

4i. Visitor facilities and statistics

Approximately 2,340,000 visitors (in 2001) visit Shiretoko National Park and its surrounding area every year. Approximately 1,650,000 tourists visit the Shari-side while some 700,000 visit the Rausu-side (Table 4-2). July to October is the peak season, but some 300,000 come to see the pack ice in winter (January to March) (Table 4-3).

Table 4-2 Number of visitors to the Shiretoko National Park (1992-2001)

Year	Visitors
1992	2,370,000
1993	2,330,000
1994	2,490,000
1995	2,240,000
1996	2,250,000
1997	2,350,000
1998	2,420,000
1999	2,420,000
2000	2,260,000
2001	2,340,000

Table 4-3 Number of visitors by month (2001)

Month	Visitors
April	54,000
May	142,000
June	225,000
July	369,000
August	513,000
September	379,000
October	308,000
November	43,000
December	32,000
January	32,000
February	146,000
March	92,000

Popular activities for visitors include nature walks to the Shiretoko-goko lakes and Kamuiwakka, trekking around Lake Rausu, sightseeing from Shiretoko pass and climbing in the Shiretoko mountain range. In recent years, the range of activities has widened to include sea-kayaking and fishing. In addition, there are an increasing number of guided tours such as nature interpretation and guided trekking and sea-kayaking.

The details of the visitors' facilities are provided below.

4i.1 Interpretations and explanations by trails, guides, notices and publications

4i.1.1 Trails

The following trails including climbing routes and nature trails are provided in the nominated site. These trails are managed by the relevant agencies.

4i.1.1.1 Climbing routes

- Mt. Rausu climbing route

This is the climbing route that reaches the Mt. Rausu (altitude: 1,661 m) which is the main peak in the Shiretoko mountain range. There are entry points at Rausu hot spring and Iwaobetsu hot spring. The vertical distribution of vegetation from the mixed forest on the mountainside to Erman's birch *Betula ermanii* forests and the Japanese stone pine *Pinus pumila* zone can be observed along the trail. It is estimated that some 10,000 climbers use this route from April to November with the peak season from July to September.

- Mt. Iou climbing route

Mt. Iou (altitude: 1,563 m) is a globally rare volcano that ejected molten sulfur in the eruption in 1936. Volcanic gases are still seen at the crater on the mountainside and there are deposits of crystallized sulfur in the surrounding area. The gravel beds and rocky soil near the peak are a habitat for the endemic *Viola kitamiana*. It is estimated that some 1,000 climbers use the route during the period from June to October.

- Shiretoko mountain range traverse route

The traverse route connects Mt. Rausu and Mt. Iou and climbers can clearly observe the double ridgeline of the mountain chain from the route. It is an interesting route filled with scenic points such as vegetation surrounding snow patches, plants growing on gravel beds, communities of marsh plants and patterned ground. It is estimated that some 500 climbers use this route from May to October with the peak season from July to August.



Trails photo by Ministry of the Environment

- Lake Rausu walking trail

Lake Rausu is a naturally dammed lake situated at the northeastern base of Mt. Chinishibetsu at an altitude of about 700 meters. The perimeter of the lake is six kilometers. The area is a scenic alpine spot for sightseeing with several ponds and swamps in the surrounding area as well as rare alpine plants and communities of marsh plants. Some 2,000 tourists use the trail from June to October with the peak season from July to September.

4i.1.1.2 Nature trails

- Rausu hot spring nature trail

The strolling path situated in the Rausu hot spring facility complex is used as a convenient trail near accommodation for activities such as forest walks and nature observation.

- Kumagoeno waterfall nature trail

It is a nature trail leading to the Kumagoeno waterfall (a major scenic spot on the Rausu-side). Tourists can visit the small but dynamic waterfall as well as observe buttercup sp. *Ranunculus nipponicus* var. *submersus* and dolly varden *Salvelinus malma* in the clear streams.

- Shiretoko-goko lakes circling route

Shiretoko-goko lakes is a group of five lakes fed by groundwater in the virgin forest on the Iwaobetsu tableland. With approximately 600,000 tourists visiting the lake every year, it is one of the key tourist attractions in Shiretoko. The route circles the five lakes and the sceneries of the virgin forest, lakes and reservoirs and the Shiretoko mountain range is excellent.

