

National
Parks
of Japan



Outstanding Natural Beauty for Future Generations

National Parks of Japan



Ministry of the Environment



Scenic Beauty for Future Generations

Grand ridges crowned with snow

A wooden walkway runs through colorful alpine plants

Gorge with colored leaves

Marsh with Japanese cranes dancing gracefully

Meadow with cattle grazing

Islands facing the setting sun on the open sea

Mystic ocean with tropical fish and coral reefs

The ecosystem a subtropical forest brings up

We can recuperate and be inspired when close to nature.

National parks have been established for the enjoyment,
education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

What is National Parks of Japan?

National parks of Japan are landscape areas of national importance. They have been designated as "areas of the greatest natural scenic beauty," by the Minister of the Environment under the Natural Parks Law. The Law provides the legal basis for three types of natural parks: National Parks, Quasi-National Parks, and Prefectural Natural Parks. Currently 35 areas have been designated as National parks, 57 as Quasi-National Parks, and more than 300 as Prefectural Natural Parks. The 35 National Parks cover about 2.44 million ha, which is about 6.5 percent of the total land area of Japan. National Parks receive about three hundred million visitors annually.



Minami Alps National Park

History of National Parks

The national park concept was first developed in the United States. In 1872, Yellowstone was designated as the world first national park. The concept soon prevailed all over the world. Based on the American National Park System, Japan designated the first three National Parks in March 1934: Setonaikai, Unzen, and Kirishima. By 1936, there were 12 national parks. After World War II, more were designated, the most recent of which is Hidakasanmyaku-Erimo-Tokachi National Park, designated in 2024 as the 35th in Japan.

Features of Japan's National Parks

Japan is a small, densely populated land, in which people use the land for agriculture, forestry, and other economic purposes as well as for outdoor recreation. To regulate use, Japan has adopted a zoning system, which allows the government to designate national parks regardless of land-ownership. At the same time, the designated areas are not necessarily used exclusively for park purposes, though some rights of land use are controlled, and some duties are imposed, according to the category of the park.



