



Nomination of

Amami-Oshima Island

Tokunoshima Island

The Northern Part of  
Okinawa Island, and

Iriomote Island

for Inscription on  
the World Heritage List

GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

January 2017





**Nomination of  
Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, the northern part of Okinawa  
Island, and Iriomote Island  
for inscription on the World Heritage List**

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## GLOSSARY

- Terms used to indicate localities in this document:
  - 1) Nominated property:
    - The 24 component parts in four regions included in this serial nomination, i.e. nominated areas on Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, the northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island.
  - 2) The four regions containing the nominated property:
    - The whole area of Amami-Oshima, Tokunoshima, Iriomote Islands, and three Yambaru villages in the northern part of Okinawa Island. Each region includes the nominated areas, buffer zones and neighboring areas.
    - “Three Yambaru villages” means the area comprising Kunigami Village, Ogimi Village, and Higashi Village in the northern part of Okinawa Island. Yambaru means the wide forest area in mountains in Okinawa language.
  - 3) The four islands containing the nominated property:
    - The whole area of Amami-Oshima, Tokunoshima, Okinawa, and Iriomote Islands including the nominated areas, buffer zones, and neighboring areas.
- Names and classification of islands used in this document are shown in a figure on the next page.
- Endemic species in this document refers to a species, whose geographic distribution is confined to Central and/or South Ryukyus unless otherwise specified.
- Relict endemic species refers to an endemic species, whose extant sister lineage (i.e., group of phylogenetically closest relatives) does not occur in the vicinity of the Ryukyu Chain.
- New endemic species refers to an endemic species, whose extant sister lineage (i.e., group of phylogenetically closest relatives) occurs in the vicinity of the Ryukyu Chain.
- Globally threatened species indicate the species listed as Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) or Vulnerable (VU) on the IUCN Red List.
  - The assessment of IUCN Red List is basically at the species level, but some are assessed at the subspecies level.
- Japanese threatened species indicate the species listed as CR, EN or VU on the Red List of Japan produced by the Ministry of the Environment (MOEJ-Red List).
  - The assessment of MOEJ-Red List is usually at the subspecies level. Only plants are assessed at the subspecies and variety levels.

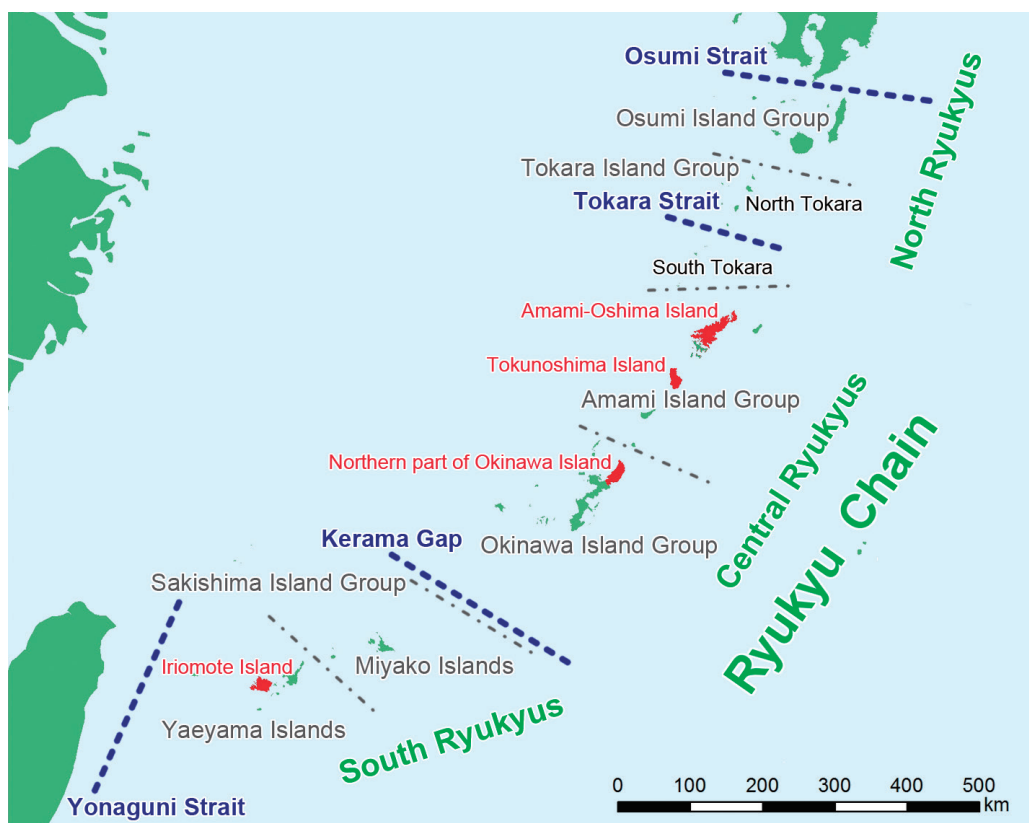
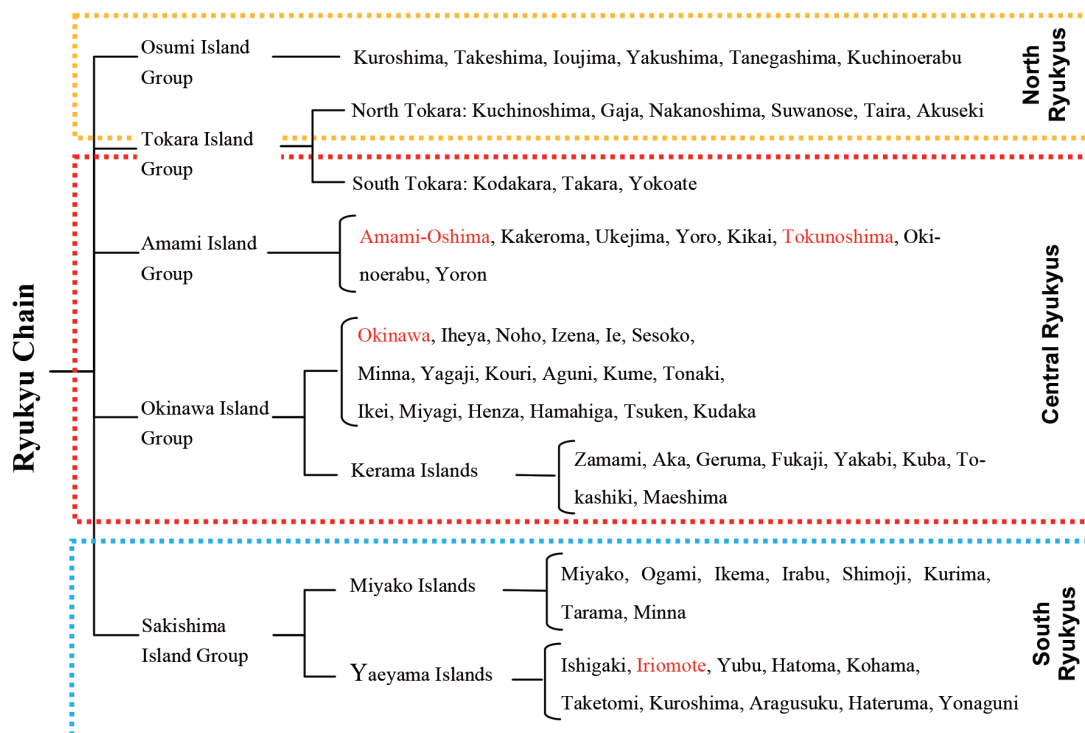


Figure: Names and classification of islands used in scientific fields, especially biology (based on Toyama 2014). Red letters indicate the islands in which the nominated property is included.

