

SHIRETOKO 知床

WORLD NATURAL HERITAGE IN JAPAN

白神山地 SHIRAKAMI-SANCHI

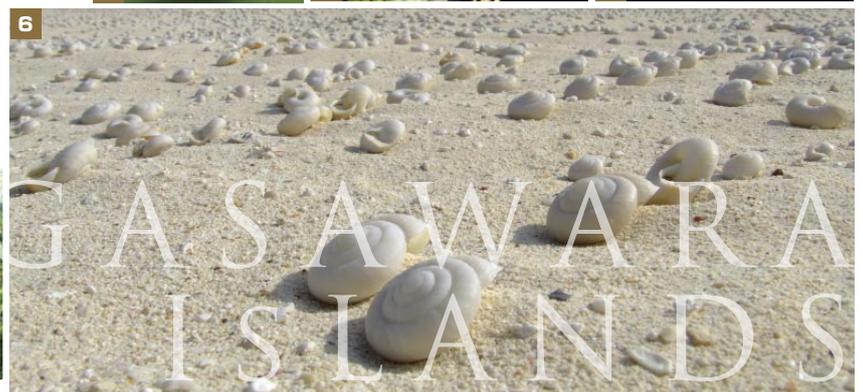
OGASAWARA ISLANDS 小笠原諸島

屋久島 YAKUSHIMA

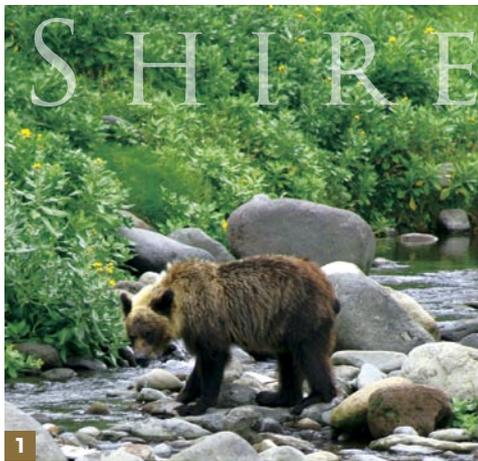
Ongoing Evolutionary Process — Ogasawara Islands

The Ogasawara Islands World Heritage Property is located approximately 1,000 km south of the main Japanese Archipelago. The islands are surrounded by sheer cliffs, and ocean whose deep blue colour is referred to as 'Bonin blue'. The terrestrial environment is dominated by subtropical forest and sclerophyllous shrubland. As the Ogasawara Islands have never been part of a continent, a variety of animals and plants have evolved in their own distinctive ways. About 70% of the vascular plants on record, and over 90% of the more than 100 species of land snails, are endemic to the islands. Ongoing evolutionary processes observable on the islands include 'adaptive radiation', in which a common ancestor changes into significantly diverse species according to the environmental conditions, and the evolution of species from marine to terrestrial forms.

- 1 Sclerophyllous shrubland (Anijima Island)
- 2 Endemic subspecies of Japanese wood pigeon (*Columba janthina nitens*)
- 3 *Boninosuccinea ogasawarae*, a species of land snail
- 4 Bonin flying fox (*Pteropus pselaphon*)
- 5 Luminous mushroom (*Mycena chlorophos*)
- 6 Semifossil of *Mandarina luhuana*



World Natural Heritage in Japan

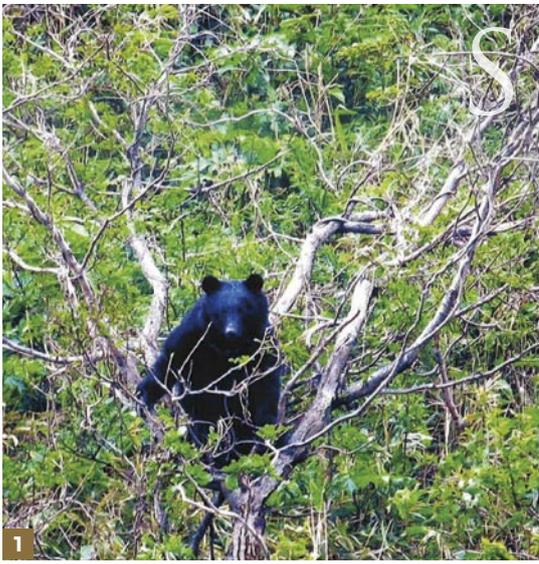


- 1 Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*)
- 2 Chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*) running upstream
- 3 Steller's sea eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*) resting on sea ice
- 4 Sea ice reaching the Horobetsu-daichi tableland