Hidakasanmyaku-Erimo-Tokachi National Park

Park Conservation Plans

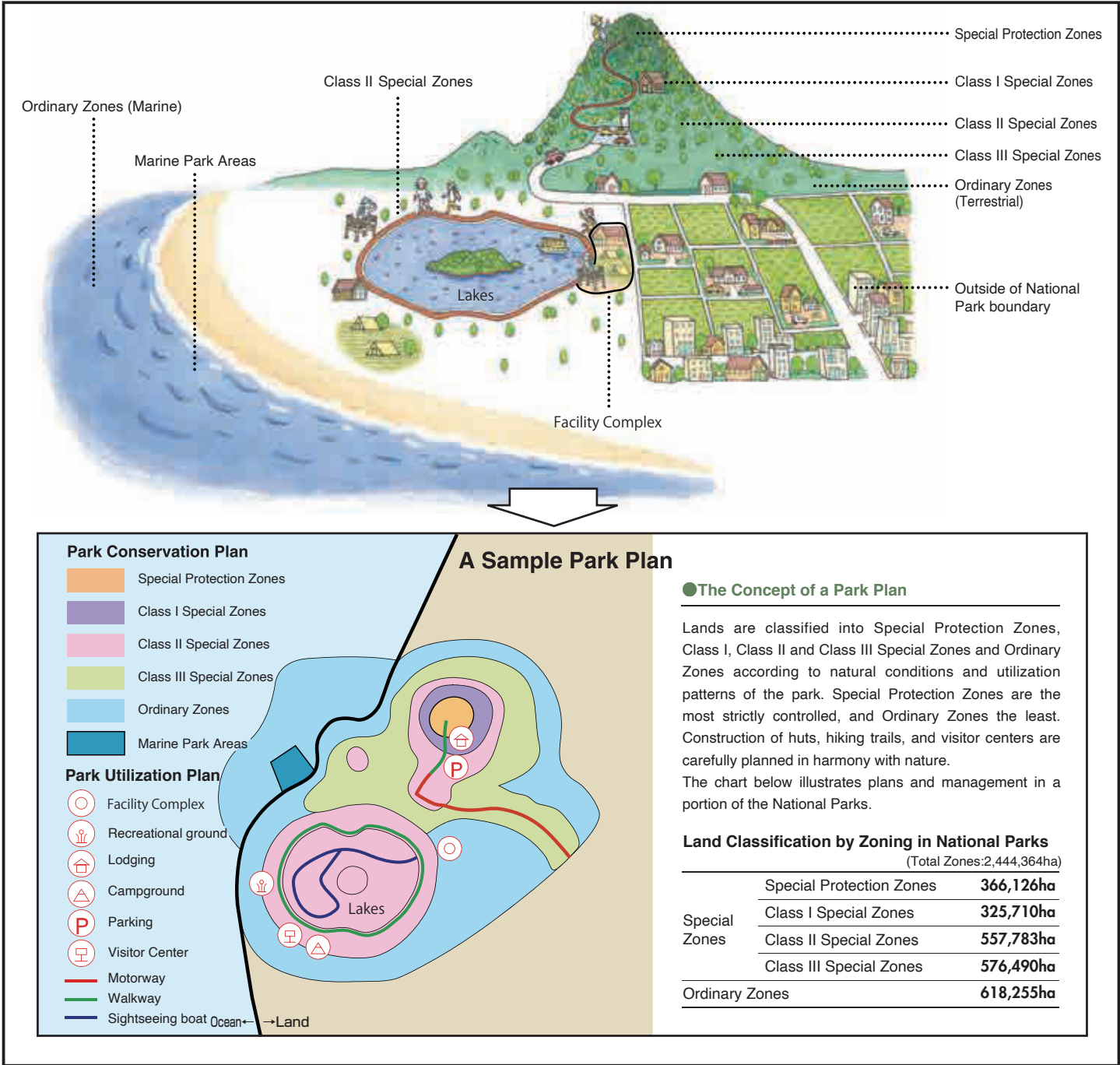
National parks contain various land use types from wilderness to developed areas including local communities and tourist sites. Agricultural and forestry areas are also included within park boundaries. Therefore, zoning system is adopted to control land use within national parks. National Parks are classified into various areas for management purposes. The location of park facilities, roads and trails are carefully planned in advance according to the zoning. These zoning systems are known as park conservation plans.



Shikotsu-Toya National Park

A park plan

A park plan is formulated for each national park to ensure that it is protected and utilized appropriately.



Conservation of National Parks

It is our responsibility to conserve the great natural scenic beauty and biodiversity in the national parks, and to keep them unimpaired for the future generations. The Government thus promotes and regulates the use of national parks.



Clearing crown-of-thorns starfish threatening corals

The Law and Measures

In order to fulfill their mission, the National Parks have established regulations to ensure the conservation of their natural environment.



Restrictions on Activities

Within designated conservation areas, activities harmful to the landscape of the park such as building and logging may not be carried out without a permit. Camp fires, and the collection of insects, plants, fallen leaves and branches are also prohibited in Special Protection Zones.



Regulations against Driving Vehicles in Parks

Beaches where turtles lay eggs, and rare plant habitats are very sensitive to external influence. Use of vehicles, snowmobiles, and motorboats is prohibited in such areas in order to protect them.



Restrictions on Private Cars

Private cars are prohibited in certain areas. Alternative transportation is provided for visitors. This has been undertaken in crowded national parks such as Mt. Fuji (Fuji-Hakone-Izu NP), Kamikochi (Chubu sangaku NP), Oze (Oze NP), and Yakushima (Yakushima NP).



Nature restoration

Some National Parks include areas in which the nature lost in the past needs to be restored actively. In order to regain the healthy ecosystems in those areas, the Ministry of the Environment is conducting several activities such as restoring and recovering wetlands and forests. The activities are implemented through conducting researches, taking measures, and monitoring, in cooperation with local residents and experts.



Cleanup

Litter and human waste left behind not only spoil the beauty of National Parks, but also affect the ecosystems within the park. As a rule, visitors are asked to take their litter home, but cleanup, treatment of human waste, and facility maintenance are also carried out by national park maintenance crews.



