

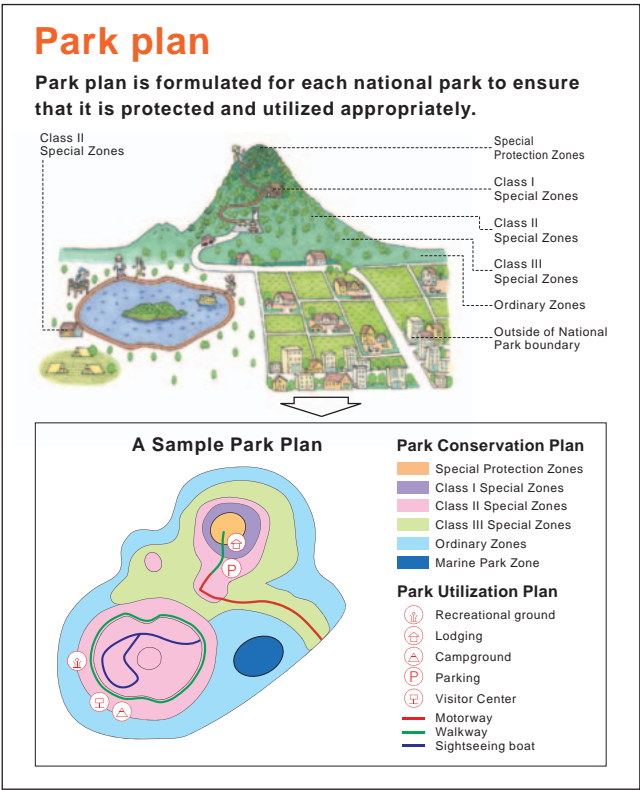


# National Parks & Important Biodiversity Areas of JAPAN



National Parks & Important Biodiversity Areas of JAPAN

## National Parks of JAPAN



## National Park System of Japan

National Parks of Japan are designated and protected under The Natural Parks Law of Japan, which aims at enhancing the protection and utilization of representative landscapes of Japan and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the promotion of the health, recreation, and education of the people.

Besides National Parks, there are two other types of natural park in Japan, depending on the size and other factors: Quasi-National Parks and Prefectural Natural Parks.

A National Park can contain not only natural areas with little human intervention but also developed areas such as a rural village and a recreational area as well as land used for agriculture, forestry, etc.

The park area is divided into different zones, depending on the level of protection and utilization, and the Park Plan is drawn up to provide for facilities such as roads and lodges in light of the convenience and opportunities of visitors to enjoy the natural environment.

## Roles for Biodiversity Conservation

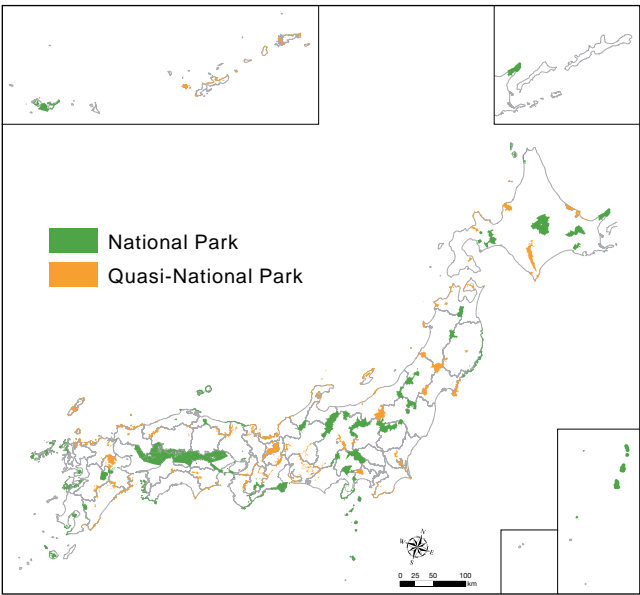
In response to the increasing social needs for the conservation of biodiversity, The Natural Parks Law of Japan was recently amended, clearly stating that the contribution to the conservation of biodiversity is one of the objectives of National Parks and Quasi-National Parks of Japan. At the same time, the importance of natural parks in conserving the biodiversity of Japan has been given official recognition as constituting the “backbone” of biodiversity in Japan in the National Biodiversity Strategy of Japan (<http://www.env.go.jp/en/focus/attach/071210-e.pdf>).