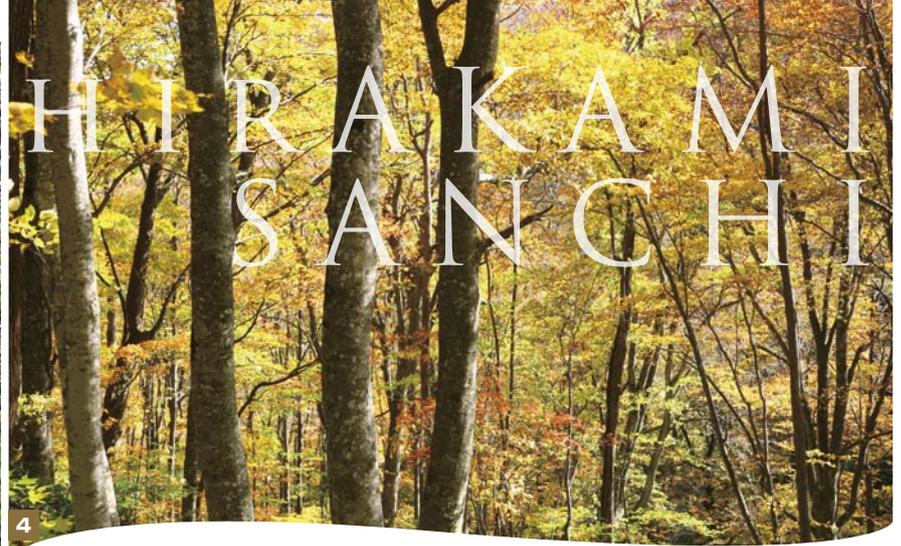


Interaction between Marine and Terrestrial Ecosystems — Shiretoko

The Shiretoko World Heritage Property is composed of part of the Shiretoko Peninsula, located in the northeast of Hokkaido Island, and its surrounding marine area. A harsh environment has discouraged exploitation of this land and left the vegetation undisturbed. An integrated and complex ecosystem, linking seas, rivers and land, has emerged within its confines. The marine area around the Shiretoko Peninsula, the Northern Hemisphere's most southerly sea with seasonal sea ice, is icebound during the winter, but becomes a dynamic stage for the wildlife food chain in the spring, when phytoplankton blooms occur. This circulation of life supports many salmonid species, endangered Blakiston's fish owl (*Ketupa blakistoni blakistoni*), densely-populated brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), and other animals.



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Remnants of ancient vegetation

— Shirakami-Sanchi

The Shirakami-Sanchi World Heritage Property is located in the northern part of Honshu Island. It contains one of the largest virgin beech forests in East Asia, which forms an extensive remnant of the cool-temperate beech forest that has covered the mountains of northern Japan for 10,000 years. This forest is of particular value, as it emerged from circumpolar vegetation of around 30 million years ago, and still maintains its characteristic species. A pure forest of Japanese beech (*Fagus crenata*), able to survive under snowy conditions, has developed in this often heavily snowbound environment. The water-retaining beech forest is home to a plentiful ecosystem with abundant wild fauna and flora, including black woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius martius*), Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*), Japanese serow (*Capricornis crispus*), and *Pseudolysimachion schmidtianum* subsp. *senanense* var. *shiragamiense*.



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- 1 Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*)
- 2 Japanese serow (*Capricornis crispus*)
- 3 *Pseudolysimachion schmidtianum* subsp. *senanense* var. *shiragamiense*, a species endemic to Shirakami-Sanchi
- 4 Autumn foliage in the beech forest

World Natural Heritage in Japan

A vegetational microcosm of the Japanese Archipelago

— Yakushima

Situated off the southernmost tip of Kyushu Island, the Yakushima World Heritage Property is a mountainous island with high peaks. The vegetation of Japan, which stretches from north to south, is reflected in miniature on this island, ranging from coastal vegetation with subtropical elements such as *Ficus superba* var. *japonica*, to evergreen broadleaf forest such as *Castanopsis sieboldii*, to Japanese cedar forest, to cold-temperate bamboo grassland, and to high moor, as elevation increases. It is one of a few locations in the north temperate zone where this kind of vertical plant distribution may be observed. The area receives so much precipitation that it is often described as 'rainy 35 days a month'. In this humid environment, fresh green rheophytes and epiphytes abound, in a distinctive landscape dominated by a natural forest of immense Yakusugi trees, Japanese cedars (*Cryptomeria japonica*) over 1,000 years old.

- 1 Kohananoego, a high moor
- 2 Endemic subspecies of Japanese macaque (*Macaca fuscata yakui*)
- 3 Rhododendron (*Rhododendron yakushmanum*)
- 4 Endemic subspecies of Sika deer (*Cervus nippon yakushimae*)
- 5 Jomon Sugi, a Yakusugi tree with trunk circumference of 16 m



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YAKUS

ABOUT WORLD HERITAGE

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 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972, in order to establish an international cooperation and support framework that protects and preserves such common asset. Japan ratified the Convention in 1992.



SHIRETOKO (HOKKAIDO)

Area: Approx. 71,100ha Inscription: 2005
Shiretoko World Heritage Conservation Center
186-10 Utoro-nishi, Shari-cho, Shari-gun, Hokkaido

CRITERIA FOR NATURAL HERITAGE

The World Heritage includes cultural and natural heritage. To be inscribed on the World Heritage List as a natural heritage, it must meet one or more of the four criteria which are "natural beauty", "geology and geomorphology", "ecosystem", and "biodiversity".

(vii) natural beauty	contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance; [Yakushima]
(viii) geology and geomorphology	be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
(ix) ecosystem	be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals; [Shiretoko, Shirakami-Sanchi, Ogasawara Islands, and Yakushima]
(x) biodiversity	contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science or conservation. [Shiretoko]

* Criteria (i) - (vi) are used for cultural heritage.

SHIRAKAMI-SANCHI (AOMORI, AKITA)

Area: Approx. 17,000ha Inscription: 1993
Shirakami-Sanchi World Heritage Conservation Center
· Nishimeya-kan
(Nishimeya Ranger Office for Nature)
61-1 Aza Kanda, Oaza Tashiro,
Nishimeya-mura, Nakatsugaru-gun, Aomori
· Fujisato-kan
(Fujisato Ranger Office for Nature)
63 Aza Satokuri, Fujikoto, Fujisato-cho,
Yamamoto-gun, Akita

OGASAWARA ISLANDS (TOKYO)

Area: Approx. 7,900ha
Inscription: 2011

YAKUSHIMA (KAGOSHIMA)

Area: Approx. 10,700ha, Inscription: 1993
Yakushima World Heritage Conservation Center
2739-343 Anbomaedake, Yakushimas-cho,
Kumage-gun, Kagoshima