Land Acquisition

National Parks in Japan contain a large number of private lands. When it is deemed necessary, important areas in national parks are purchased by the government for nature conservation.

Etiquette

All park visitors are responsible for nature conservation. Park visitors' behavior is important for conserving nature. Visitors must abide by certain nature conservation rules: take litter home; stay on the hiking trails; and leave plants and animals untouched.

Nature is not always safe. Whether you go mountain climbing or snorkeling, you need to be well prepared for accidents and unpredictable changes in the weather.



Use of Parks

National Parks are areas where visitors not only conserve nature, but also have opportunities for education, health and recreation.

Every year more than three hundred million people participate in outdoor activities such as climbing, walks, tours, and hikes in national parks.

Hiking trails, picnic area, and other park facilities are provided and maintained for public enjoyment.



Keeping the walking trail

Enjoying Nature

National Parks have various programs for public enjoyment and outdoor education.

●Activities

Various programs are provided for visitors such as mountain climbing, hiking, skiing, camping, canoeing, snorkeling, bird watching according to visitors' experiences, interests and physical strength.



●Visitor Centers

In order to help guests understand their history and natural environment, visitor centers are located in the main areas of national parks. Visitor centers provide information and orientation through displays, slides and videos, as well as outdoor classrooms and interpretation services.



Nasukogen Visitor Center



Nature observation and studying marine biodiversity by snorkeling

Let's access to the Internet.

The National Parks homepage (<https://www.env.go.jp/park/>) introduces the scenery and nature of the National Parks. You can get the latest information on the National Parks, the event information such as natural observation meetings and the information of animals and plants, etc. through this page. In addition, you can download the beautiful scenery of National Parks. This homepage also provides the latest live images (※).

Through this homepage, you can obtain information to help you plan your park visit before you go, or you can enjoy finding the characteristics and nature of each National Parks without visit.

※ Links to the Internet Nature Institute (<https://www.sizenken.biodic.go.jp>).



The National Parks homepage

Rangers and Partners

The Ministry of the Environment has set up 7 Regional Environment Offices and more than 100 Ranger Offices throughout the country.

Rangers and Active Rangers are stationed in these offices, and work with many people.



Park Ranger

Volunteers in Parks

Many volunteers work for national parks

Park Volunteers

Each national park has its own registration system for park volunteers. Park volunteers participate in such activities as park interpretation services, cleanup, repair of park facilities and scientific research. Currently, about 1,500 people are registered as park volunteers across the country.



Junior Park Ranger Program

Primary and Junior high school students who volunteer to work in the parks are called Junior Park Rangers. They participate in park patrol and basic research on wildlife guided by rangers and park volunteers. Every summer such programs are held in all the National Parks.



Natural Park Adviser

In order to support appropriate use of the parks, Natural Park Advisers patrol the parks for the safety of visitors simultaneously checking the park facilities.



Green Worker Projects

Skilled park volunteers are called Green Workers. Local people with knowledge of the areas and special skills work on special projects such as wildlife inventories, and nature trail repair and construction. Their expenses are covered by the government.



Rangers: The staff of the Ministry of the Environment who work in national parks are called rangers. Rangers are responsible not only for granting permits, patrolling and maintaining the parks. They are involved with park planning, scientific research and land management. They also provide educational programs and interpretation services for park visitors.

Please contact the Regional Environment Office for further information on Park volunteers and Junior Park Rangers.

Park management organizations and Scenic Area Protection Agreement

In Aso area of Aso-Kuju National Park, a local foundation “Aso Green Stock” has been working as a *park management organization* since December 2003. A park management organization is a NPO or a public-service corporation, assigned by the Minister of the Environment, whose tasks include managing natural scenic areas and inspecting/repairing the trails and other park facilities. Aso Green Stock is involved in maintaining the grassland scenery through prescribed burning and other activities. The area in which their activities take place includes the land under the *Scenic Area Protection Agreement*, which enables national/local governments or park management organizations to manage the land on behalf of the landowners for conserving scenic areas.



