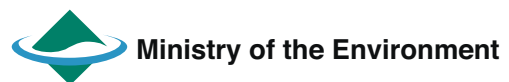


National Parks of Japan

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Front cover: Mt. Fuji in spring, seen from the
shores of Kawaguchi Lake

Back cover: Mt. Taisetsu in autumn color

(Photos by Toshitaka Morita)

National Parks

The National Parks, occupying 5% 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, 28 sites from Hokkaido in north to Okinawa and Ogasawara Islands in south, are designated as the National Parks.

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

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.

Kamikochi (Chubu-Sangaku NP) (Photo by Toshitaka Morita)

Winter

In the world of all white



Mt. Taisetsu rising fumes in the snow
(Taisetsusan NP) (1)



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



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)



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 (Nikko 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 summer of the archipelagic sea (Setonaikai NP) (1)
A flower carpet spreading over near the summit of Mt. Hakuba-dake,
the Japan Northern Alps (Chubu-sangaku NP) (2)



Kushiro River, flowing through the wetlands (Kushiro-shitsugen NP) (3)



Islands of Yaeyama in the coral sea (Iriomote 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 (*Dicenta* sp.)



A flower garden on a major ridge of Asahi Mountain Range (Bandai-Asahi NP) (5)

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

Fall

*Clear mountain streams,
Colorful meadows and forests*

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



Autumn sunset at Seto-naikai Inland Sea (Seto-naikai 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 steams, 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 (Nikko NP)
- 2 Diving with a dolphin (Ogasawara NP)
- 3 Bird-watching(Joshinetsu-kogen NP)
- 4 Sea-kayaking (Iriomote NP)



National Park guide Visitor Centers

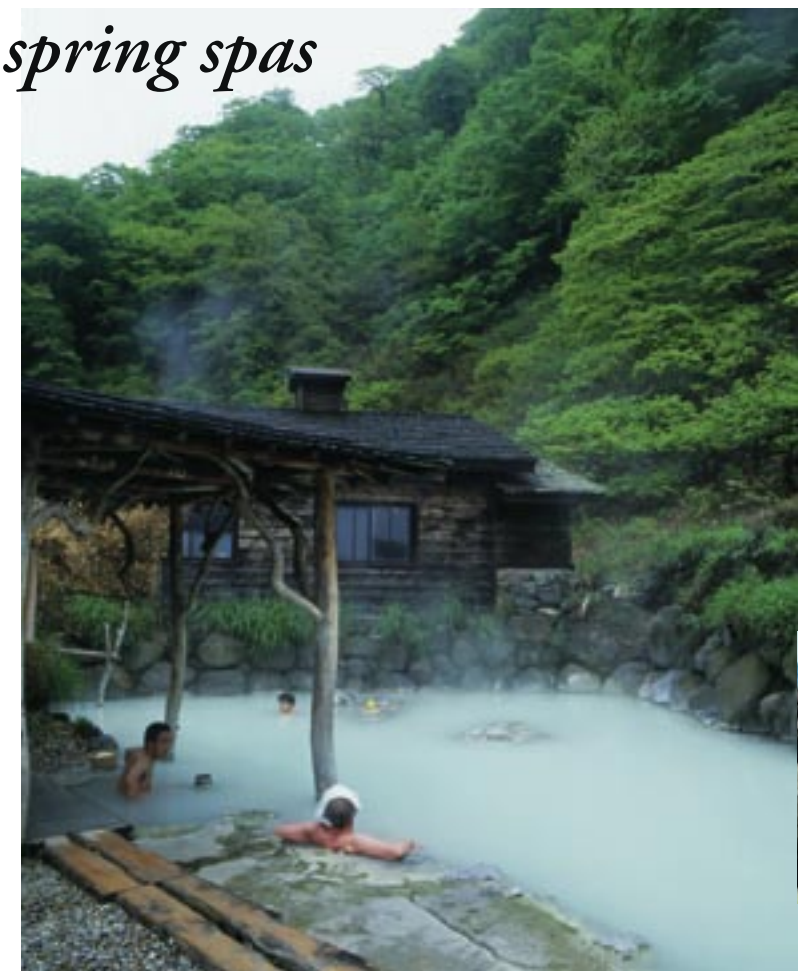
Visitor centers are the park facilities introducing special qualities of natural objects and processes in the park, to assist visitors to understand better and enjoy the park. Park visitors can learn about the park's scenic views and wildlife from the presentation of replicas, posters, diorama and videos. 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 (Chubu-sangaku 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 Seseki 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 (Joshinetsu-kogen NP)



1. Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu

24,166ha

The Japan's nothernmost national park, consisting of two islands and an expanse of wetlands. A variety of scenery, from mountains to wetlands, are truly enjoyable.