## Current Status

At present, there are 29 National Parks, 56 Quasi-National Parks, and 312 Prefectural Natural Parks in Japan; the area covered by these natural parks accounts for as much as 14 % of the total area of Japan.

### Basic Information of Japan

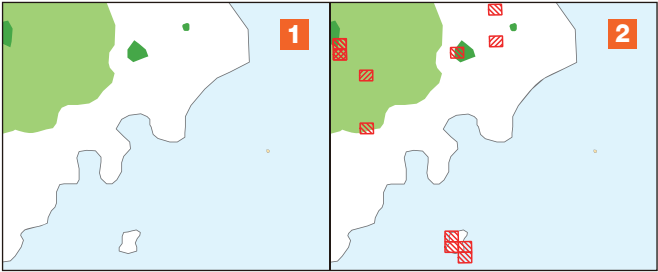
Land area	377,914 km <sup>2</sup>
Length of coastline	35,126 km
Territorial waters	310,000 km <sup>2</sup>
Exclusive Economic Zone	4,479,358 km <sup>2</sup>
Population (Oct. 2010)	127,510,000



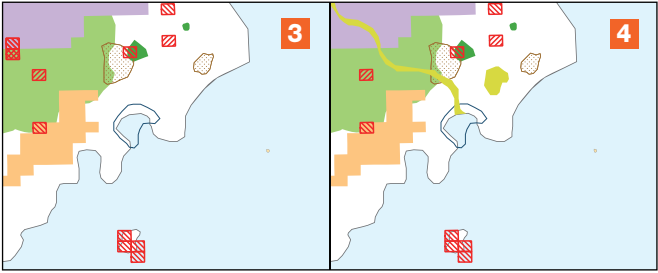
Type	Number	Land area (ha)	Ratio to total national land area (%)	Sea area (ha)	Ratio to total territorial water area (%)
National Park	29	2,087,475	5.5	1,393,978	4.5
Quasi-National Park	56	1,362,030	3.6	451,979	1.5
Prefectural Natural Park	312	1,968,465	5.2	—	—
Total	397	5,417,970	14.3	1,845,957	5.9

# Identification of Important Biodiversity Areas and Gap Analysis

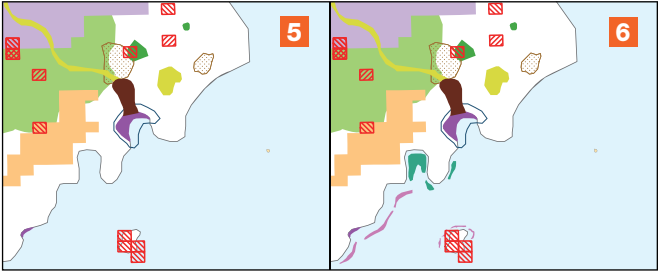
Japan has long been conducting a series of National Surveys on the Natural Environment, collecting nation-wide baseline environmental information including the actual vegetation covers. Based on such data, areas important for the conservation of biodiversity (hereinafter “Important Biodiversity Areas”) have been identified in cooperation with experts, as is explained below, and then unprotected Important Biodiversity Areas, or gaps, have been identified by overlaying these areas with the areas protected by the existing National Parks and Quasi-National Parks of Japan.



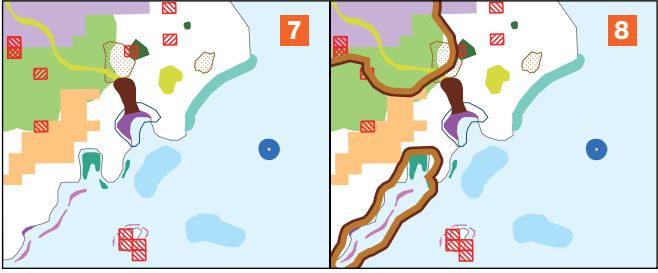
**1 Important areas based on vegetation**  
Large-scale typical natural forests (1000 ha or larger) (■) and vegetations that are formed by unique environmental factors regardless of their size (■) were firstly selected as important areas.