Prescribed burning for maintaining the grassland

Regional Environment Office (REO) & Nature Conservation Office (NCO), etc

Hokkaido REO	2-CHO-ME, KITA-8-JO-NISHI, KITA-KU, SAPPORO, HOKKAIDO 〒060-0808	011-299-1950
Kushiro NCO	10-3 SAIWAI-CHO, KUSHIRO, HOKKAIDO 〒085-8639	0154-32-7500
Tohoku REO	3-2-23 HON-CHO, AOBA-KU, SENDAI, MIYAGI 〒980-0014	022-722-2870
Fukushima REO (*)	11-25 SAKAE-CHO, FUKUSHIMA, FUKUSHIMA 〒960-8031	024-573-7330
Kanto REO	1-1 SHIN-TOSHIN, CHUO-KU, SAITAMA, SAITAMA 〒330-9720	048-600-0516
Chubu REO	2-5-2 SANNOMARU, NAKA-KU, NAGOYA, AICHI 〒460-0001	052-955-2130
Shinetsu NCO	1108 ASAHI-MACHI, NAGANO, NAGANO 〒380-0846	026-231-6570
Kinki REO	1-8-75 TENMABASHI, KITA-KU, OSAKA, OSAKA 〒530-0042	06-6881-6500
Chugoku-Shikoku REO	1-4-1 SHIMOISHII, KITA-KU, OKAYAMA, OKAYAMA 〒700-0907	086-223-1577
Shikoku Office	3-33 Sunport, TAKAMATSU, KAGAWA 〒760-0000	087-811-7240
Kyusyu REO	2-10-1 KASUGA, NISHI-KU, KUMAMOTO, KUMAMOTO 〒860-0047	096-322-2400
Okinawa amami	1-15-15 HIGAWA, NAHA, OKINAWA 〒900-0022	098-836-6400

* Fukushima REO does not manage National Parks.

Photograph In Cover

- Chubusangaku National Park
- Oze National Park
- Keramashoto National Park

National Park Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of the Environment

No.5 Godochosha, 1-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 〒100-8975

TEL.03-3581-3351(main)

Ministry of the Environment homepage : <https://www.env.go.jp>

National Park homepage : <https://www.env.go.jp/park/>

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National Parks of Japan

Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of the Environment



Ministry of the Environment

⑧ Ashizuri-Uwakai National Park

(Kakumori-Iwa Sea National Park)

Designation: 1972/11/10

This marine park at the southernmost tip of Shikoku Island extends into Ehime and Kochi prefectures, and gives the visitor the illusion of being in the subtropics. The Ashizuri Promontory offers a magnificent view, with many tall and steep cliffs, and Uwakai has a Rias coastline and islands. Tatsukushi, a marine park, offers various views of coral and tropical fish.



② Saikai National Park

Designation: 1955/03/16

This park consists of close to 400 islands, large and small, including Hirado, the Kujukushima Islands, and the Goto (Five Islands) Archipelago, extending over the northwestern extremity of Kyushu. The Goto Islands have high cliffs, and Kyushu Island has rare volcanic formations (asphaltomate, or cinder-cone)



⑩ Unzen-Amakusa National Park

Designation: 1934/03/16

This park is located in the middle of the Shimabara Peninsula, and the islands of Amakusa. The Unzen area lies in the hillsides of Mt. Fugen, which is famous for the volcanic activity which occurred in 1980. The Unzen area has many hot springs, and is a summer resort. The Amakusa area has 120 islands, large and small, in the Ariake and Yatsushiro Seas.



⑨ Aso-Kuju National Park

Designation: 1934/12/04

This mountainous park has many volcanoes and the world's largest caldera basin, whose circumference is about 100km. The Aso area has a magnificent view of Aso-Gogaku Five Mountains, including meadows and the active volcano, Mt. Naka-Dake. The Kuju Range and Mt. Yuku-Dake offer great views of the Kuju area. The region is famous for its wild azaleas.



②② Yoshino-Kumano National Park

Designation: 1936/02/01

The central mountainous area of the Ki Peninsula and meandering rivers and seashore in the south-eastern part of the peninsula form this park. Mt. Yoshino is noted for its cherry blossoms, and Mt. Omine is worshipped by ascetic devotees. There are many cliffs along the coast from Owease to the Shiono Promontory. Various kinds of scenery can be seen in this area.



