushiroshitsugen | 19 Ise-Shima |
| 5 Daisetsuzan | 20 Yoshino-Kumano |
| 6 Shikotsu-Toya | 21 San'in-kaigan |
| 7 Towada-Hachimantai | 22 Setonaikai |
| 8 Sanriku Fukko (reconstruction) | 23 Daisen-Okii |
| 9 Bandai-Asahi | 24 Ashizuri-Uwakai |
| 10 Nikko | 25 Saikai |
| 11 Oze | 26 Unzen-Amakusa |
| 12 Joshin'etsukogen | 27 Aso-Kuju |
| 13 Chichibu-Tama-Kai | 28 Kirishima-Kinkowan |
| 14 Ogasawara | 29 Yakushima |
| 15 Fuji-Hakone-Izu | 30 Keramashoto |
| | 31 Iriomote-Ishigaki |

A Scenic Country, Japan

Solitary mountain peaks, covered with snow

all year round, soar into the air,

while islands of various sizes are scattered on a spring sea gleaming like a mirror.

Forests and lakes turn to brilliant shades of autumn color like a piece of brocade...

a variety of natural views are displayed in all four seasons everywhere in the country, which capture hearts of many people.

Winter

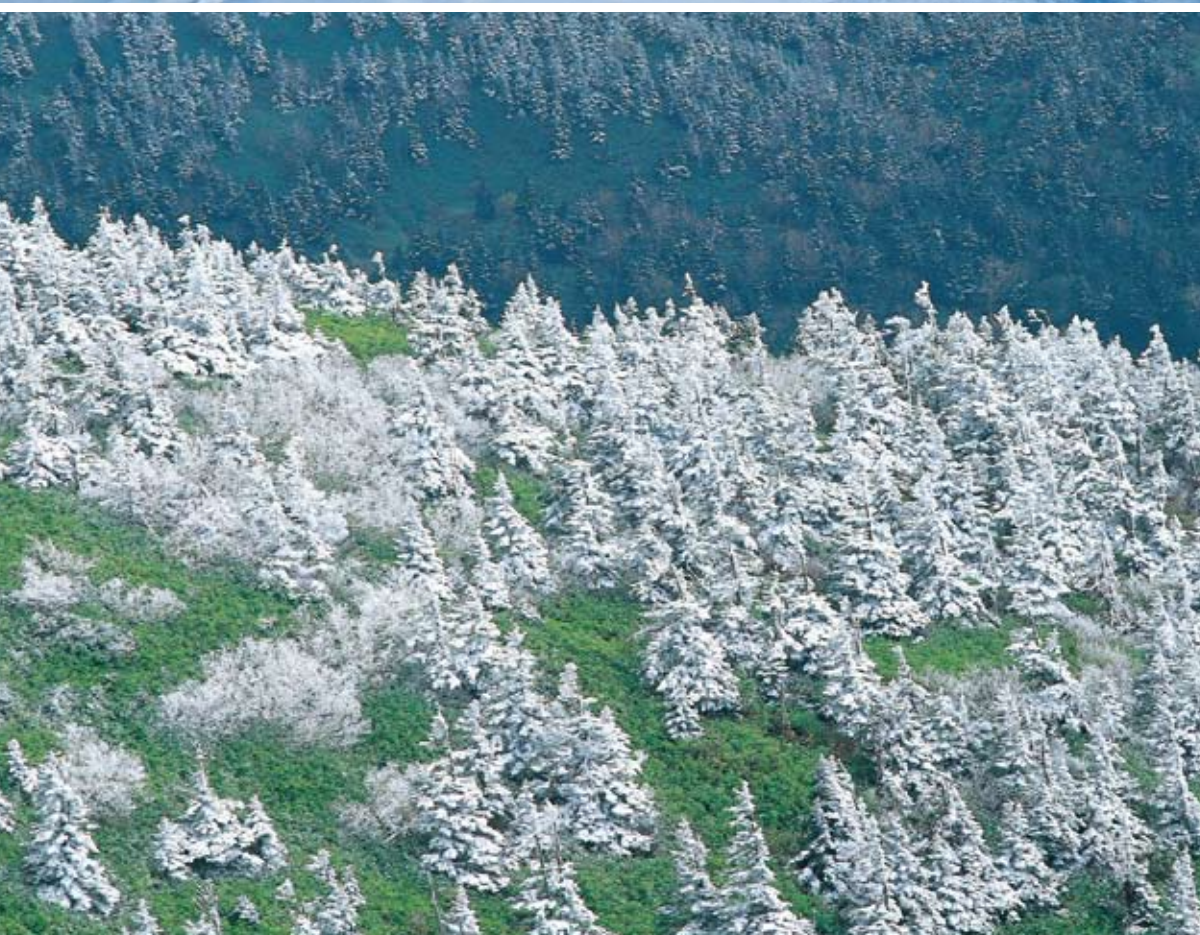
In the world of all white



Hoar frost covered trees on Mt. Unzen-myoken-dake (Unzen-Amakusa NP) (3)



A messenger of winter: the Steller's sea eagle (Shiretoko NP) (4)
Surging ice floe, with Kunashiri Island in the distance (Shiretoko NP) (5)



Mt. Asahidake rising fumes in the snow
(Daisetsusan NP) (1)

Hoar frost on Japanese alpine snow-firs
(Towada-Hachimantai NP) (2)



COLUMN

Migratory birds —a sign of the changing seasons

Since ancient times, Japanese have sensed the beginning of a new season by bird migration. In late fall, mallard and swans fly from the north, spend winter in Japan and return to the north in spring. Other species, such as swallows and gray-faced-buzzard eagles, migrate from the south in early spring, and nurture juveniles in summer. Snipes and plovers visit the country both in spring and fall on the way to their final destinations. The National Parks play a vital role as habitats of these migratory birds and other wildlife.



Whooper swans over
Kussharo Lake (Akan NP)

(Photo by Toshitaka Morita)

Spring

Soft sunlight, Budding of trees and flowers

Japanese hill cherry blossoms showcasing the spring color of Mt. Yoshino (Yoshino-Kumano NP) (1)



Asian skunk cabbage in Oze Marsh (Oze NP) (2)
Wild azaleas and the Kuju Mountain Range (Aso-Kuju NP) (3)



A cape in a sea mist, Okino-shima Island (Daisen-Oki NP) (4)

