



National Parks and World Natural Heritage Sites in Japan

National Parks in Japan

National Parks of Japan play the role of being the backbone for protecting a wide variety of ecosystems including forests, wetlands, seashores, and coral reefs as well as wild fauna and flora, and preserving biodiversity. Therefore, the existence of national parks is indispensable for passing down the affluent nature of Japan to the future.

Currently, 29 areas are designated as National Parks, covering 2.09 million hectares or 5.5% of the country's ground surface. Designation and management of National Parks are administered by the Ministry of the Environment.



1. Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu National Park

Designated in 1974, 24,166ha

The Japan's northernmost national park, consisting of two islands and an expanse of wetlands. A variety of scenery, from mountains to wetlands, are truly enjoyable.



2. Shiretoko National Park

Designated in 1964, 38,633ha

Contains primeval ecosystems with diverse wildlife, remaining in Shiretoko Peninsula. In winter a portion of coastline is covered with drifting ice. Inscribed on the World Heritage List.



3. Akan National Park

Designated in 1934, 90,481ha

A park of forests, lakes and volcanoes. Boasts a majestic view of three crater lakes including Akan Lake, known for spherical moss, Marimo, and surrounding coniferous forests.



4. Kushiro-Shitsugen National Park

Designated in 1987, 26,861ha

The Japan's largest wetland complex. Supports about 200 plant species and some rare species, including Japanese crane and Sakhalin taimen. Canoe touring is popular.



5. Taisetsusan National Park

Designated in 1934, 226,764ha

The Japan's largest national park, featuring Taisetsu Mountains, and wetlands and alpine plant communities at over 2000m elevations. A stunning view of autumn leaves.



6. Shikotsu-Toya National Park

Designated in 1949, 99,473ha

Consists of two crater lakes and active volcanic mountains. With popular hot spring resorts, such as Noboribetsu, the park offers a host of vacation options.



7. Towada-Hachimantai National Park

Designated in 1936, 85,551ha

Encompasses from a Japan's most picturesque mountain stream view, vast open space of broad-leaved trees, to a plateau, Hachimantai. The park also features old several therapeutic hot spring resorts.



8. Rikuchu-Kaigan National Park

Designated in 1955, 12,212ha

A seashore park stretching for about 180km on the coast of northeastern Honshu. A series of enormous bluffs offer a spectacular vista and is called Sea Alps.



9. Bandai-Asahi National Park

Designated in 1950, 186,404ha

Mt. Dewa-sanzan, famous for mountain worship, Asahi-Iide Mountain Range, Mt. Bandai, and numerous lakes-the majestic views of mountains, forests and lakes adorn the park.



10. Nikko National Park

Designated in 1934, 114,908ha

Features various aspects: a historical architecture, Nikko Toshogu; a summer retreat on a mountain, Chuzenji Lake; the Japan's most prominent mountain wetlands, Oze Marsh. The park is close to Tokyo and easily accessible.



11. Oze National Park

Designated in 2007, 37,200ha

Oze is Japan's largest high moor. The highland plateau is covered with some 400 shallow pools, crowds of creeping pine trees, and virgin forests of beech trees.



12. Joshinetsu-Kogen National Park

Designated in 1949, 188,046ha

Consists of a highland and its surrounding chain of mountains sitting on a continental divide. This park has several ski resorts and hot springs, drawing a large number of tourists.



13. Chichibu-Tama-Kai National Park

Designated in 1950, 126,259ha

The old stratum mountains are home to natural forests of beech, Japanese hemlock and veitch fir. Located in the headwater of Tokyo, bounty forests and streams provide a recreational ground for urban communities.



14. Ogasawara National Park

Designated in 1972, 6,629ha

Subtropical oceanic islands of over 30 islands are scattered in the 1,000km south of Tokyo. Humpback whales migrate to the surrounding ocean. The islands support many endemic species such as Ogasawara fruit bat.



15. Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park

Designated in 1936, 121,695ha

Mt. Fuji rises high in a vast stretch of luxius forests and several lakes. The Hakone area features several volcanoes, volcanic vents and lakes. Izu Peninsura offers scenic mountains, seashores, and a chain of characteristic islands in the ocean, Izu-shichito.



16. Chubu-Sangaku National Park

Designated in 1934, 174,323ha

One of the most prominent mountain parks. Encompasses a number of precipitous 3000m peaks. Kamikochi highland and Mt. Tateyama attract many tourists seeking for magnificent mountain views.



17. Hakusan National Park

Designated in 1962, 47,700ha

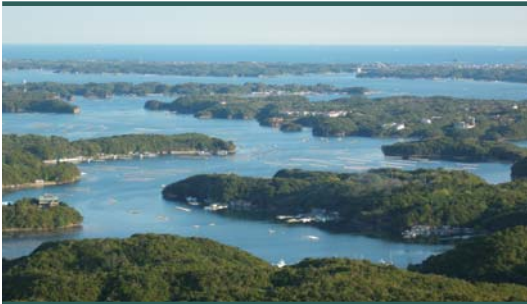
Consists of a sacred mountain, Mt. Hakusan, and its foot. Because of rich alpine plants, the area has a long history of plant research. Broad-leaved trees, mainly beech, are distributed.



18. Minami Alps National Park

Designated in 1964, 35,752ha

A mountain park with a series of 3000m mountains, covered with thick coniferous forests while alpine plants on their tops. It is a paradise for mountaineers willing to a long walk.



19. Ise-Shima National Park

Designated in 1937, 55,544ha

Comprised of an elegantly displayed coastline with numerous inlets and outlets, Shima Peninsula, and a symbol of the Japan's ancient religion and culture, Ise Shrine. The mountain behind the shrine has been protected as a sacred forest.



20. Yoshino-Kumano National Park

Designated in 1936, 59,793ha

Consists of forested mountains and Kumano Valley in the middle of Kii Peninsula and its shorelines. The area is famous for Mt. Yoshino with cherry blossoms and historic sites; Ohmine Mountain Range, a training ground for Shugen-do (Japanese esoteric Buddhism) practitioners; and Mt. Kumano-sanzan.



21. Sanin-Kaigan National Park

Designated in 1963, 8,783ha

This 75-km shoreline park in the Kinki and Chugoku districts offers a spectacular view of intricate shorelines with caves and surrounding clear ocean water. Distinctive plant species are found in a desert-like view of Tottori Sand Dune.



22. Setonaikai National Park

Designated in 1934, 66,934ha

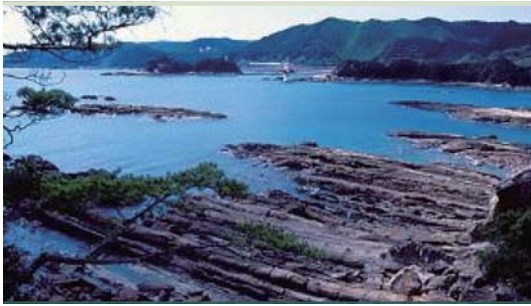
About 3,000 islands, small and large, spread over the Seto Inland Sea. Human life and natural beauty are peacefully blended to create this park's view.



23. Daisen-Oki National Park

Designated in 1936, 35,053ha

Mt. Daisen, a highest mountain in the Chugoku district; Oki Islands of large to small 180 islands; the Shimane Peninsula known for Izumo Taisha Shrine; and Mt. Sanbe and Mt. Hiruzen-all are the components of the Daisen-Oki National Park.



24. Ashizuri-Uwakai National Park

Designated in 1972, 11,345ha

A marine park in southwestern Shikoku, featuring a delicate scenery with an intricate shoreline pattern and numerous islands in north (Uwa-kai) and contrasting dynamic view in south (Ashizuri), where high bluffs extend along its shoreline. The sea has richly decorated underwater views with abundant coral community.



