

Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, Northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island

The World Heritage property consists of four regions on Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island in Kagoshima Prefecture, Northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island in Okinawa Prefecture, covering a land area of approximately 42,700 ha. These islands are part of the Ryukyu Chain, which is located at the southern tip of the Japanese archipelago. Influenced by the Kuroshio current and subtropical high-pressure, the islands have a warm and humid subtropical climate, and are largely covered with evergreen broadleaved rainforests. This makes the area a globally rare place where rainforests develop in a subtropical zone.

Les sites enregistrés au patrimoine mondial s'étendent sur une superficie totale de 42 700 hectares et comprennent quatre zones sur l'île Amami-Oshima et l'île Tokunoshima (deux sites) dans le département de Kagoshima, et sur l'île Iriomote et la partie nord de l'île Okinawa dans le département d'Okinawa. La région fait partie des îles Ryukyu, situées dans le sud de l'archipel nippon. La proximité du courant marin Kuroshio et les hautes pressions subtropicales produisent un climat chaud et humide. Les îles sont quasiment recouvertes de forêts tropicales humides à feuillage persistant. La présence de ce type de végétation dans une zone subtropicale est rare et fait la grande particularité de la région.



Evergreen broadleaved forests

The dominant natural vegetation of the property. The periodic disturbances caused by frequent typhoons and complex landform help create a variety of habitats that support high biodiversity.



Cloud forests

Mt. Yuwandake (694 m) on Amami-Oshima Island, the highest peak in the property. Mt. Inokawadake (645 m) on Tokunoshima Island, Mt. Yonahadake (503 m) on Okinawa Island, and Mt. Komidake (497 m) on Iriomote Island constitute cloud belts, where sunlight is limited and air humidity is high, forming forests filled with bryophytes, epiphytic and ground orchids, and fern plants.



Mountain stream zone

At the upstream and mid-stream, riverbeds and riverbanks are flooded periodically due to frequent rainfall. In this kind of environment, there are plants called "rheophytes" that have adapted to the unusual environment where they are exposed to torrents during heavy rainfalls and dried during the low-water period. Such plants include many endemic and endangered species of the Ryukyu Chain.



Mangrove forests

In Japan, mangrove forests covering large areas can be seen only in the Ryukyu Chain. Among them, the mangrove forest at the mouth of the Sumiyo River on Amami-Oshima Island is the most northern. On Iriomote Island, mangrove forests are found at the mouths of the Nakama River, the Urauchi River, and the Shilira River, etc.

Amami-Oshima Island

Amami Island Group

Tokunoshima Island

Okinawa Island Group

Northern part of Okinawa Island

Sakishima Island Group

Iriomote Island



World Heritage property
Buffer zone

*Categories on the Red List of the Ministry of the Environment (MOE)

- Threatened IA (CR): Species facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the near future
- Threatened IB (EN): Species facing a high risk of extinction in the near future
- Threatened II (VU): Species facing a growing risk of extinction



Neolucanus protogenetivus protogenetivus

This species is endemic to Amami-Oshima and Tokunoshima Islands. In the Ryukyu Chain, stag beetles of the genus *Neolucanus* have speciated into 4 species and 2 subspecies, including *N. okinawanus* on Okinawa Island and *N. insulicola* and *N. insularis* on Iriomote Island.

Threatened II (VU)



Amami jay

This jay is endemic to Amami-Oshima Island and its neighboring isolated islands. It is smaller than a dove, and has beautiful deep purplish-blue feathers. The black-headed jay, which is distributed in the Himalayas, is its closest relative.



Amami Ishikawa's frog

This species is endemic to Amami-Oshima Island. With golden spots scattered over its green back, it is often described as the most beautiful frog in Japan. This frog and the closely related Okinawa Ishikawa's frog, which is found only in the northern part of Okinawa Island, were previously considered the same species, but are now known to be separate species.

Threatened IB (EN)

Tokunoshima Island



Banded ground gecko

This species is endemic to Tokunoshima Island. Its sister species, Kuroiwa's ground gecko which speciated from the same lineage, is found on Okinawa Island.

Threatened IB (EN)



Amami rabbit

This species is endemic to Amami-Oshima Island and Tokunoshima Island. It is the only species in its genus, with no close relatives anywhere in the world. It has distinctive small ears and eyes, and is thought to be one of the most primitive extant rabbits.

Threatened IB (EN)



Ryukyu long-haired rat

This species is endemic to Amami-Oshima Island and Tokunoshima Island and Okinawa Island. It is the largest of Japan's native rodents and, as its name suggests, has long bristles reaching up to 6 cm on its body surface. It is nocturnal and lives primarily in trees.

Threatened IB (EN)



Anderson's crocodile newt

This species is endemic to the Ryukyu Chain, inhabiting Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, Okinawa Island, and so on. It is said to retain the most primitive form of newts.

Threatened II (VU)



Amami-Oshima World Heritage Conservation Center

This is an exhibition space where visitors can experience the forests and creatures on Amami-Oshima Island as if they were actually walking in the field, as well as an exhibition corner on the efforts and rules to protect the nature. The center is a base for the promotion of appropriate use and conservation of Amami-Oshima National Park.

*Refer to the back cover



Wildlife Conservation Center

The centers have been established on Amami-Oshima Island, northern Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island by the Ministry of the Environment. They serve as bases for exhibiting materials related to wildlife unique to the region, providing visitors with explanations and public education, implementing the Protection and Recovery Program of National Endangered Species, and conducting surveys and research.



Yellow-margined box turtle

This subspecies is endemic to Ishigaki and Iriomote Islands. It has been designated as a Natural Monument. It mainly lives on the forest floor in humid evergreen forests.

Threatened II (VU)

Iriomote Island



Iriomote cat

This cat, a subspecies of the leopard cat distributed on the continent, is endemic to Iriomote Island. It is the sole carnivore in the property and is the apex predator on Iriomote Island, the world's smallest island where wildcats live.

Threatened IA (CR)

Crested serpent eagle

This species is widely distributed throughout India, Indochina, Taiwan, and South Asia. In Japan, endemic subspecies occur on Ishigaki and Iriomote Islands. It feeds on a wide variety of prey including frogs, snakes, rats, and crabs. On Iriomote Island, it is an apex predator along with the Iriomote cat.

Threatened IA (CR)



Solenogyne mikadoi

This species is endemic to 4 islands containing the property. It occurs in mountain streams and their neighboring rocky stretches and cliffs. The plant is 3-5 cm tall and produces small flowers about 1.5 mm in diameter.

Threatened II (VU)



Okinawa rail

This rail, the only flightless bird in Japan, is endemic to northern Okinawa Island. Captive breeding is taking place under the Protection and Recovery Program based on the Act on Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Threatened IA (CR)

Northern part of Okinawa Island

Yambaru Wildlife Conservation Center

Mt. Yonahadake



Yanbaru long-armed scarab beetle

This species is endemic to northern Okinawa Island. It is the largest beetle in Japan, measuring 5 to 6 cm in length. It occurs in natural forests where large-diameter trees grow.

Threatened IB (EN)



Dendrobium okinawense

This orchid is endemic to northern Okinawa Island. It grows on large trees such as *Distylium racemosum* and blooms from winter to spring.

Threatened IB (EN)



Okinawa Rail Ecological Exhibition Learning Facility

The facility exhibits living Okinawa rail to raise public awareness for protection activities.