COLUMN

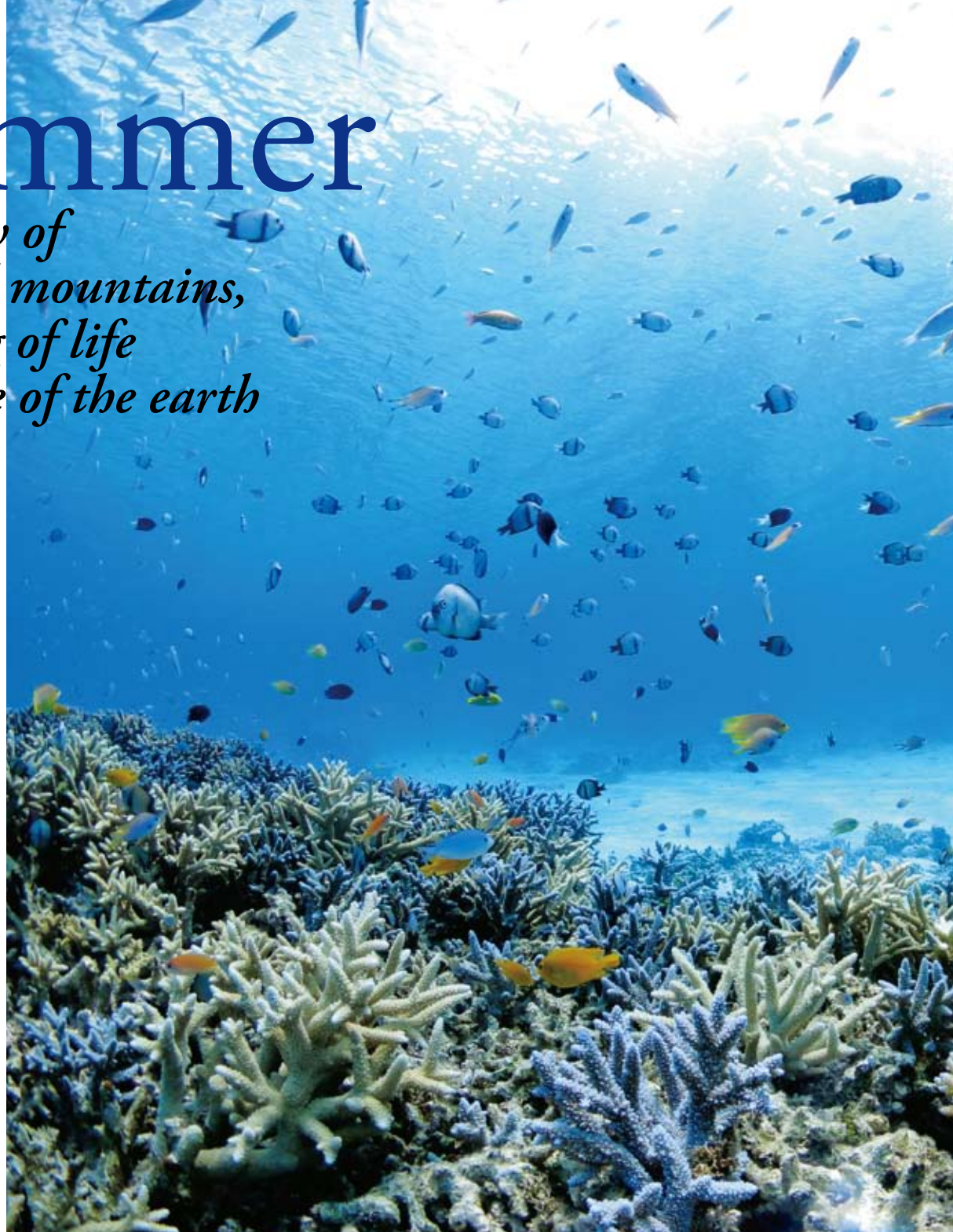
Cherry blossom front

In late March, when cherry trees begin blooming in southern Kyushu and Shikoku, Japanese people start caring about 'Cherry blossom front', which forecasts expected dates for cherry blossoms. For the following a month and half, cherry blossom front moves slowly up to the north in the Japanese archipelago. People are anxious to view the gorgeous full blooming and are fascinated with the transient nature of flowers dying in a few days and a beauty in the way of falling petals.



Summer

*The glow of
seas and mountains,
The song of life
in praise of the earth*



The bountiful clear ocean in Kerama Blue.
(Keramashoto NP) (1)



A flower carpet spreading over near the summit of
Mt. Hakuba-dake, the Japan Northern Alps
(Chubusangaku NP) (2)



The summer of the archipelagic sea (Setonaikai NP) (3)

Islands of Yaeyama in the coral sea (Iriomote-Ishigaki NP) (5)



A flower garden on a major ridge of Asahi Mountain Range (Bandai-Asahi NP) (6)

(Photo 1 by Seiji Miyazato; 2: Tsuyoshi Takahashi; 3, 4 & 5: Toshitaka Morita; 6: Shinichi Satake)

Kushiro River, flowing through the wetlands (Kushiroshitsugen NP) (4)



COLUMN

A mountain high paradise —The garden of wildflowers

Summer is the season for mountain hiking. The mountains in north of central Japan offer an amusement for hikers to spot fields of wildflowers. As climbing a mountain trail patiently, where trees become sparse, hikers will find the garden of colorful alpine flowers spreading like a carpet. Alpine plants are adapted to harsh alpine environments such as low temperatures, strong wind and prolonged periods of snow pack. Most species bloom all at once in the short summer. The lovely and healthy life forms determined to survive in such severity is a remarkable view, etched into hiker's memories.