1. The marine area between Yonaguni Island and Taiwan is not explicitly named and is described as “between Taiwan and Yonaguni Island” by Geospatial Information Authority of Japan and Japan Coast Guard. In this document, the area is called “Yonaguni Strait” for descriptive purposes as it appears repeatedly.



## Executive Summary

### State Party

Japan

### State, Province or Region

Kagoshima Prefecture and Okinawa Prefecture

### Name of Property

Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, the northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island

### Geographical Coordinates to the Nearest Second

Latitude/longitude of each component part of the nominated property

Annex 1. Longitude of each component part of the nominated property							
ID	Name of the component parts		Region/ District	Coordinates of the central point	Area of nominated component of the property (ha)	Area of the buffer zone (ha)	Map No. (Appendix 5-1)
1	Amami-Oshima Island	a	Kagoshima Prefecture	N28° 16' 44.969" E129° 22' 41.886"	9,299	14,468	AMA_2 AMA_3
2		b		N28° 12' 26.893" E129° 25' 35.112"	1,752		AMA_3
3		c		N28° 16' 40.687" E129° 25' 26.504"	164		AMA_3
4		d		N28° 15' 20.993" E129° 22' 49.542"	96		AMA_3
5		e		N28° 11' 27.022" E129° 23' 35.690"	72		AMA_3
6		f		N28° 16' 53.282" E129° 24' 54.518"	49		AMA_3
7		g		N28° 15' 35.162" E129° 23' 42.903"	45		AMA_3
8		h		N28° 14' 11.265" E129° 24' 32.565"	41		AMA_3
9		i		N28° 13' 18.441" E129° 26' 08.388"	26		AMA_3
Amami-Oshima Island area (ha)					11,544	14,468	
10	Tokunoshima Island	1	Kagoshima Prefecture	N27° 45' 48.136" E128° 58' 01.962"	1,643	1,853	TOK_2
11		2		N27° 51' 56.053" E128° 55' 33.394"	791	999	TOK_1
Tokunoshima Island area (ha)					2,434	2,852	
12	Northern part of Okinawa Island	1-a	Okinawa Prefecture	N26° 43' 29.212" E128° 13' 12.382"	4,219	2,385	NPO_2 NPO_4
13		1-b		N26° 39' 03.653" E128° 11' 41.015"	34		NPO_4
14		1-c		N26° 39' 19.626" E128° 11' 29.668"	6		NPO_4

ID	Name of the component parts		Region/ District	Coordinates of the central point	Area of nominated component of the property (ha)	Area of the buffer zone (ha)	Map No. (Appendix 5-1)
15		1-d		N26° 39′ 21.979″ E128° 11′ 43.241″	5		NPO_4
16		1-e		N26° 39′ 01.906″ E128° 12′ 02.403″	3		NPO_4
17		2		N26° 45′ 52.953″ E128° 17′ 19.942″	355	131	NPO_2
18		3-a		N26° 43′ 36.353″ E128° 16′ 26.244″	229	184	NPO_2
19		3-b		N26° 43′ 25.308″ E128° 15′ 26.700″	77		NPO_2
20		4-a		N26° 41′ 06.970″ E128° 08′ 40.088″	84	327	NPO_2
21		4-b		N26° 40′ 44.575″ E128° 07′ 37.115″	65		NPO_2 NPO_3
22		5		N26° 51′ 15.715″ E128° 15′ 17.122″	56	241	NPO_1
Northern Part of Okinawa Island area (ha)					5,133	3,268	
23	Iriomote Island	a	Okinawa Prefecture	N24° 19′ 34.257″ E123° 48′ 31.486″	18,829	5,542	IRI_1 IRI_2 IRI_3
24		b		N24° 18′ 28.492″ E123° 54′ 03.246″	6		IRI_2
Iriomote Island area (ha)					18,835	5,542	
Total area (ha)					37,946	26,130	

### Textual Description of the Boundaries

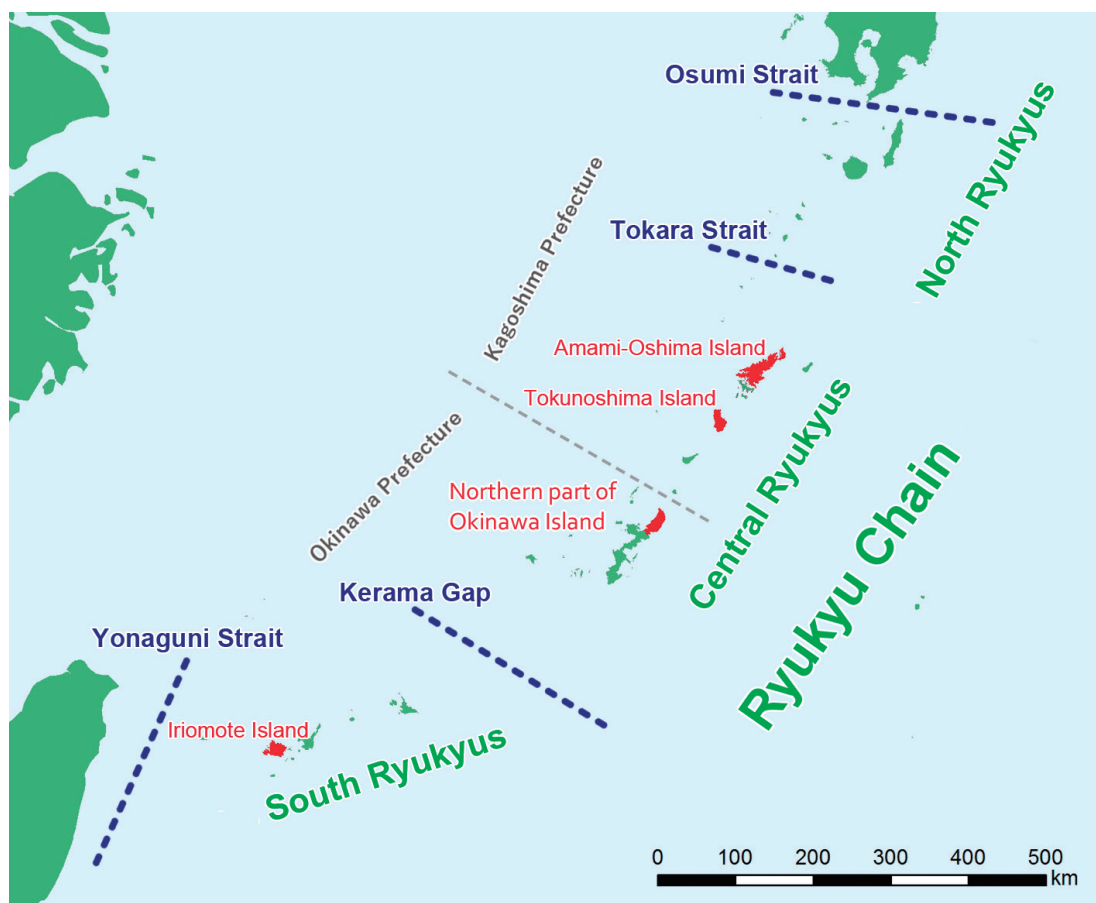
The nominated property is part of the Ryukyu Chain scattered in an arc, about 1,200 km long, lying between the south end of Kyushu of the Japanese Archipelago and Taiwan. It is a serial property consisting of four islands: Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, Okinawa Island (in the Central Ryukyus), and Iriomote Island (in the South Ryukyus).