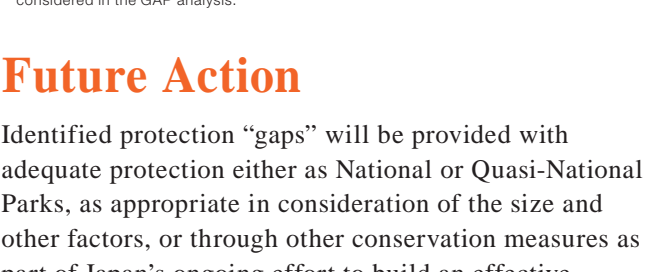
**2 Important habitats of plants**  
Areas where many threatened endemic species of Japan were recorded (■) were identified as important habitats of plants. Hotspot analysis was also carried out by experts and areas with high risks of extinction were identified (■). In addition, areas of the distribution of the plant species dependent on special habitats were identified.



**3 Important habitats of animals**  
Areas where threatened local populations of animal species that require large habitat areas (e.g. bears) (■) and those dependent on man-altered ecosystems (■) were identified as important habitats of animals. Areas of importance for the conservation of specific animals (i.e. birds (■), reptiles, amphibians, and insects (■)) were also identified.



**4 Important areas of freshwater ecosystems**  
Rivers, lakes, and marshes that foster rich biodiversity or that have large-scale, excellent nature (■) were identified as important areas of freshwater ecosystems.



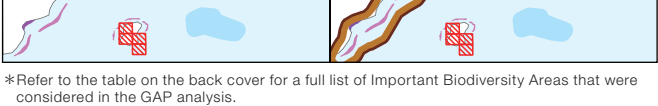
**5 Important areas of the coastal region**  
Ecotones between terrestrial and marine ecosystems, i.e. areas of tidal flats (■), salt marshes of a certain size as well as the whole areas of mangrove (■), were identified as important areas of the coastal region.



**6 Important areas of shallow waters**  
Large-scale seaweed beds (■) and the whole areas of coral reefs (■) that provide habitats for diverse marine organisms were identified as important areas of shallow water.



**7 Important habitats of marine life**  
The coastlines inhabited by seals and marine areas where the finless porpoise or the dugong are distributed (■), the breeding grounds of the humpback whale, the breeding grounds of seabird colonies (■), beaches where sea turtles lay eggs (■), and important sandbanks were identified as important habitats of marine life.



**8 Identification of protection gaps**  
Protection gaps have been identified by overlaying the Important Biodiversity Areas identified through steps (1) to (7) with the areas protected under the existing National Parks (■).

## Future Action

Identified protection “gaps” will be provided with adequate protection either as National or Quasi-National Parks, as appropriate in consideration of the size and other factors, or through other conservation measures as part of Japan’s ongoing effort to build an effective network of biodiversity conservation.

