

Yakushima Nagata-hama

Sand Beach

Geographical Coordinates: 30°24'N, 130°25'E / Altitude: below 10m / Area: 10ha / Major Type of Wetland: Sand beach/ Designation: Special protection Zone and Special Zone of National Park / Municipalities Involved: Yakushima Town, Kagoshima Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: November 2005 / Ramsar Criteria: 4



Yakushima Nagata-hama viewed from the south

General Overview:

Yakushima is an island with a circumference of 132km and an area of 50,000ha situated 60km south of the southern end of Kyushu Island. Yakushima Nagata-hama is a collective term for three beaches, approximately 1km long Maehama Beach and Inaka-hama Beach, and approximately 0.2km long Yotsuse-hama Beach, situated on the northwest side of the island. These beaches are made of coarse sand of weathered granite and have a width of 30m. Yakushima Nagata-hama is one of the few sand beaches on this island and is designated as a part of National Park. Every year, Loggerhead Sea Turtle comes to nest on this tiny stretch. As this beach has the highest number of nesting in the north Pacific region, it is a crucial habitat in the lifecycle of the turtle.

Nesting of Loggerhead Sea Turtle:

During the nesting season from May to August, Loggerhead Sea Turtle arrives on the beach at approximately nine o'clock in the evening. Within roughly 40 minutes, a female turtle lays 100 to 140 eggs in the sand. Young turtles hatch approximately 2 to 3 months later and start the life in the sea.

Conservation Efforts:

Local people engage in efforts such as monitoring, beach cleanup, nesting patrol and raising public awareness. In this way, local people are leading the conservation

work for sea turtles in collaboration with government agencies to promote the protection and wise use of the nesting habitat.

An Island of World Natural Heritage:

With its subtropical climate, Yakushima experiences annual precipitation exceeding 4,000mm and an average temperature of around 20 degrees C in the lowland area. This island has some unique features such as the pristine natural environment with the "Yaku-sugi" cedar estimated to be older than 1,000 years, and the diverse vertical distribution of flora that changes in accordance with the altitude from the sea level to the mountain top. This unique natural environment was designated as a World Natural Heritage Site in 1993. Today, the island with a population of 12,000 attracts 300,000 visitors annually.

[Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*)]

It is a large species of sea turtle family with a body length spanning 70-100cm and weighs as much as 180kg. It is reddish to yellow-brown with a large and stout head. It feeds on shellfish, inhabits tropical to temperate waters, and has the northernmost nesting grounds among all sea turtle species. With exception of nesting, Loggerhead Sea Turtle leads a completely aquatic life, but its actual habitat range remains unknown.

Contact Information:

Yakushima Town Office
<http://www.yakushima-town.jp/>



Footprints of Loggerhead Sea Turtle



Signboard of caution