2. Shiretoko

38,633ha

Contains primeval ecosystems with diverse wildlife, remaining in Shiretoko Peninsura. In winter a portion of coastline is covered with drifting ice. Inscribed on the World Natural Heritage List.

3. Akan

90,481ha

A park of forests, lakes and volcanoes. Boasts a majestic view of three crater lakes including Akan Lake, known for spherical moss, Marimo, and surrounding coniferous forests.

4. Kushiro-Shitsugen

26,861ha

The Japan's largest wetland complex. Supports about 200 plant species and some rare species, including Japanese crane and Sakhalin taimen. Canoe touring is popular.

5. Taisetsusan

226,764ha

The Japan's largest national park, featuring Taisetsu Mountains, and wetlands and alpine plant communities at over 2000m elevations. A stunning view of autumn leaves.

6. Shikotsu-Toya

99,473ha

Consists of two crater lakes and active volcanic mountains. With popular hot spring resorts, such as Noboribetsu, the park offers a host of vacation options.

7. Towada-Hachimantai

85,551ha

Encompasses from a Japan's most picturesque mountain stream view, vast open space of broad-leaved trees, to a plateau, Hachimantai. The park also features old several therapeutic hot spring resorts.

8. Rikuchu-Kaigan

12,212ha

A seashore park stretching for about 180km on the coast of northeastern Honshu. A series of enormous bluffs offer a spectacular vista and is called Sea Alps.

9. Bandai-Asahi

186,404ha

Mt. Dewa-sanzan, famous for mountain worship, Asahi-Iide Mountain Range, Mt. Bandai, and numerous lakes - the majestic views of moutains, forests and lakes adorn the park.

10. Nikko

140,021ha

Features various aspects: a historical architecture, Nikko Toshogu; a summer retreat on a mountain, Chuzenji Lake; the Japan's most prominent mountain wetlands, Oze Marsh. The park is close to Tokyo and easily accessible.

11. Joshinetsu-Kogen

189,062ha

Consists of a highland and its surrounding chain of mountains sitting on a continental divide. This park has several ski resorts and hot springs, drawing a large number of tourists.

12. Chichibu-Tama-Kai

126,259ha

The old stratum mountains are home to natural forests of beech, Japanese hemlock and veitch fir, Located in the headwater of Tokyo, bounty forests and streams provide a recreational groud for urban communities.

13. Ogasawara

6,099ha

Subtropical oceanic islands of over 30 islands are scattered in the 1000km south of Tokyo. Humpback whales migrate to the surrounding ocean. The islands support many endemic species such as Ogasawara fruit bat.

14. Fuji-Hakone-Izu

121,714ha

Mt. Fuji rises high in a vast stretch of luxius forests and several lakes. The Hakone area features several volcanoes, volcanic vents and lakes. Izu Peninsura offers scenic mountains, seashores, and a chain of characteristic islands in the ocean, Izu-shichito.

15. Chubu-Sangaku

174,323ha

One of the most prominent mountain parks. Encompasses a number of precipitous 3000m peaks. Kamikochi highland and Mt. Tateyama attract many tourists seeking for magnificent mountain views.

16. Hakusan

47,700ha

Consists of a sacred mountain, Mt. Hakusan, and its foot. Because of rich alpine plants, the area has a long history of plant research. Broad-leaved trees, mainly beech, are distributed.

17. Minami Alps

35,752ha

A mountain park with a series of 3000m mountains, covered with thick coniferous forests while alpine plants on their tops. It is a paradise for mountaineers willing to a long walk.