The nominated property which demonstrates Outstanding Universal Value for inscription on the World Heritage List is to be limited, in light of scientific examination, only to these four islands.

The nominated property is part of the areas strictly protected by the Special Protection Zone and the Class I Special Zone in the Amami Gunto National Park, Yambaru National Park, and Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park as well as the Preservation Zone in the Amami Gunto Forest Ecosystem Reserve and Iriomote Forest Ecosystem Reserve (for the zoning system of protected areas, see Tables 5-2-1 to 5-2-4, 5-3, and 5-4).

The buffer zones are mainly parts of the areas protected by the Class II Special Zone in the above national parks as well as the Conservation and Utilization Zone of the above Forest Ecosystem Reserves.



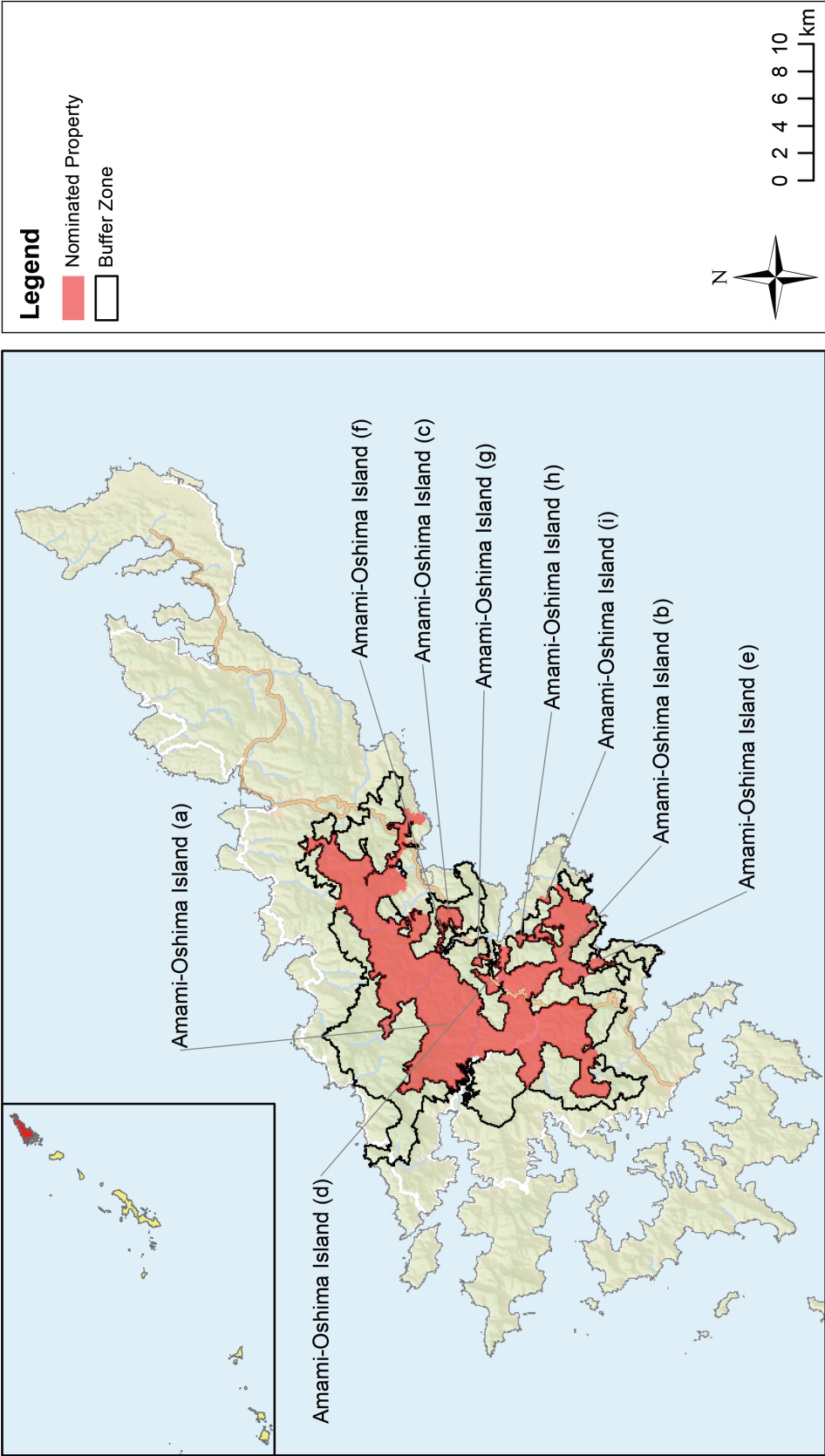


Regional classification of the Ryukyu Chain including the nominated property

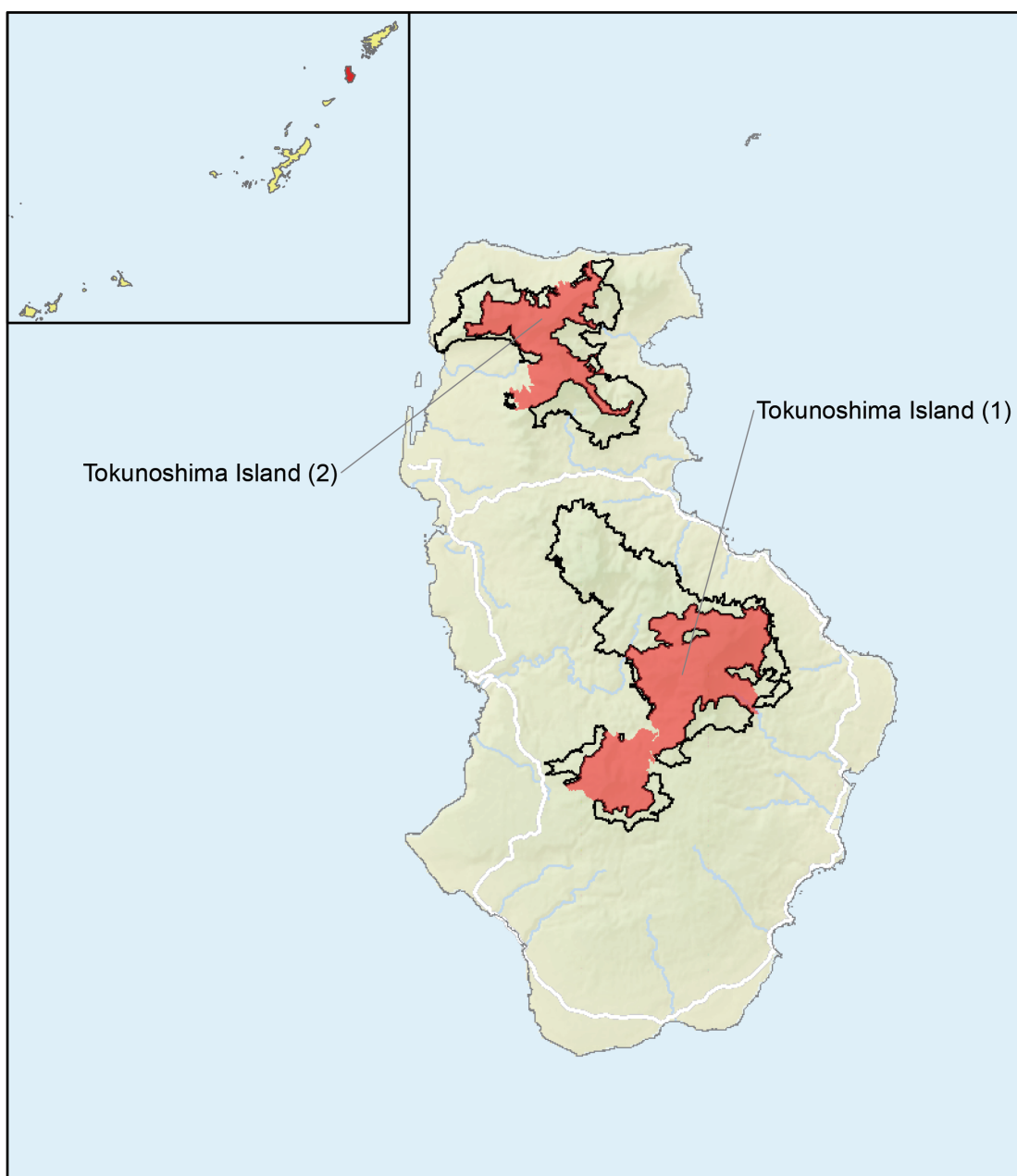
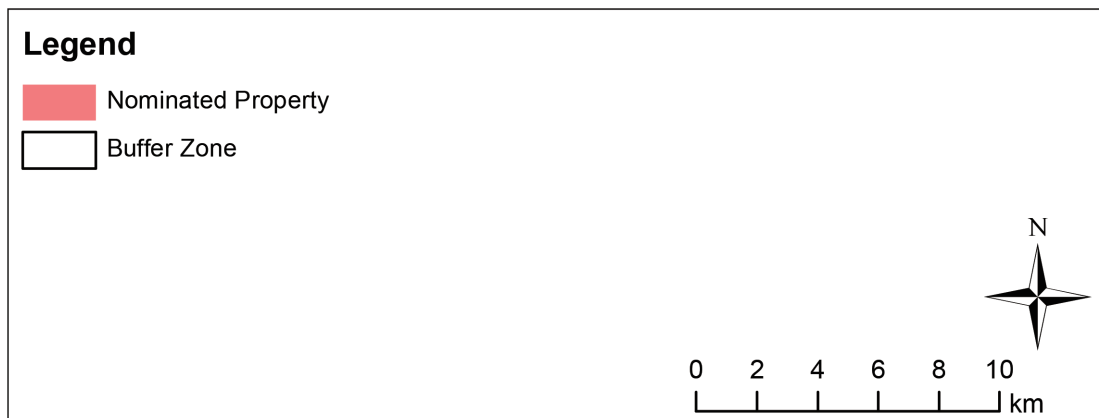


Subtropical rainforest (Photo: MOEJ)

Maps of the Nominated Property, Showing Boundaries and Buffer Zone

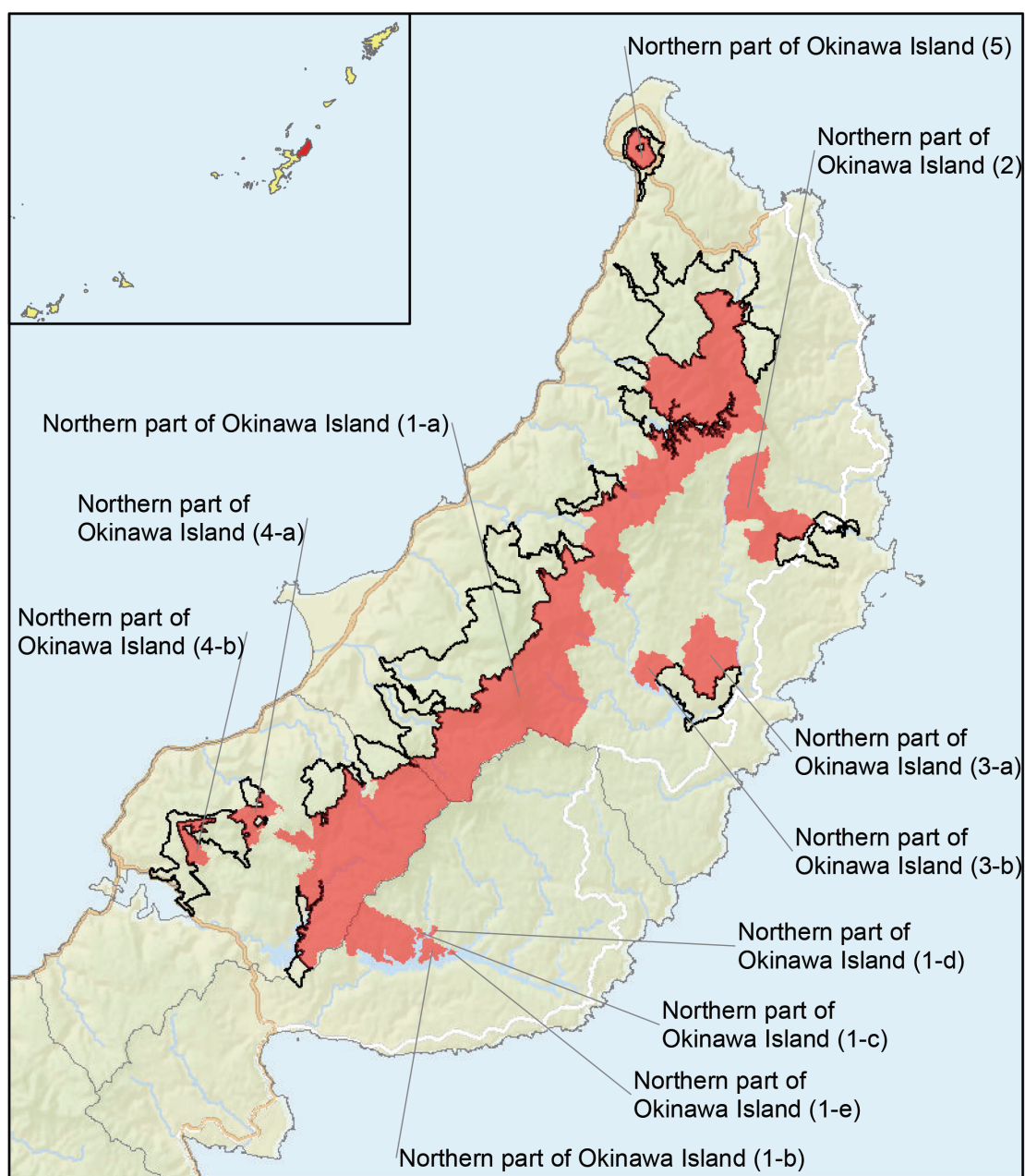
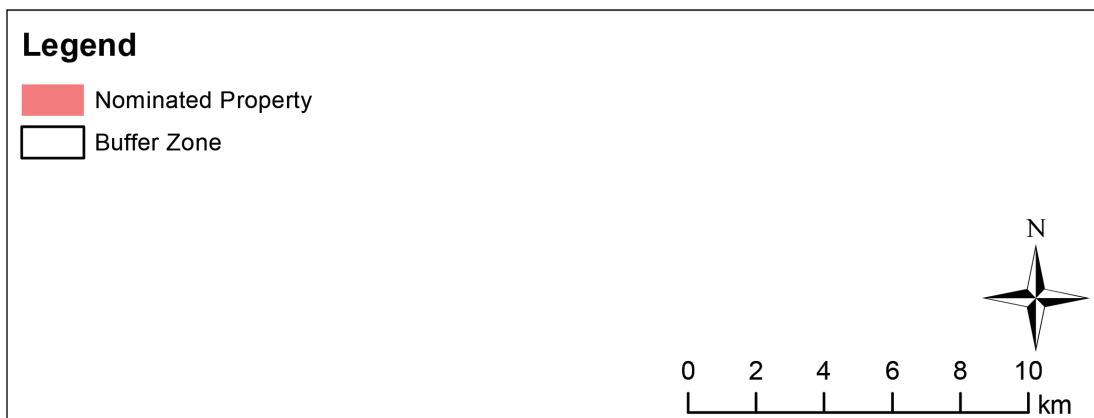