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10	11	12
	13	14

### Front cover photos

1. Okinawa rail

2. Nakaumi – large brackish lake

3. Kuroiwa's ground gecko

4. Coral reefs of Sekisei lagoon

5. Spotted seal

6. Kushiro-shitsugen wetland

7. Mangroves of Iriomote Island
8. Beech forest of Shirakami-sanchi

9. Humpback whale

10. Ishikawa's frog

11. Abe's salamander

12. Tsushima leopard cat

13. Tidal flat of Shin-Maikohama

14. *Dryas octpetala*

## Important Biodiversity Areas

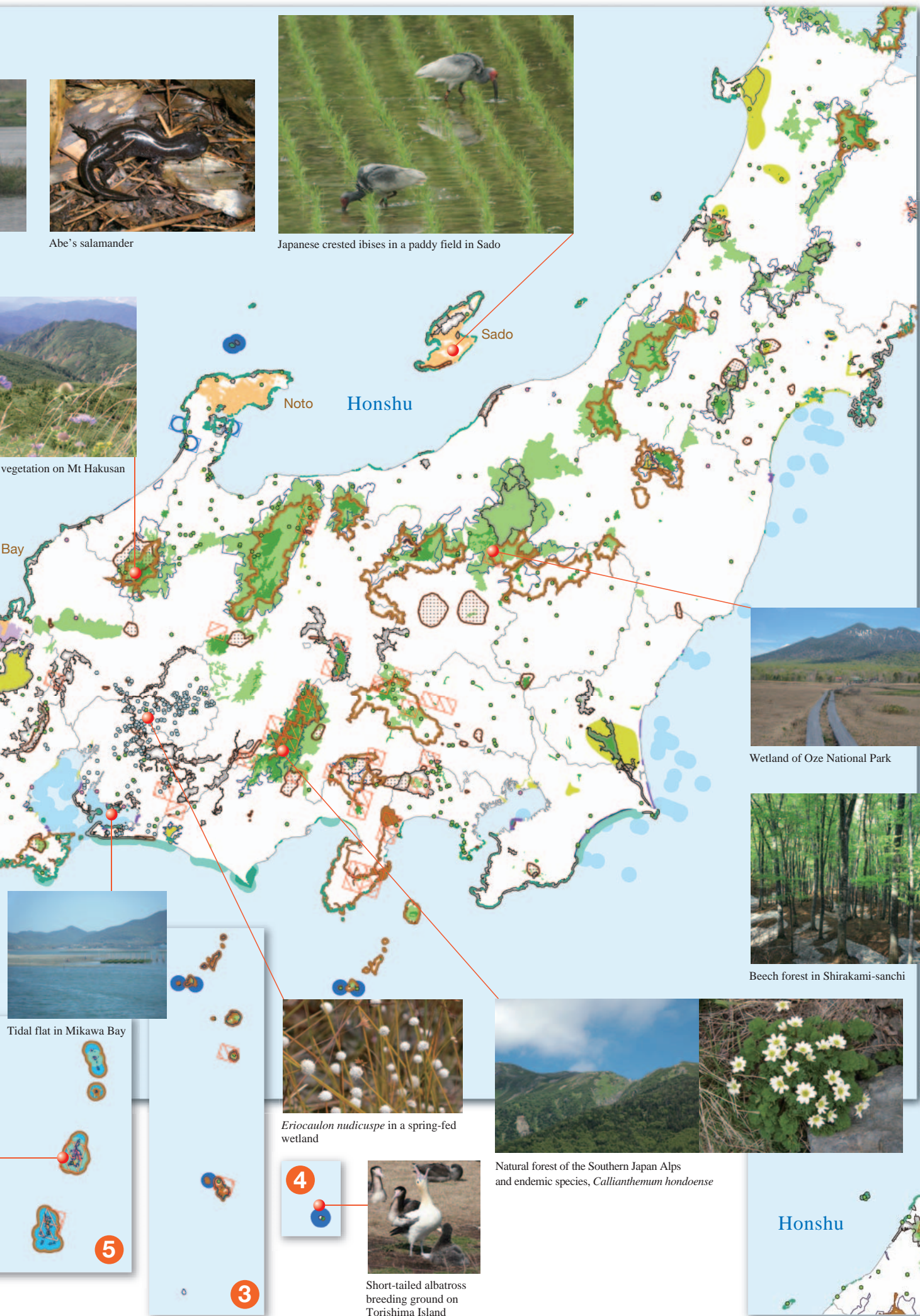
Type	Category	Content / Description	Color code
1. Terrestrial ecosystem	(1) Important areas based on vegetation	Northern coniferous forest	■
		Northern conifer-broadleaf mixed forest	
		Summer green forest	
		Summer green forest (Japan Sea side type)	
		Summer green forest (Pacific side type)	
		Evergreen broadleaf forest	
		Subtropical forest	
		Subtropical forest (oceanic island type)	
		Alpine	■
		Subalpine	
		Mountain	
		Floodplain forest	
		River	
		Wetland with thick peat layer	
		Wetland with medium to thin peat layer	
		Lake and marsh	
		Volcanic desert	
		Rock / gravel	
		Special rock type	
		Coast	
	(2) Important habitats of plants	i. Areas of concentrated distribution of threatened endemic plant species (9 species or more)	■
		ii. Areas where the extinction risk of plant species is high in hotspot analysis	■
		Top 20 grids*1 in terms of the conservation effectiveness measured by “C index” (short-term conservation index), which represents the degree of contribution to the national extinction risk reduction if a specific area is conserved in the following 10 years. (Yahara, Matsuda, et al., unpublished data)	■
		Top 20 grids*1 in terms of the conservation effectiveness measured by “D index” (long-term conservation index), which represents the degree of national extinction risk increase if the habitats of threatened species within a specific area is lost. (Yahara, Matsuda, et al., unpublished data)	
		iii. Areas of the distribution of the plant species dependent on special habitats	●
2. Freshwater ecosystem	Important areas of freshwater ecosystems	i. Rivers that have rich biodiversity or are considerably large	■
		ii. Lakes that have rich biodiversity or are considerably large	
		i. Areas of the distribution of threatened local populations (LP) of animal species requiring a wide habitat range*2	■
		ii. Areas of the distribution of threatened animal species requiring a secondary natural environment	
		iii. Important Bird Area (IBA)	
3. Coastal ecosystem	(1) Important areas of the coastal region	i. Mangroves	■
		ii. Large tidal flats that provide habitats for organisms	■
		iii. Salt marshes that have rich biodiversity or are considerably large	■
	(2) Important areas of shallow waters	i. Large seaweed beds that provide habitats for organisms	■
		ii. Coral reefs	■
	(3) Important habitats of marine life	i. Important habitats of marine mammals	■
		ii. Breeding grounds of threatened seabirds and neighboring sea area	■
		iii. Breeding grounds of sea turtles and neighboring sea area	■
		iv. Sandbanks that provide habitats for marine life	●
		Coastline inhabited by seals	■
		Area of the distribution finless black porpoises	■
		Area of the distribution of dugong	■
		Humpback whale breeding area	■
		Seabird breeding grounds (land area)	■
		Sea area adjacent to the seabird breeding grounds	■
		Sea turtle breeding ground (beach)	■
		Sea area adjacent to the sea turtle breeding grounds	■

