

# 3. Nature Conservation Areas

On the basis of the Nature Conservation Law and relevant prefectural ordinances, areas without being influenced by human activities and areas with outstanding nature are designated as Wilderness Areas and Nature Conservation Areas (or Prefectural Nature Conservation Areas) respectively, for the purpose of conservation of the natural environment.

## Nature Conservation Areas

### (1) Summary of the System

#### ① Wilderness Areas

Areas where the natural environment has maintained an ecological stability without being influenced by human activities (larger than 1,000ha, or larger than 300ha on an island)

#### ② Nature Conservation Areas

Areas of outstanding nature, as described below:

- (A) Alpine and sub-alpine vegetation areas larger than 1,000ha, and outstanding natural forests larger than 100ha
- (B) Lands with unique topography, geology or natural features (larger than 10ha)
- (C) Coasts, lakes, wetlands, rivers and marine sites with outstanding nature larger than 10ha
- (D) Areas of native plants and wildlife habitats, provided that the area has a natural environment as outstanding as (A), (B) and (C) (larger than 10ha)

#### ③ Prefectural Nature Conservation Areas

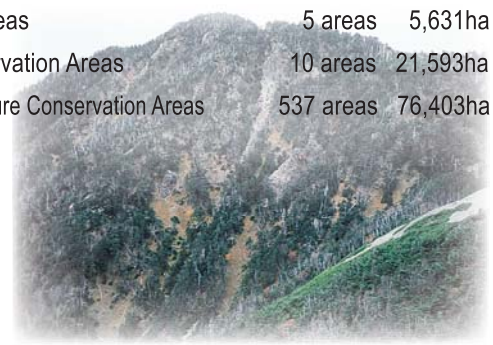
Areas with nature almost as outstanding as that of the Nature Conservation Areas above (except marine areas)

### (2) Designation of Nature Conservation Areas, etc.

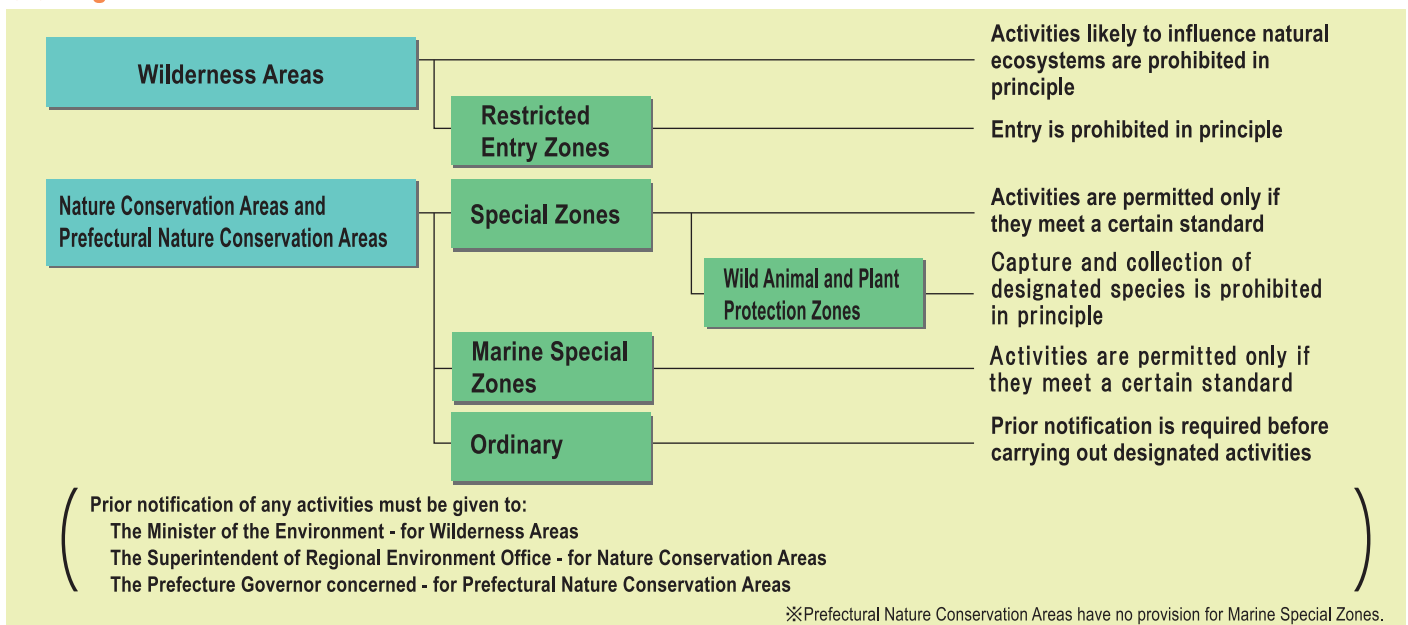
Wilderness Areas and Nature Conservation Areas are designated by the Minister of the Environment after seeking the opinions of the Central Environment Council.

Nature conservation areas designated so far are listed below (as of March 2009):

● Wilderness Areas	5 areas	5,631ha
● Nature Conservation Areas	10 areas	21,593ha
● Prefectural Nature Conservation Areas	537 areas	76,403ha



### (3) Regulations for Conservation



## The Difference between Nature Conservation Areas and Natural Parks

Wilderness Areas and Nature Conservation Areas are designated to preserve into the future the areas that have maintained their pristine characteristics and outstanding natural environment. Natural Parks, on the other hand, are designated to provide opportunities for people to experience nature, as well as to protect natural landscapes. Enjoyable and appropriate use of the parks by visitors is being encouraged through the planned

development of walkways and visitor centers. Parks are expected to increase their role, among others, in high quality, on-site environmental education. In cooperation with local governments concerned, the Ministry of the Environment manages these areas in accordance with their respective purposes.