25. Saikai National Park

Designated in 1955, 24,646ha

A marine and islands park in northwestern Kyushu. A chain of over 200 islands form this archipelagic sea. The sunset view is especially breathtaking. Also, the Goto archipelago in the East China Sea consists of over 250 islands.



26. Unzen-Amakusa National Park

Designated in 1934, 28,279ha

The Unzen area in the center of Shimabara Peninsula hosts summer resorts, known by the famous volcanic activity of Mt. Fugen in 1990 and hot springs. The Amakusa Islands of 120 islands, small and large, is known for its scenic beauty.



27. Aso-Kuju National Park

Designated in 1934, 72,678ha

A park of volcanoes and grass fields. Mt. Aso has an extremely large caldera, while Mt. Kuju is a series of dome-shaped volcanoes. The grassy fields on their hillslopes have been maintained by human activities, such as prescribed burning and cattle grazing.



28. Kirishima-Yaku National Park

Designated in 1934, 60,794ha

The Kirishima area is a collection of over 20 volcanoes. Natural trees spread over the mountain foot. The Yaku-shima Island, inscribed on the World Natural Heritage, is known for the forests of over 1000 years-old cedars.



29. Iriomote National Park

Designated in 1972, 20,569ha

At the southwest end of the Japanese archipelago, the park encompasses Iriomote and Ishigaki Islands, smaller islands and coral reefs. Subtropical forests blanket 80% of Iriomote, supporting a large number of rare species such as the Iriomote wild cat.

World Natural Heritage Sites and Nominated Sites in Japan

The World Heritage is an irreplaceable asset of mankind as a whole and is a treasure to be handed over to the future generations. The World Heritage includes cultural and natural heritage. To be inscribed on the World Heritage List as a natural site, it must meet one or more of the four criteria which are “topography / geography and geology”, “ecosystem”, “natural landscape”, and “biodiversity”.

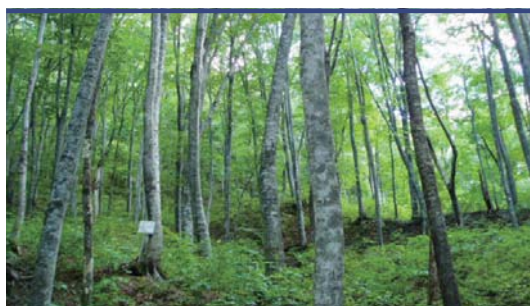
In Japan, Shiretoko, Shirakami-Sanchi and Yakushima have been inscribed on the World Heritage List as natural properties., while Ogasawara Islands and Ryukyu Islands are chosen as candidate sites. Japanese government submitted the nomination of Ogasawara Islands to the World Heritage Centre in Jan 2010.



1. Shiretoko

Inscribed under criteria ix) and x) in 2005, 71,103ha

Shiretoko is an extraordinary productive area influenced by the nutrient-rich ocean current formed by sea ice formation. It provides an outstanding example of the interaction between marine and terrestrial ecosystems. At the same time, this site is important for many marine animals including threatened seabirds, migratory birds, sea lions and other cetacean species.



2. Shirakamisanchi

Inscribed under criterion ix) in 1993, 16,971ha

The Shirakami-sanchi is the last areas where cool temperature beech trees that once covered the hills and mountain slopes of northern Japan are widely distributed untouched. Various types of community and stages of reproduction show an significant example of the on-going ecological process.



3. Yakushima

Inscribed under criteria vii) and ix) in 1993, 10,747ha

Yakushima is characterized by its rich biota with about 1,900 species and subspecies of flora including the enormous 1,000 year old Japanese cedar trees. Yakushima also exhibits a typical example of vertical distribution of vegetation from a coastal region to a subalpine region.