②③ San'in-kaigan National Park

(San'in Coast National Park)

Designation: 1963/07/15

This is a marine park that covers the 75km-long seacoast from Amino of Oki-Tango Peninsula to the sand dunes of Tottori. There are beautiful caves eroded by seawater. One of the main features of this park are the sand dunes of Tottori, which are largely undulating. There are plants such as Hamabobu (Glehnia) which are peculiar to the sand dunes and the severe environment of this area.



②④ Setonaikai National Park

(Setonaikai Sea National Park)

Designation: 1934/03/16

This park contains about 1,000 islets. The park features scenery of the calm inland sea and many islands. One such view is of the Bisan Archipelago from Mt. Washu. The white beach sand and green pines, such as those found on along the Shikukawa coast and Keno-Matsuao, as well as cultivated land present scenery of harmonious beauty.



②⑤ Daisen-Oki National Park

Designation: 1936/02/01

This park embraces a mountainous area from Mt. Hizen to Mt. Daisen (1,729m), the highest peak in the Chugoku district. The park also features the Oki Archipelago, the Shimane Peninsula and Mt. Sanbe. Mt. Daisen has precipitous cliffs, and Oki Archipelago has bluffs and caves eroded by seawater.



⑩⑥ Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park

Designation: 1936/02/01

Mt. Fuji, a World Cultural Heritage site inscribed in June 2013, rises high in a vast stretch of forests and several lakes. The Hakone area features several volcanoes, volcanic vents and lakes. Izu Peninsula offers scenic mountains, seashores, and a chain of characteristic islands in the ocean, Izu Islands.



⑩⑦ Chubusangaku National Park

(Chubu Mountains National Park)

Designation: 1934/12/04

This mountainous park has a series of mountains over 3,000m, including Mt. Shiroumadake, Mt. Tateyama, Mt. Yariyake, Mt. Hotakadake and Mt. Norikuradake of the Northern alps. Rivers and streams such as the Kurobe River and Azusa River are beautiful. There are a number of flower gardens in Midagahara, Goshikigahara, etc. Alpine plants are beautiful in the summer. This area is an important habitat of the ptarmigan.



⑩⑧ Myoko-Togakushi reizan National Park

(Myoko-Togakushi Reizan National Park)

Designation: 2015/03/27

Consist of concentrated chain of volcanoes such as Mt. Myoko and Mt. Iizuna and non-volcanic mountains such as Mt. Amakazari, Lake Nojiri, dammed lake, is famous for fossil excavation of Palaeozoicodon naumanni. The park also has interesting cultural sites such as Togakushi Shrine famous for Japanese Aminoawato myth.



⑩⑨ Hakusan National Park

(Mt Hakusan National Park)

Designation: 1962/11/12

Hakusan has been regarded as one of the three most sacred mountains in Japan, along with Mt. Fuji and Mt. Tateyama, and has long been the object of religious worship. This park is rich in alpine plants. Many plants have been named after Hakusan. This area is famous as a habitat for black bears and antelopes.



⑩⑩ Minami Alps National Park

(South Alps National Park)

Designation: 1964/06/01

This park extends into Yamanashi, Nagano and Shizuoka prefectures. There are many mountains over 3,000m such as Mt. Kitadake (3,193m), the second highest peak in Japan. Alpine plants live in Mt. Kitadake and Mt. Sengogake, and indigenous plants can also be seen in this area.



⑩⑪ Ise-Shima National Park

Designation: 1948/11/20

This park has a lot of inlets and bays in Tobu, Matsuyama, Ago and Gotohara. They create the unique landscape of Ise-Shima. Ise Jingu is religiously, historically, and culturally important for the Japanese. The natural forest behind the shrine is formed by Japanese red cedars, chinquapine (Castanopsis), and camphor trees.



⑩⑫ Bandai-Asahi National Park

Designation: 1950/09/05

This park is composed of many mountains. Mt. Dewa-Sanzan is famous for mountain worship. Mt. Asahi, Mt. Iide and Mt. Bandai are also located within the park boundaries. The view of Unbandai and Lake Inawashiro is beautiful. This park is surrounded by mountains, forests and a lot of lakes. Antelopes and black bears live in this park.