18. Ise-Shima

55,544ha

Comprised of an elegantly displayed coastline with numerous inlets and outlets, Shima Peninsura, and a symbol of the Japan's ancient religion and culture, Ise Shrine. The mountain behind the shrine has been protected as a sacred forest.

19. Yoshino-Kumano

59,793ha

Consists of forested mountains and Kumano Valley in the middle of Kii Peninsura and its shorelines. The area is famous for Mt. Yoshino with cherry blossoms and historic sites; Ohmine Mountain Range, a training ground for Shugen-do (Japanese esoteric Buddhism) practitioners; and Mt. Kumano-sanzan.

20. Sanin-Kaigan

8,784ha

This 75-km shoreline park in the Kinki and Chugoku districts offers a spectacular view of intricate shorelines with caves and surrounding clear ocean water. Distinctive plant species are found in a desert-like view of Tottori Sand Dune.

21. Setonaikai

66,934ha

About 3000 islands, small and large, spread over the Seto Inland Sea. Human life and natural beauty are peacefully blended to create this park's view.

22. Daisen-Oki

35,053ha

Mt. Daisen, a highest mountain in the Chugoku district; Oki Islands of large to small 180 islands; the Shimane Peninsura known for Izumo Taisha Shrine; and Mt. Sanbe and Mt.Hiruzen - all are the components of the Daisen-Oki National Park.

23. Ashizuri-Uwakai

11,345ha

A marine park in southwestern Shikoku, featuring a delicate scenery with an intricate shoreline pattern and numerous islands in north (Uwa-kai) and contrasting dynamic view in south (Ashizuri), where high bluffs extend along its shoreline. The sea has richly decorated underwater views with abundant coral community.

24. Saikai

24,646ha

A marine and islands park in northwestern Kyushu. A chain of over 200 a form this archipelagic sea. The sunset view is especially breathtaking. Also, the Goto archipelago in the East China Sea consists of over 250 islands.

25. Unzen-Amakusa

28,279ha

The Unzen area in the center of Shimabara Peninsura hosts summer resorts, known by the famous volcanic activity of Mt. Fugen in 1990 and hot springs. The Amakusa Islands of 120 islands, small and large, is known for its scenic beauty.

26. Aso-Kuju

72,678ha

A park of volcanoes and grass fields. Mt. Aso has an extremely large caldera, while Mt. Kuju is a series of dome-shaped volcanoes. The grassy fields on their hillslopes have been maintained by human activities, such as prescribed burning and cattle grazing.

27. Kirishima-Yaku

57,078ha

The Kirishima area is a collection of over 20 volcanoes. Natural trees spread over the mountain foot. The Yaku-shima Island, inscribed on the World Natural Heritage, is known for the forests of over 1000 years-old cedars.

28. Iriomote

13,547ha

At the southwest end of the Japanese archipelago, the park encompasses Iriomote and Ishigaki Islands, smaller islands and coral reefs. Subtropical forests blanket 80% of Iriomote, supporting a large number of rare species such as the Iriomote wild cat.



The National Park Profile



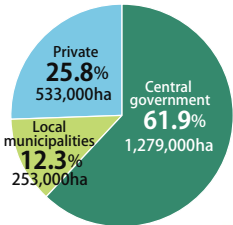
The National Park System

The National Park System aims at protecting the scenery that represents the Japan's natural beauty and leaving them unimpaired for future generations. Within the National Parks, while activities to cause environmental impacts are regulated under the law, the improvement of park facilities, such as trails and visitor centers, and rehabilitation of degraded areas are conducted.

Currently, 28 sites are designated as the National Parks, covering 2.065 million hectares or 5.4% of the country's ground surface. Designation and management of National Parks are administered by the Ministry of the Environment. The Ministry's staffs who are called 'rangers' work on field management in each of the National Parks.

The Japan's National Parks contain local public and private lands, many of which are often used for forestry and other purposes. Therefore, the partnership among the central and local governments and local people is important in the operation of the National Park system.

Land ownership in the National Park



- Legend
- Major airport
 - National Park unit
 - World Natural Heritage site
 - 1 Shiretoko
 - 2 Shirakamisanchi
 - 3 Yakushima