- Horobetsu trail (Furepe waterfall trail)

It is a nature trail reaching the Furepe waterfall which has no mother river and cascades directly into the ocean. Along the trail, visitors can enjoy the scenic view of the Shiretoko mountain range and the sheer cliffs along the seashore as well as opportunities to encounter wildlife such as Yezo sika deer.

4i.1.2 Guides, notices and publications

Along the above nature trails, there are interpretive panels illustrating information on wildlife and geological history. Guided visits and tours are also on the increase in recent years.

In addition to activities on nature trails, guides also provide a wide range of services such as guiding along climbing routes especially on the Lake Rausu trail, observation of white-tailed eagle and Steller's sea eagle from ships in winter, walking on sea ice, sea kayak tours and observing the natural spawning of salmon and trout.

In addition, there are guide maps that cover the information on most of the above trails as well as publications such as brochures and guidebooks that introduce the wildlife of Shiretoko.

4i.2 Site museums, and visitor or interpretation centers

4i.2.1 Rausu Visitor Center

Rausu visitor center was developed in 1983 by the Environment Agency (currently, the Ministry of the Environment) in order to introduce the natural environment of Shiretoko. In addition to exhibition facilities, services provided include: interpretation of exhibition for visitors; instructions on the utilization of the park; providing information on nature; guides to the nature of the surrounding area by park volunteers, etc.; researches on natural environment and wildlife, etc. (Table 4-4)

Table 4-4 Number of visitors to the Rausu Visitor Center

Fiscal Year	No. of visitors to the Rausu Visitor Center
1993	7,931
1994	7,190
1995	8,410
1996	7,492
1997	8,866
1998	10,598
1999	11,419
2000	7,698
2001	7,884
2002	7,576

Address: 388 Yunosawa, Rausu town, Menashi-gun, Hokkaido
 Size: Single story reinforced concrete structure, 364 square meters
 Facilities: Exhibition room, lecture rooms, conference rooms, restrooms
 Number of staff: two employees, 34 park volunteers



Rausu visitor center photo by TAZAWA Michihiro

4i.2.2 Shiretoko Nature Center

The Shiretoko Nature Center which is a museum developed by Shari town in 1988 is situated on the Shari town side of the national park entrance. It provides services including a dynavision theater for visual presentations, nature information, instructions on utilization of the park, and guided nature interpretations as well as conducting research into the natural environment and activities related to wildlife management. In addition, there is a restaurant and kiosk (Table 4-5).

Table 4-5 Number of visitors to Shiretoko Nature Center (dynavision audience)

Fiscal Year	Number of dynavision audience
1993	119,062
1994	116,337
1995	92,890
1996	125,576
1997	103,277
1998	114,249
1999	87,438
2000	68,191
2001	64,302
2002	55,884



Shiretoko Nature Center photo by Shiretoko Nature Foundation

Address: 531 Iwaobetsu, Shari town, Shari-gun, Hokkaido
 Size: Steel reinforced concrete structure; 1,707 square meters
 Facilities: Theater room, exhibition rooms, information booth, restaurant, kiosk, restrooms
 Number of staff: 24 employees

4i.3 Over night accommodations

Visitors' facilities can be categorized into the Rausu town side group and the Shari town side group.

As for the accommodation in the Rausu town side, there are three hotels and two family-run inns within the nominated site and five hotels or Japanese-style hotels as well as 17 family-run inns outside the site. Total capacity for the entire area is approximately 1,100 guests per day.

As for camping grounds, in addition to the Rausu hot spring camping ground in the nominated site, there are two campsites run by Rausu town outside the site. Total capacity is approximately 600 campers per day. The total number of overnight guests has been fairly stable in the past few years; likewise the trend in the number of visitors to the area.

On the other hand, in the Shari town side, there is a hotel, a youth hostel and a mountain lodge within the nominated site. However, the major location for accommodation is in the Utoro area which is outside the nominated site. In Utoro area, there are nine hotels or Japanese-style hotels as well as 16 family-run inns and the total capacity for the entire area is approximately 5,500 guests per day. In addition, there are two campsites (private and nationally owned) outside the nominated site and their capacity is approximately 700 campers per day. The number of overnight visitors is fairly stable at 600,000 guests in recent years (Table 4-6).