⑩⑬ Nikko National Park

Designation: 1934/12/04

Features various aspects: a historical architecture, Nikko Toshogu Shrine ; a summer retreat on a mountain, Lake Chuzenji and Seppogahara Marchland; gorge such as Kirugawa and Shobara, and plateau spreading out at the foot of the Nasu Mountains are very beautiful. The park is close to Tokyo and easily accessible.



⑩⑭ Oze National Park

Designation: 2007/08/30

The Japan's most prominent mountain wetlands, Oze Mash. Oze-gahara has many moor plants such as mizu-basho (Lysichiton camtschatcense).



⑩⑮ Joshin'etsukogen National Park

(Joshin'etsu Highland National Park)

Designation: 1949/09/07

This Park consists of a highland and its surrounding chain of mountains through Gunma, Nagano and Niigata prefectures. This park features a number of volcanoes including Mt. Asama, Mt. Kusatsu-Shirane and Mt. Tangawa, which are 2,000m class. On the other hand, spacious highlands such as Shiga Kogen and Sugadaira are found in everywhere.



⑩⑯ Chichibu-Tama-Kai National Park

Designation: 1950/07/10

There are many coniferous and broadleaf trees and old stratum mountains such as Mt. Kumotori and Mt. Mitake. Near Tokyo, this park provides the headquarters for the Arakawa, Chikuma, Tama and Fusetaki rivers. Natural forests and gorges offer good recreational sites. Mt. Mitake and Mt. Mitsumine are ancient places of mountain worship.



⑩⑰ Ogasawara National Park

Designation: 1927/10/16

This park is composed of over 30 islands, including the two main islands of Chichijima and Hahajima. The Ogasawara archipelago is located 1,000-1,200 km south of Tokyo. It is the smallest subtropical national park in Japan. The main feature of this park is its many indigenous plants and animals. Inscribed on the World Natural Heritage List on June 21, 1993.



⑩⑱ Towada-Hachimantai National Park

Designation: 1936/02/01

Lake Towada and the Oirase River, which runs from this lake, make a beautiful landscape with plentiful green and water. There are volcanoes such as Mt. Iwate, coniferous forests, and many moors in Hachimantai. This park offers climbing and hot springs.



⑩⑲ Sanriku Fukko National Park

(Sanriku Kosoetsuden National Park)

Designation: 1955/05/02

This park extends for 250 km from Kabushima in Aomori prefecture to Oshika Peninsula in Miyagi prefecture. Its northern part is a coastline composed of uninterrupted dynamic cliffs, while its southern part forms a delicately-rugged coastline. The park offers a breeding place for black-tailed gulls, petrels, etc. It was reorganized on 24 May 2013 as a contribution to the recovery of the Sanriku area which was severely damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake.



① RISHIRI-REBUN-SAROBETSU N.P.

Designation: 1974/09/20

This is the northernmost national park in Japan. Mt. Rishiri soars majestically above the sea. Rebun Island has many alpine plants such as large-flowered cypripedium (Cypripedium megalantha). Sarobetsu wetlands, abundant in marsh plants, and Wakasakani dune forest contribute to the exciting landscape.

② SHIRETOKO N.P.

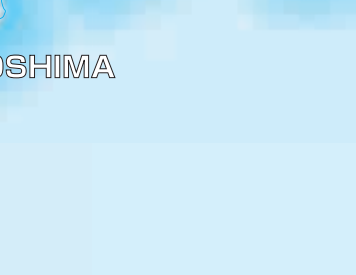
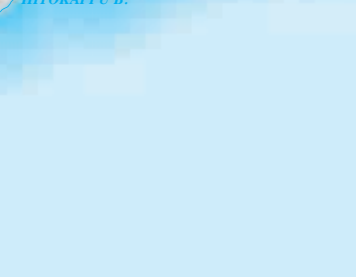
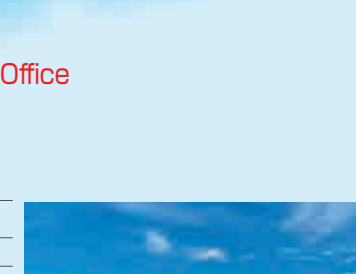
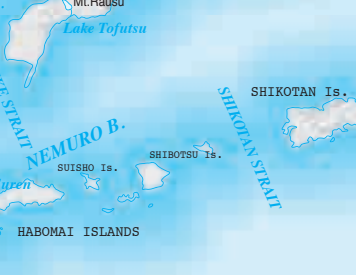
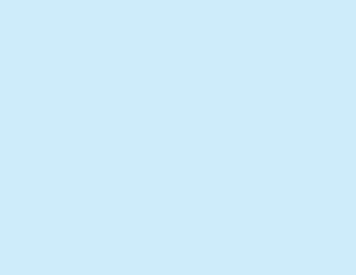
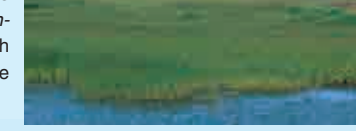
Designation: 1964/06/01