Boundary of the nominated property (Amami-Oshima Island)

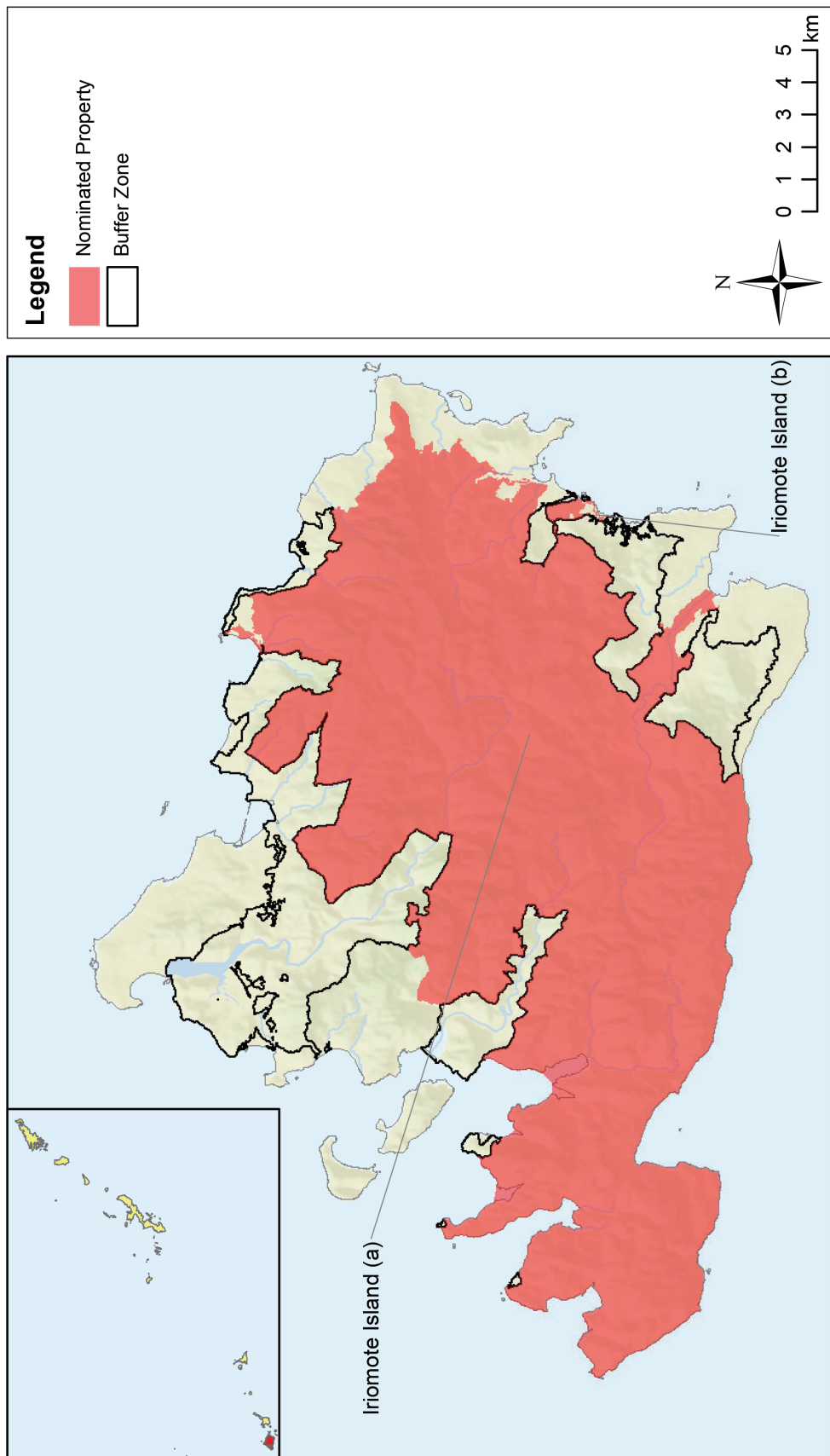


Boundary of the nominated property (Tokunoshima Island)





Boundary of the nominated property (Northern part of Okinawa Island)