\*1: Grid size approximately 10 km square. \*2: Grid size approximately 1 km square.



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Abe's salamander

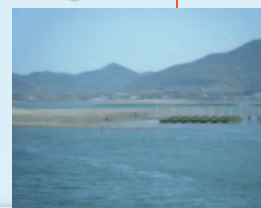


Japanese crested ibises in a paddy field in Sado



vegetation on Mt Hakusan

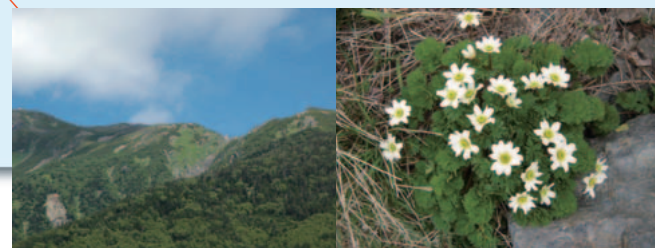
Bay



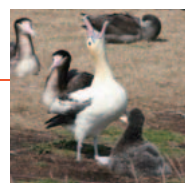
Tidal flat in Mikawa Bay



*Eriocaulon nudicuspe* in a spring-fed wetland



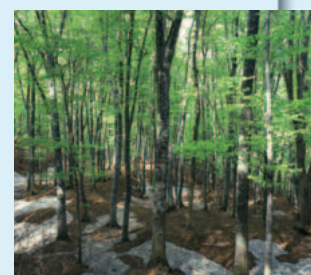
Natural forest of the Southern Japan Alps and endemic species, *Callianthemum hondoense*