Table 4-6 Number of overnight guests

Fiscal Year	Rausu town	Shari town	Total
1993	60,852	586,269	647,121
1994	59,172	615,767	674,939
1995	54,889	535,628	590,517
1996	55,853	552,986	608,839
1997	68,949	616,439	685,388
1998	57,275	664,321	721,596
1999	50,469	651,173	701,642
2000	37,113	592,548	629,661
2001	37,142	614,747	651,889
2002	37,879	596,340	634,219

4i.4 Restaurants and refreshment facilities

Within the nominated site, there is one eating establishment in Rausu town and are two in Shari town.



4i.5 Parking facilities

There are three parking facilities on the Rausu town side and two on the Shari town side within the nominated site. There is a total capacity for 48 large coaches and 225 private cars.

4i.6 Public restrooms

There are five public restrooms on the Rausu town side and two on the Shari town side within the nominated site.

4j. Property management plan and objectives

The management plan was developed to ensure that the natural environment of the nominated site is conserved effectively for future generations. The objective is to implement adequate and effective management for the nominated site by realizing close cooperation among the governmental agencies, local governments and other related organizations and bodies. The plan clarifies the basic policies for operation of the systems and promotion of programs. The full text of the management plan is included in Appendix 4-A. An overview of the management plan is below.

4j.1 Framework and systems for the management

A comprehensive administration scheme is to be implemented for the terrestrial and marine area taking into account the various systems such as the Onnebetsudake Wilderness Area, the Shiretoko National Park and the Shiretoko Forest Ecosystem Reserve described in 4c.

The plan aims to facilitate close collaboration among the government agencies (Ministry of the Environment, Forestry Agency and Hokkaido prefectural government including the branch offices), local municipalities and other related organizations in charge of various systems as well as to promote the participation and cooperation from local residents and related bodies in order to enhance the effectiveness of the management.

Therefore, the “Shiretoko Nominated Site Regional Liaison Committee” (Regional Liaison Committee) was established for discussion and coordination among the above government agencies and related bodies in the management of the nominated site. In addition, a council consisting of experts from relevant fields is to be established to provide scientific advice with the collaboration and cooperation with the Regional Liaison Committee in order to assess the status of the natural environment of the nominated site and to adopt appropriate measures based on scientific data.

4j.2 Basic policies for the management

4j.2.1 Conservation of the virgin condition

A particular attention is to be given to conserve the virgin nature of Shiretoko for future generations.

4j.2.2 Comprehensive management of the terrestrial and marine area

- A monitoring program is to be conducted on the integration and soundness of the terrestrial and marine ecosystems of the nominated site. When there are any indications of changes that may affect the natural environment, recovery measures are to be reviewed and implemented based on the scientific survey and analysis.
- A system to facilitate collaboration and cooperation among relevant agencies, related bodies and researchers is to be established. Information sharing as well as developing and securing of human resources is to be accommodated for survey, research and monitoring projects.

4j.2.3 Core and Buffer areas

- The basic policy on conservation for the Core area is focused on allowing nature to follow its natural transition without human intervention.
- According to need, certain activities are to be restricted in the Buffer area. In particular, any activity that may have impact on the natural environment in the Core area is to be strictly controlled.

4j.2.4 Coexistence with primary industries

- The fishery industry in Shiretoko is to realize sustainable use of marine resources by taking necessary measures to assure coexistence with the wildlife of Shiretoko.
- There is no forestry activity for timber production conducted within the National Forests. Although there is a small area of privately owned forests within the site, forestry activities are taking to forest management operations such as planned tree thinning which takes into account the virgin natural landscape.

4j.2.5 Appropriate utilization of nature

- Activities such as sightseeing, nature exploration and fishing will be appropriately conducted without impacting on the natural environment. Specific restrictions and rules will be imposed according to need. The measures are to be implemented to realize the conservation of the virgin natural environment and promotion of tourism which is the local major industry.
- Studies are to be continued to determine appropriate types of eco-tourism which takes account the natural environment while facilitating development of the local area.