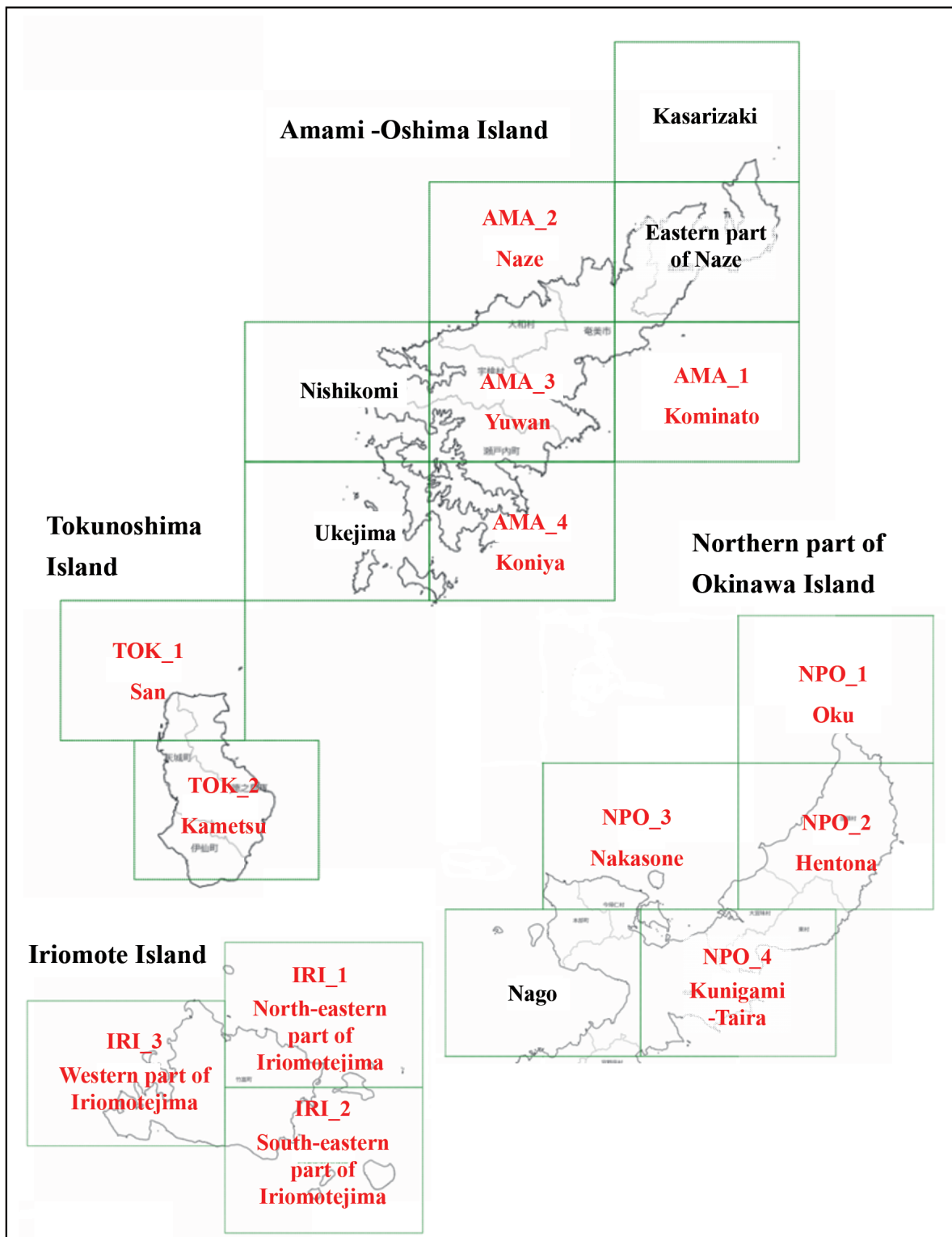


Boundary of the nominated property (Iriomote Island)

## Boundaries of 1:5000 topographical maps including the nominated property and buffer zones

(Source: Geospatial Information Authority of Japan)

Red letters indicate the map numbers and names in which the nominated property is included.





**AMA\_1 Kominato (Amami-Oshima Island)**

5-1. AMA\_2. Naze (Amami-Oshima Island)



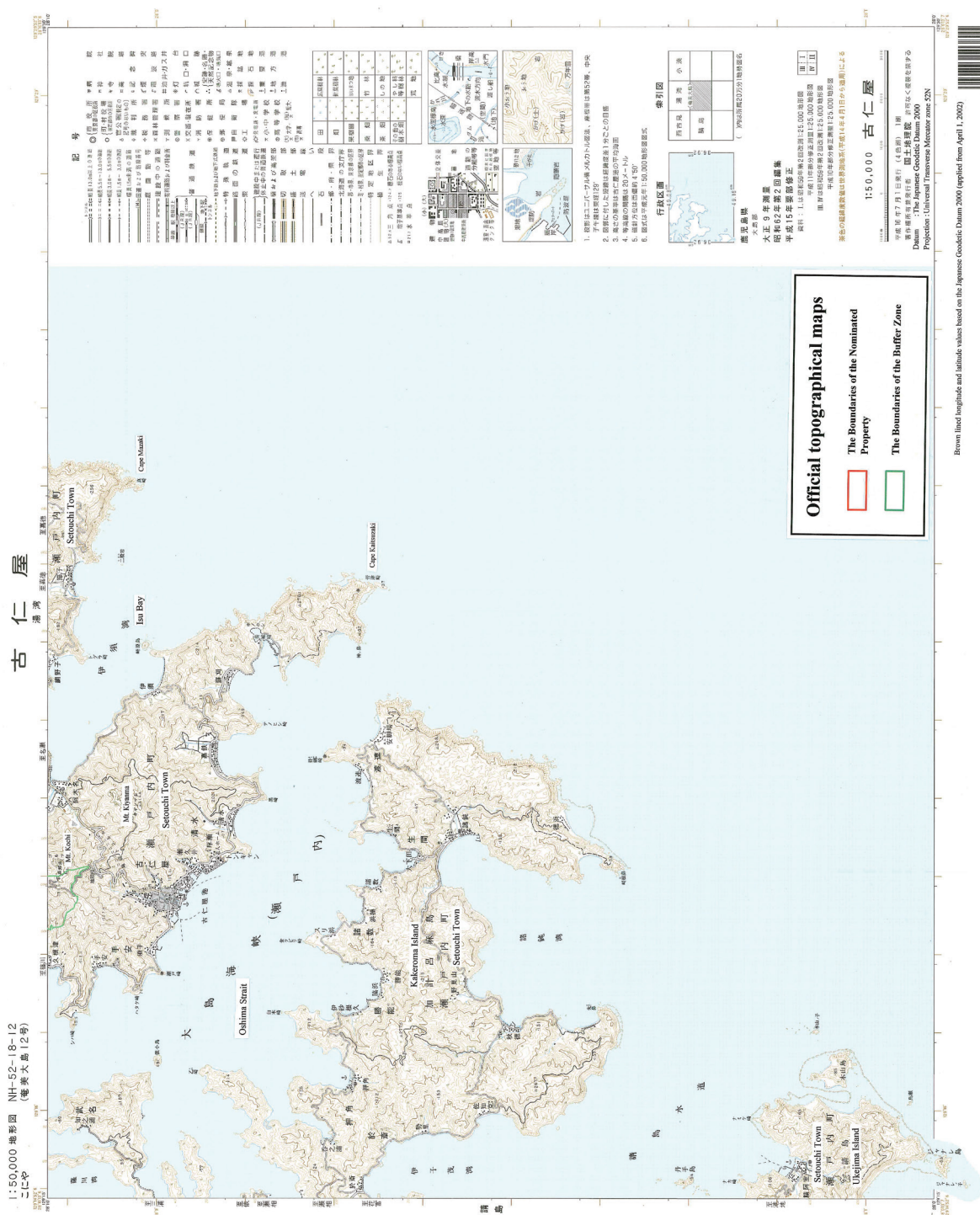


5-1.AMA\_3. Yuwan (Amami-Oshima Island)





5-1.AMA\_4. Koniya (Amami-Oshima Island)



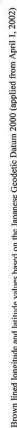


### 5-1. TOK\_1. San (Tokunoshima Island)





5-1. TOK\_2. Kametsu (Tokunoshima Island)



5-1. NPO\_1. Oku (Northern part of Okinawa Island)





5-1. NPO\_2. Hentona (Northern part of Okinawa Island)





5-1. NPO\_3. Nakasone (Northern part of Okinawa Island)





5-1. NPO\_4. Kunigami-Taira (Northern part of Okinawa Island)