This park is highly primeval. Sea eagles, Blackston's fish-owls and blown bears live in the district. The view of the Shiretoko mountain chain from the five lakes is splendid. The west side of the Shiretoko Peninsula is covered with drift ice during the winter. Inscribed on the World Heritage on July 2005.

③ AKAN-MASHU N.P.

Designation: 1934/12/04

This is a volcanic park, featuring such volcanoes as Mt. Mtsu. There are many rare plants such as Mamm. (Gleditsia asagayana) in the Lake Akan area. Lake Mashu is known for one of the world's clearest lakes. Lake Kusharo, which is surrounded by hot springs, commands splendid views.



LEGEND	
	NATIONAL PARK AREA
	Boundary of Regional Environment Office
	Boundary of Pref.



1 : 2,500,000

0 50 100 150 200km

③④ Amamigunto National Park

(Amami Islands National Park)

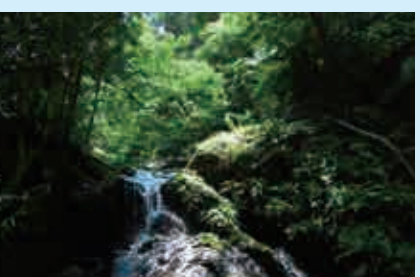
Designation: 2017/03/07

This national park consists of eight inhabited islands between Kyushu and Okinawa. Its subtropical laurel forests are home to concentrated populations of various unique, endangered plants and animals including the Amami rabbit. Furthermore, the islands are bordered by the world's northernmost coral reefs and host mangroves, tidelands and a diverse range of other natural environments.

③⑤ Yambaru National Park

Designation: 2016/09/15

Yambaru means an area filled with numerous mountains and large forests. This region is covered with subtropical laurel forestland, its terrain defined by the geological history of the Ryukyu island chain and related formation processes. Okinawa rail and other unique, endangered plants and animals live and breed here.



③⑥ Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park

Designation: 1972/05/15

This park contains Iriomote Island, Ishigaki Island and other islands. Roughly 80% of Iriomote Island is covered with subtropical trees. There are many rare animals on Iriomote Island such as the Iriomote wildcat. There is a coral reef stretching between Taketomi Island and Ishigaki Island creating the largest coral in Japan.



③⑦ Keramashoto National Park

(Kerama Islands National Park)

Designation: 2014/03/05

Kerama Islands are located to 40 km the west of Naha City, consisting of more than 30 small and large islands and a number of rock reefs. The blue of the sea is renowned as "Kerama Blue", and the contrast between the bright blue ocean and the white of the sand beach is fascinating. The rich ecosystems show various coral reefs in the shoals, and humpback whales breeding in the surrounding waters. Kerama Islands was the first national park that the area was designated as long as 7 km away from the shores for the reason that humpback whales are commonly observed in a wide range of the surrounding ocean.

③⑧ Amamigunto N.P.

Designation: 2017/03/07

This national park consists of eight inhabited islands between Kyushu and Okinawa. Its subtropical laurel forests are home to concentrated populations of various unique, endangered plants and animals including the Amami rabbit. Furthermore, the islands are bordered by the world's northernmost coral reefs and host mangroves, tidelands and a diverse range of other natural environments.