4j.3 Management Plan

- Conservation of the terrestrial ecosystem and natural landscape.
(Conservation and management of wild fauna and flora, preservation of the natural landscape, conservation of the river environment, and measures against exotic species)
- Conservation of the marine area.
(Management of fishery resources, conservation of marine mammals and seabirds, and anti-pollution measures against marine oil spills, etc.)
- Appropriate usage of the natural environment
(Establishment of “Shiretoko Rules” which is pertinent to utilization of the virgin nature of Shiretoko, capacity building of nature guides, and providing information and awareness programs, etc.)
- Conservation and management programs
(Inspections by related government agencies, restoration of vegetation, and elimination of exotic species)
- Research, survey and monitoring activities
(Implementation of research, survey and monitoring activities for wild fauna and flora, landscape, exotic species, marine ecosystem, and usage levels, and Creation of a database using GIS)

4j.4 Implementation of the plan

- A council consisting of experts from relevant fields is to be established to provide scientific advice with collaboration and cooperation with the Regional Liaison Committee in order to review the status of the natural environment of the nominated site and to adopt appropriate measures based on scientific data.
- With regard to details on the management of the natural environment and measures against specific issues, studies are to be conducted taking into consideration results of monitoring projects to realize appropriate administration of the nominated site. In this process, the Regional Liaison Committee contributes in establishing a consensus with the input and suggestions from local residents, related bodies and experts in relevant fields.
- Cooperative relationships are to be created with local citizens’ groups in order to promote activities that involve the local community.
- The management plan is to be reviewed taking into account the results of the natural environment monitoring projects and changes in the social environment.

4k. Staffing levels

The following sections details the number of staff engaged in professional, engineering and maintenance positions for the nominated site.

4k.1 Ministry of the Environment

The staff of the East Hokkaido Regional Office for Nature Conservation includes a general manager, manager and several staff for each of the divisions of General Affairs, Park Protection, Facility Management, Wildlife Management and Ecosystem Conservation. As a result, there are a total of 17 members responsible for protection and management of the nominated site.

In addition, there are Ranger Offices for Nature Conservation at Utoro and Rausu staffed with two rangers and one ranger respectively for field management activities.

Furthermore, a total of 34 volunteer rangers (as of October 24, 2003) work in Rausu area using the Rausu Visitor Center as the base.

4k.2 Forestry Agency

At the Planning and Coordination Division in the Hokkaido Regional Forest Office and at the Guidance and Planning Division II and III in the Kitami and Obihiro Branch Offices of the Hokkaido Regional Forest Office, there are five, six and nine staff respectively who are in charge of conservation and management of the nominated site.

In addition, there are five, 16 and 14 staff respectively at the Shiretoko Forest Center, Abashiri South District Forest Office and Konsen East District Forest Office that are the outpost agencies of the above Branch Offices.

Furthermore, there are Forest Ranger Offices at Utoro, Minehama and Rausu and a total of two forest rangers, one ranger at Minehama (who holds a concurrent post at Utoro) and one ranger at Rausu.

4k.3 Hokkaido prefectural government

There is a total of four staff, who are in charge of conservation and management of the nominated site, at the Natural Environment Division, Office of Environmental Affairs, Department of Environment and Lifestyle, Hokkaido. In addition, there are 10 staff in charge of the nominated site at the Environment and Lifestyle Division and Fishery Division in the Abashiri Subprefectural Office, 11 staff at the Environment and Lifestyle Division and Fishery Division in the Nemuro Subprefectural Office and two staff at the Eastern Hokkaido Wildlife Research Station in Hokkaido Institute of Environmental Sciences. Furthermore, there are one staff at the Counselor of Culture Division, Lifelong-learning Department, Education Agency, Hokkaido, two staff at Abashiri Education Office, and two staff at Lifelong-learning Division, Nemuro Education Office.



4k.4 Shari town

There are two staff, who are in charge of conservation and management of the nominated site, at the Environment Conservation Division of Shari town and 24 staff at the Shiretoko Nature Foundation. In addition, the Shari town Education Board has five staff at the Shiretoko Museum and five Natural Monument Guardians.

4k.5 Rausu town

The Environment Division, Rausu town has six staff, who are in charge of conservation and management of the nominated site, including the manager. In addition, Rausu town Education Board has one staff as the manager of the Local History Office and five Natural Monument Guardians.

4k.6 Natural Parks Foundation, Shiretoko Branch

There are 11 staff in charge of conservation and management of the nominated site at the Natural Parks Foundation, Shiretoko Branch.