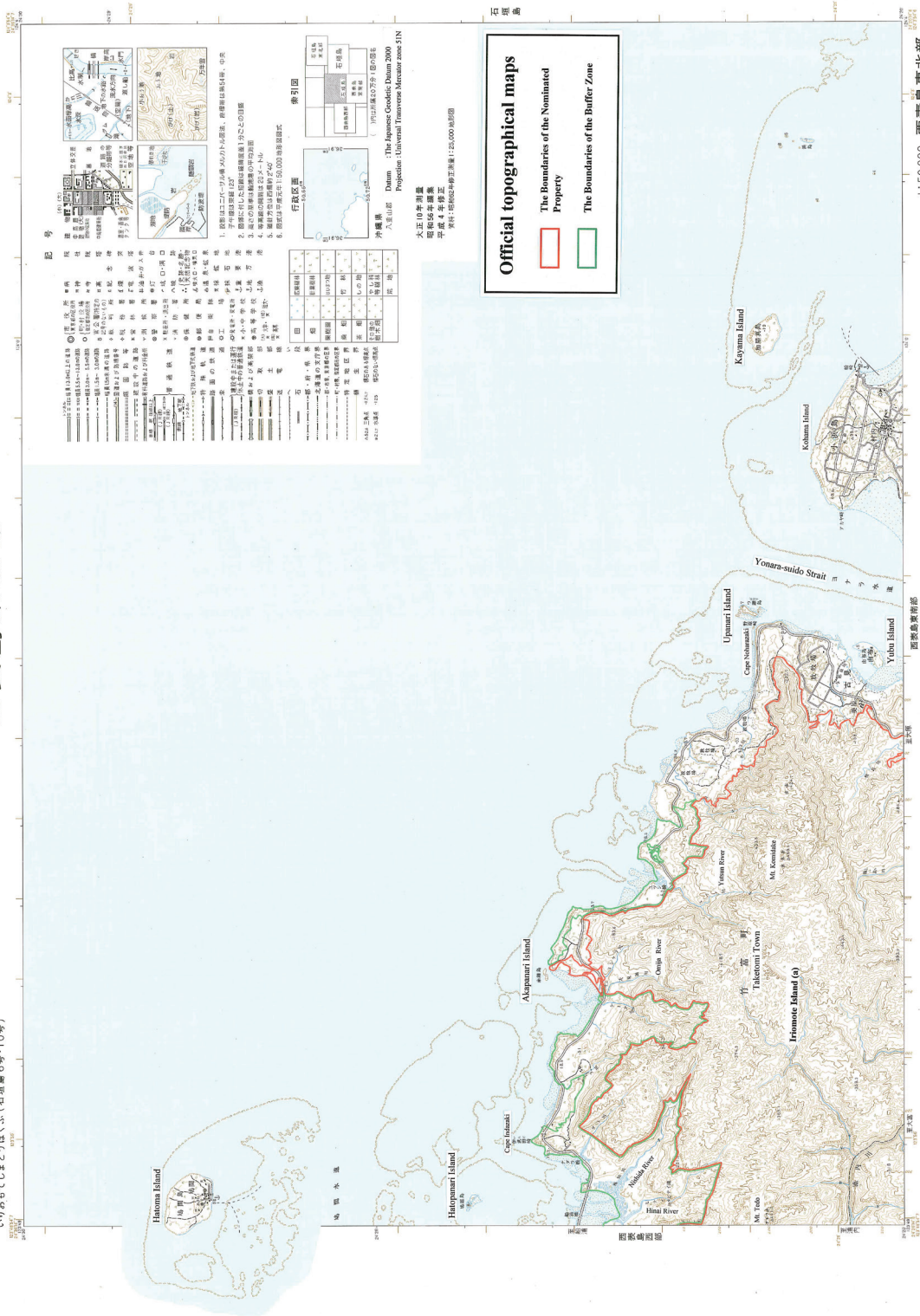


IRI\_1 North-eastern part of Iriomotejima (Iriomote Island)

5-1. IRI\_1. North-eastern part of Iriomotejima (Iriomote Island)

1:50,000 地形図 NG-51-12-14, 18-2  
いりおもてしまとうほうくふ(右図幅6巻・10巻)

西表島東北部



1:50,000 西表島東北部

NG-51-12-14, 18-2

いりおもてしまとうほうくふ(右図幅6巻・10巻)

Copyright © 2003 by the Japanese Geodetic Datum 2000 (applied from April 1, 2003)

5-1. IRI\_2. South-eastern part of Iriomotejima (Iriomote Island)





5-1. IRI\_3. Western part of Iriomotejima (Iriomote Island)

1:50,000 地形図 NG-51-18-2・3・6・7  
いりおもてじませいぶ (石垣島10号・11号・14号・15号)



## **Criteria Under Which Property Is Nominated**

Criterion (ix): to 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.

Criterion (x): to 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.

## **Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

### **a) Brief synthesis**

Belonging to the Ryukyu Chain located at the south end of the Japanese Archipelago, the nominated property has a land area of 37,946 ha comprising of four regions: Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island and the northern part of Okinawa Island in the Central Ryukyus; and Iriomote Island in the South Ryukyus. Influenced by the Kuroshio Current and subtropical high-pressure, the nominated property is in warm, humid subtropical climate and covered mainly with evergreen broadleaved rainforests.

The Ryukyu Chain is believed to have been formed through the formation and expansion of the Okinawa Trough and associated tectonic uplift and subsidence caused by subduction of the Philippine Sea plate beneath the Eurasian plate that had occurred since the middle Miocene of the Neogene. The Ryukyu Chain was then divided into the North Ryukyus, the Central Ryukyus and the South Ryukyus by deep straits lying between islands. Then since the early Pleistocene of the Quaternary, sea-level changes repeated the process of separation and unification of neighboring islands.

This geological history created opportunities for speciation and endemism for non-flying terrestrial creatures in the Central and South Ryukyus. Also, the Central and South Ryukyus have differences in their patterns of speciation and endemism in the terrestrial biota because of differences in the distance from the continent and the timing of separation. The nominated property comprises representative four regions of the Central and South Ryukyus which are home to particularly large number of endemic species and subspecies of various organisms. By examining them collectively, we can understand the ongoing processes of speciation and diversification of evolutionary lineages that reflect the geological history of the entire Ryukyu Chain.

The nominated property is also an irreplaceable habitat for at least 1,808 vascular plant species, 740 terrestrial and freshwater vertebrate species, 6,148 insect species, 47 freshwater decapod species, and 88 threatened species listed on the IUCN Red List.

As such, the nominated property is a good example of the ongoing process of speciation and endemism that reflects its formative history as a continental island involving long-period isolation. It also has an invaluable natural environment, including habitats for various endemic species and threatened species of international

significance.

## **b) Justification for criteria**

### **Criterion (ix)**

As part of the Eurasian Continent, the Central and South Ryukyus containing the nominated property used to share the same continental terrestrial biota. Thereafter, in the process of separation from the continent driven by the formation of the Okinawa Trough and two deep straits and in the repeated process of separation and unification of islands affected by sea-level changes, the nominated property has given rise to speciation and endemism in various evolutionary lineages.

In the Central Ryukyus, which were separated from the continent around the late Miocene of the Neogene, many relict endemic species, whose related species cannot be found in the neighboring regions, still survive on the islands. The South Ryukyus, which separated from Taiwan and the continent during the Pliocene, have endemic species and subspecies with their related species distributed in Taiwan and the continent. Those processes are particularly evident in plants and non-flying terrestrial vertebrates that cannot easily cross the ocean gaps. Various patterns of endemism and each stage of speciation on the continental islands can be seen in the area. The nominated property comprises four regions that characterize the Central and South Ryukyus, and is an outstanding example clearly representing distinctive, ongoing processes of speciation and diversification of evolutionary lineages on the continental islands that reflect the geological history of the entire Ryukyu Chain. It can be deemed as one of the best natural laboratory in the world for studying the relation of the formation history of continental islands and biological evolution processes.

### **Criterion (x)**

The nominated property is a crucial area from the viewpoint of biodiversity conservation, as it constitutes an irreplaceable habitat for threatened and endemic species that are of global importance. There are 88 threatened species listed on the IUCN Red List, and 70 of these are endemic to Central and South Ryukyus.

Reflecting its geological history, the nominated property shows diverse examples of relict and new endemic species. Among others, five mammal species, three bird species, and three amphibian species have been identified as Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) species.