Short-tailed albatross breeding ground on Torishima Island



Wetland of Oze National Park



Beech forest in Shirakami-sanchi



*Cypripedium marcanthum* var. *rebunense*



Wetland in Sarobetsu



*Picea-Abies* forest surrounding Lake Shikotsu

**Hokkaido**



Brown bear



Blakiston's fish owl



Pink salmon going upstream



Alpine vegetation in Shiretoko peninsula



Kushiro-shitsugen wetland, a Ramsar site



Spotted seal



Alpine vegetation on Mt Daisetsuzan  
*Oxytropis japonica* var. *sericea*



Red-crowned cranes



Bird breeding ground on Hidejima Island and Madeiran storm-petrel



0 25 50 100 km

# National Parks & Important Biodiversity Areas of JAPAN

## National and Quasi-National Park

- National Park
- Quasi-National Park

## Terrestrial ecosystem

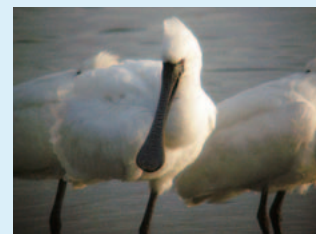
- Typical natural vegetation (forest) (1000 ha or larger)
- Vegetation formed by unique environmental factors (10 ha or larger)
- Vegetation formed by unique environmental factors (less than 10 ha)
- Areas of the concentrated distribution of Japan's threatened endemic plants (9 species or more)
- Areas where the extinction risk of plant species is high in hotspot analysis (Top 20)
- Areas of the distribution of the plants dependent on special habitats
- Areas of distribution of threatened local populations of animals requiring a wide habitat range (Hokkaido: Brown bear, Honshu and Shikoku: Asian black bear, Kyusyu: Japanese serow)
- Areas of the distribution of threatened animal species requiring "secondary" natural environments (Sado, Noto and Oki: Japanese crested ibis, Wakasa Bay and North part of Hyogo prefecture: Oriental stork, Tsushima: Tsushima leopard cat)
- Important Bird Area
- Important Bird Area (small size or unclear boundary)
- Areas of the concentrated distribution of threatened amphibian and reptile species (4 species or more)
- Areas important as habitats of insects

## Freshwater ecosystem

- Important area of freshwater ecosystems

## Coastal ecosystem

- Mangrove
- Tidal flat
- Seaweed bed
- Salt marsh
- Coral reef
- Coastline inhabited by seals
- Areas of the distribution of finless black porpoise (Honshu - Kyushu) and dugong (Okinawa)
- Humpback whale breeding area
- Breeding ground of threatened seabirds and neighboring sea area
- Breeding ground of sea turtles and neighboring sea area
- Sandbank



Black-faced spoonbills in the tidal flat at the estuary of the Tataru River



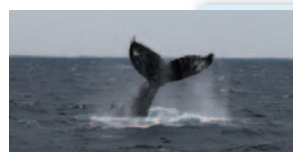
Tsushima leopard cats on Tsushima Island



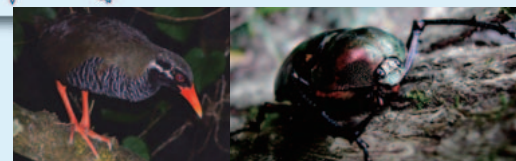
Japanese serow - endemic species of Japan