Komakusa (*Dicentra* sp.)

Fall

*Clear mountain streams,
Colorful meadows and forests*

Mt. Asahidake, seen from mire pools in
autumn color (Taisetsusan NP) (1)



Autumn sunset at Setonaikai Inland
Sea (Setonaikai NP) (2)



Kusa-momiji (Grass autumn color) and
Japanese larch trees (Nikko NP) (3)

Autumn leaves and Ryuzuno-taki Fall (Nikko NP) (4)



COLUMN

Seeking for the autumn color

Japan is said to have the most splendid autumn leaves because of its abundant and diverse deciduous broad-leaved forests. In fall, a variety of deciduous species, such as maple, Katsura tree and mountain ash, turn red or yellow with delicately varied shades of color, which covers the mountain surface. The vividness of autumn color is different every year even at a same location because it depends on temperature variability and moisture conditions. Japanese people go out in the fields and mountains seeking for the view of autumn leaves, which has been a popular activity since 1000 years ago. Towada Lake, Oirase Stream and Oku-nikko, and other famous spots are crowded by viewers most during autumn leaf seasons.



Experience the Japan's natural beauty

The National Parks contain the Japan's most scenic mountains and seas. While the Parks feature both preserving almost intact ecosystems and offering the enjoyment of accessible scenic delicate sites nearby residential areas. Whether you head out on foot to the mountains, immerse yourself in the wilderness of deep woods and hidden streams, seek for a grandeur scenery, or enjoy wildlife viewing, Japan's finest views will be revealed. Use information services and guides available in the visitor centers and other park facilities for your full enjoyment.



1	
2	3
4	

- 1 Trekking in wetlands (Oze NP)
- 2 Diving with a dolphin (Ogasawara NP)
- 3 Bird-watching (Joshiin'etsukogen NP)
- 4 Sea-kayaking (Iriomote-Ishigaki NP)



National Park guide Visitor Centers

Visitor centers are the park facilities introducing special qualities of natural objects and processes in the park, to assist visitors to understand better and enjoy the park. Park visitors can learn about the park's scenic views and wildlife from the presentation of replicas, posters, diorama and videos. Real-time wildlife information, such as about blooming flowers and bear sightings, and information on the best hiking trails are also available. Use these free visitor centers to plan your activities and destinations in the National Parks.



Kamikochi Visitor Center (Chubusangaku NP)



Enjoy hot spring spas



Japan is a volcanic country, with hot springs all over the country. It has been a traditional recreation for the general public to bathe in hot springs out in the countryside, where they can enjoy scenic views and visit historical and cultural objects, temples and shrines. In old hot spring towns, rich nature and culture are preserved. The National Parks featuring volcanoes offer various types of hot springs and ways of the enjoyment. You can enjoy outdoor bathing while viewing snow, streams, oceans, and so on. Tourists may select their destinations depending on minerals dissolved in spring waters. Local foods and delicacy add more pleasure to the visitor's enjoyment of hot springs.

1	2
	3
4	5

- 1 An outdoor bath of Nyuto Hot Spring, famous for its white spring (Towada-Hachimantai NP)
- 2 Seseiki Hot Spring, an underwater hot spring looking out at the Kunashiri Island (Shiretoko NP)
- 3 A hot spring lodge surrounded by autumn leaves (Towada-Hachimantai NP)
- 4 Fumes from Unzen Hot Spring (Unzen-Amakusa NP)
- 5 Monkeys bathing in a hot spring, Jigokudani-yaen-kouen (Joshiin'etsukogen NP)