One example of the EDGE species is the Amami rabbit (*Pentalagus furnessi*) in Amami-Oshima Island and Tokunoshima Island, it comprises a genus by itself with no other related species. The Okinawa rail (*Gallirallus okinawae*) in the northern part of Okinawa Island is one of the non-flying species of the rail family on an island, which is known to be prone to extinction. *Tokudaia* is an endemic genus of spiny rats, with three species endemic to each of the three regions in the Central Ryukyus. Iriomote cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis iriomotensis*) only inhabits Iriomote Island, the world's smallest island inhabited by wildcats.

Further, the nominated property has high levels of diversity within its vascular plants and insects. On each of the four regions containing the nominated property, there are 950 to 1,300 species of vascular plants; these represent about 20 % of threatened vascular plant species of Japan. There are also more than 1,000 to 3,000 insect species;

these represent about 10 % of the threatened insect species in Japan.

### **c) Statement of integrity**

The nominated property includes Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, and the northern part of Okinawa Island in the Central Ryukyus; and Iriomote Island in the South Ryukyus. It contains about 90% of the endemic and threatened species in Central and South Ryukyus and their important habitats, and thus includes all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value as serial World Heritage islands. All the components of the property are complementary to one another and if any of the four regions were to be omitted, it would be impossible to understand the whole picture of the ongoing evolutionary and ecological processes of the Ryukyu Chain or conserve the biodiversity of the area.

Also, the nominated property consists of islands that are large in comparison with other islands in the Central and South Ryukyus, and subtropical rainforests exist there in large clusters. The property contains diverse habitat environments, including different geologies, cloud belts around the summit areas, mountains and hills involving complex microtopographies and hydrological systems, and swamps. It has adequate buffer zones. As such, it is of sufficient size and sound environmental conditions to ensure the complete representation and long-term conservation of its Outstanding Universal Values.

While there is some impact from alien species, traffic accidents involving wild animals, and illegal collection of wild species, the risks are prevented or mitigated through coordinated efforts by relevant administrative organs (Ministry of the Environment, Forestry Agency, Agency for Cultural Affairs, Kagoshima Prefecture, Okinawa Prefecture, and local municipalities) and civilian organizations.

### **d) Statement of authenticity**

Not applicable because this nomination does not claim cultural values.

### **e) Requirements for protection and management**

The nominated property is designated as Special Protection Zone or Class I Special Zone of National Park; or Presearvation Zones of Forest Ecosystem Reserve. In addition, it is designated as National Wildlife Protection Area or Natural Monument (see Chapter 5). These are systems for protecting the excellent natural environment of Japan, regulating development projects in a strict legal manner. By these designations, the nominated property is ensured of long-term appropriate protection. Most parts of the nominated property are national or municipal lands owned and managed by national or local governments.

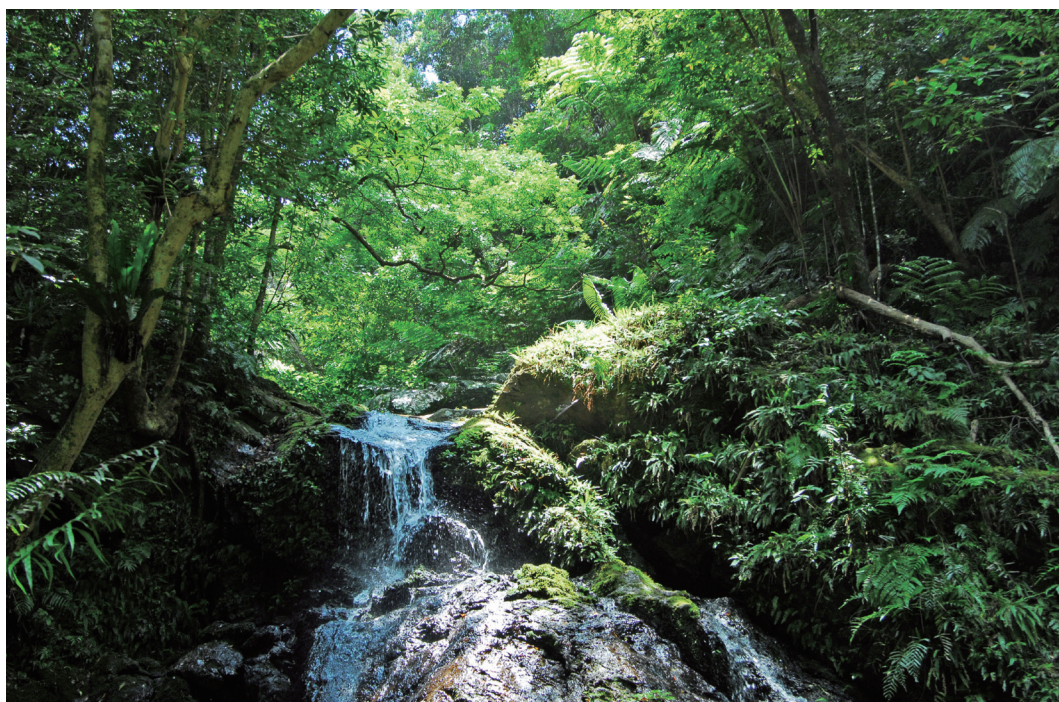
The four islands containing the nominated property are inhabited by people, and the places for residents' lives and industrial activities are close to habitats for endemic species and rare species. To carefully protect the property and enable the coexistence with people's livelihoods, buffer zones were set up mainly in Class II Special Zone of the National Park or Conservation and Utilization Zone of the Forest Ecosystem Reserve, adjacent to the nominated property.

In order to facilitate the multi-layered management and protection of protected areas and designated species, the



relevant administrative organs have established the “Regional Liaison Committee” and prepared the “Comprehensive Management Plan” describing the management policy common in the four regions. In addition, four sub-local meetings have been set up under the Regional Liaison Committee, and they formulate regional action plans to effectively carry out the conservation and management of each region containing the nominated property through collaboration and cooperation with the local stakeholders. The “Scientific Committee” comprised of academic experts and its subsidiary “Local Working Groups” have been established to provide scientific advice and promote adaptive conservation and management in light of scientific knowledge and insight.

In addition, major endemic threatened species in the nominated property such as the Amami rabbit, Okinawa rail, and Iriomote cat are legally protected by designation of National Endangered Species and Natural Monuments. Monitoring of these species will be continued as part of protection and recovery program of the National Endangered Species and/or the mongoose control program.



Mountain stream zone with many endemic and threatened species (Photo: MOEJ)

## **Name and Contact Information of Official Local Institution/Agency**

Amami Ranger Office for Nature Conservation, Ministry of the Environment

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Tokunoshima Ranger Office for Nature Conservation, Ministry of the Environment

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Yambaru Ranger Office for Nature Conservation, Ministry of the Environment

Address: 263-1 Hiji, Kunigami Village, Kunigami County, Okinawa Prefecture 905-1413

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Iriomote Ranger Office for Nature Conservation, Ministry of the Environment

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Kagoshima District Forest Office, Kyushu Regional Forest Office, Forestry Agency

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Okinawa District Forest Office, Kyushu Regional Forest Office, Forestry Agency

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Takae Forest Office, Okinawa District Forest Office, Kyushu Regional Forest Office, Forestry Agency

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Sonai Forest Office, Okinawa District Forest Office, Kyushu Regional Forest Office, Forestry Agency

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Yaeyama Regional Public Works Office, Okinawa Prefecture

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