"Jomon sugi" (old Japanese cedar tree) of Yakushima Island



Humpback whale



Okinawa rail

Yambaru long-armed scarab beetle

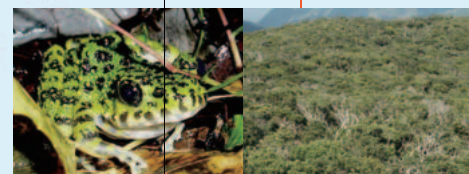


Yellow-margined box turtle of Iriomote Island

Mangroves of Iriomote Island



Coral reefs of Sekisei lagoon



Ishikawa's frog

Subtropical forest of Amami Oshima Island



Loggerhead sea turtle laying eggs



Finless black porpoise inhabiting inshore waters of Japan



Seaweed bed of Setonaikai Inland Sea



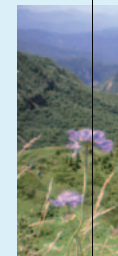
Nakaumi - large brackish lake



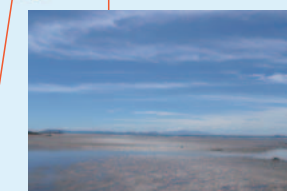
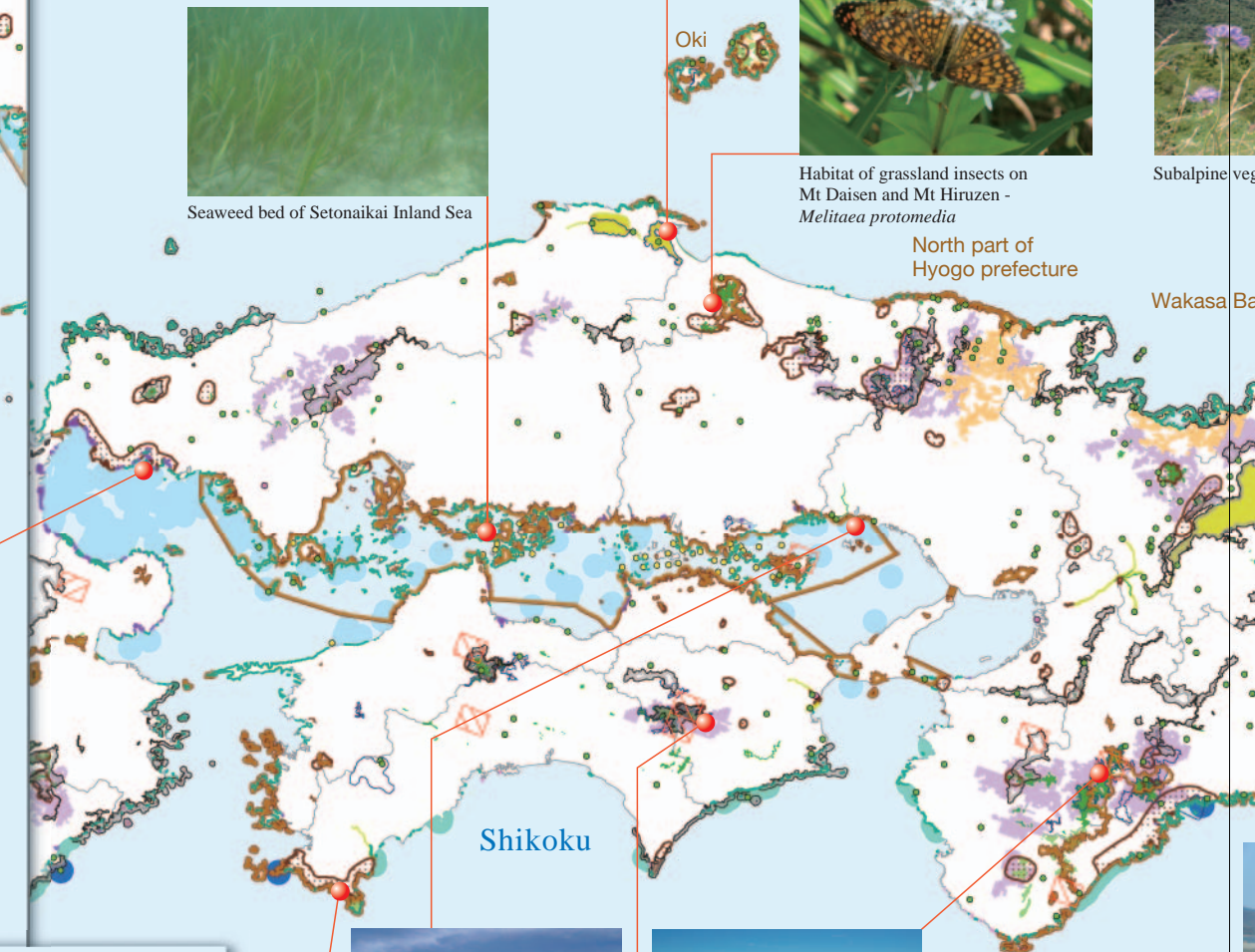
Oriental storks



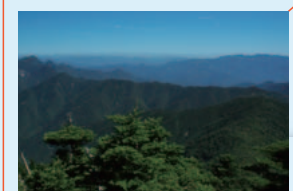
Habitat of grassland insects on Mt Daisen and Mt Hiruzen - *Melitaea protomedia*



Subalpine vegetation



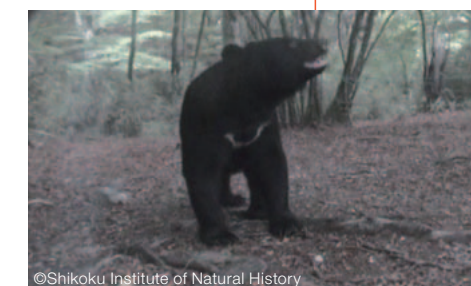
Tidal flat of Setonaikai Inland Sea



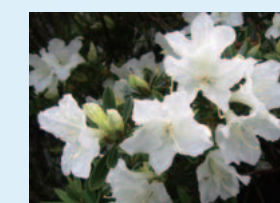
Natural forest of the Omine mountain range



Coral reefs of Tatsukushi



Asian black bear in the Shikoku mountains



Endemic species of the Ogasawara Islands - *Rhododendron boninense*