● Ogasawara Islands (Under nomination process)

Nominated in Jan 2010 under criteria viii), ix) and x), 7,408ha

The Ogasawara Islands are the only place on earth that preserves perfect exposures on land illustrating the evolution of an oceanic island arc. The islands well preserve features of oceanic islands ecosystem with many endemic species and provide habitats for many globally important endangered and endemic species.



● Ryukyu Island (National candidate site)

Selected in 2003

Ryukyu Islands illustrates evolutionary process of fauna and flora reflecting geological history of repeating separation and reunion with the continent and provides habitats for endangered species including relict endemic species.

National and Quasi-National Parks and World Natural Heritage Sites in Japan

National Parks

- 1 Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu
- 2 Shiretoko
- 3 Akan
- 4 Kushiro-Shitsugen
- 5 Taisetsusan
- 6 Shikotsu-Toya
- 7 Towada-Hachimantai
- 8 Rikuchu-Kaigan
- 9 Bandai-Asahi
- 10 Nikko
- 11 Oze
- 12 Joshinetsu-Kogen
- 13 Chichibu-Tama-Kai
- 14 Ogasawara
- 15 Fuji-Hakone-Izu
- 16 Chubu-Sangaku
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- 18 Minami Alps
- 19 Ise-Shima
- 20 Yoshino-Kumano
- 21 Sanin-Kaigan
- 22 Setonaikai
- 23 Daisen-Oki
- 24 Ashizuri-Uwakai
- 25 Saikai
- 26 Unzen-Amakusa
- 27 Aso-Kuju
- 28 Kirishima-Yaku
- 29 Iriomote

Quasi-National Parks

- 1 Shokanbetsu-Teuri-Yagishiri
- 2 Abashiri
- 3 Niseko-Shakotan-Otaru Kaigan
- 4 Hidaka Sanmyaku-Erimo
- 5 Onuma
- 6 Shimokita Hanto
- 7 Tsugaru
- 8 Hayachine
- 9 Kurikoma
- 10 Minami-Sanriku Kinkazan
- 11 Zao
- 12 Oga
- 13 Chokai
- 14 Echigo Sanzan-Tadami
- 15 Suigo-Tsukuba
- 16 Myogi-Arafune-Saku Kogen
- 17 Minami Boso
- 18 Meiji Memorial Forest Takao
- 19 Tanzawa-Oyama
- 20 Sado-Yahiko-Yoneyama
- 21 Noto Hanto
- 22 Echizen-Kaga Kaigan
- 23 Wakasa Wan
- 24 Yatsugatake-Chushin Kogen
- 25 Tenryu-Okumikawa
- 26 Ibi-Sekigahara-Yoro
- 27 Hida-Kiso Gawa
- 28 Aichi Kogen
- 29 Mikawa Wan
- 30 Suzuka
- 31 Muroo-Akame-Aoyama
- 32 Biwako
- 33 Tango-Amanohashidate-Oeyama
- 34 Meiji Memorial Forest Minoo
- 35 Kongo-Ikoma
- 36 Hyonosen-Ushiroyama-Nagisan
- 37 Yamato-Aogaki
- 38 Koya-Ryujin
- 39 Hiba-Dogo-Taishaku
- 40 Nishi-Chugoku Sanchi
- 41 Kita-Nagato Kaigan
- 42 Akiyoshidai
- 43 Tsurugisan
- 44 Muroto-Anan Kaigan
- 45 Ishizuchi
- 46 Kita-Kyushu
- 47 Genkai
- 48 Yaba-Hita-Hikosan
- 49 Iki-Tsushima
- 50 Kyushu-Chuo Sanchi
- 51 Nippo Kaigan
- 52 Sobo-Katamuki
- 53 Nichinan Kaigan
- 54 Amami Gunto
- 55 Okinawa Kaigan
- 56 Okinawa Senseki

World Natural Heritage Sites

- 1 Shiretoko
- 2 Shirakamisanchi
- 3 Yakushima

