

### 29. Kirishima-Kinkowan (Kirishima-Kinko Bay)

A park view is originated volcanic activity. The Kirishima area, which is a collection of over 20 volcanoes, has the scenery of crater lakes and fumaroles phenomena and also offers hot spring resorts. The Kinkowan area consists of Sakurajima located in the southern edge of Aira-caldera, Sata cape with many subtropical plants and Ibusuki district with polygenetic volcano.

### 30. Yakushima (Yakushima Islands)

Known for the vertical distribution of vegetation from seashore to Mt. Miyanoura (1,936 m), the highest peak in Kyushu. Primeval natural forests with Yaku cedar trees are distributed. Inscribed on the World natural Heritage List in December of 1993.

### 31. Amamigunto (Amami Islands)

This national park consists of eight inhabited islands between Kyushu and Okinawa. Its subtropical laurel forests are home to concentrated populations of various unique, endangered plants and animals including the Amami rabbit. Furthermore, the islands are bordered by the world's northernmost coral reefs and host mangroves, tidelands and a diverse range of other natural environments.

### 32. Yambaru

Yambaru means an area filled with numerous mountains and large forests. This region is covered with subtropical laurel forestland, its terrain defined by the geological history of the Ryukyu island chain and related formation processes. Okinawa rail and other unique, endangered plants and animals live and breed here.

### 33. Keramashoto (Kerama Islands)

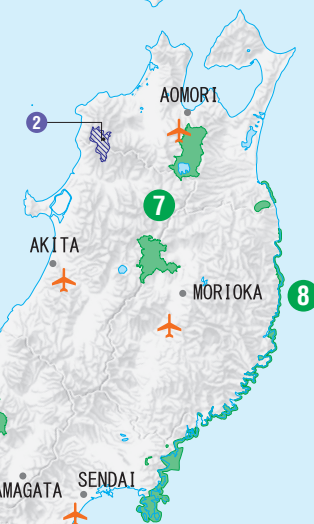
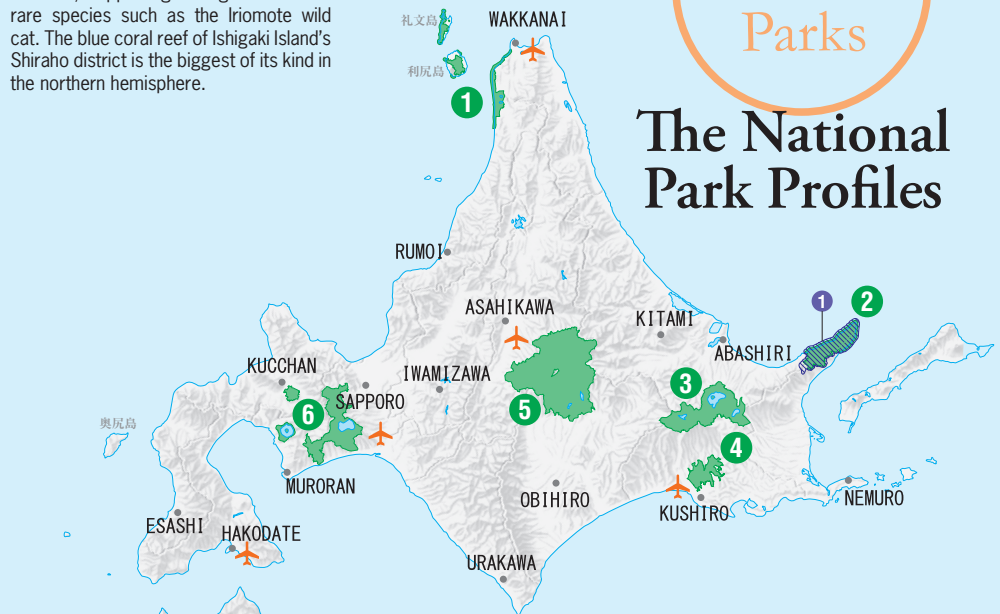
Kerama Islands is located to 40 km the west of Naha City, consisting of more than 30 small and large islands and a number of rock reefs. The blue of the sea is renowned as "Kerama Blue", and the contrast between the bright blue ocean and the white of the sand beach is fascinating. The rich ecosystems show various coral reefs in the shoals, and humpback whales breeding in the surrounding waters. In fact, Kerama Islands was the first national park that the area was designated as long as 7 km away from the shores for the reason that humpback whales are commonly observed in a wide range of the surrounding ocean.

### 34. Iriomote-Ishigaki

The park encompasses Iriomote and Ishigaki Islands, smaller islands and coral reefs. Subtropical forests blanket 90% of Iriomote, supporting a large number of rare species such as the Iriomote wild cat. The blue coral reef of Ishigaki Island's Shiraho district is the biggest of its kind in the northern hemisphere.

34  
Parks

## The National Park Profiles



### The National Park System

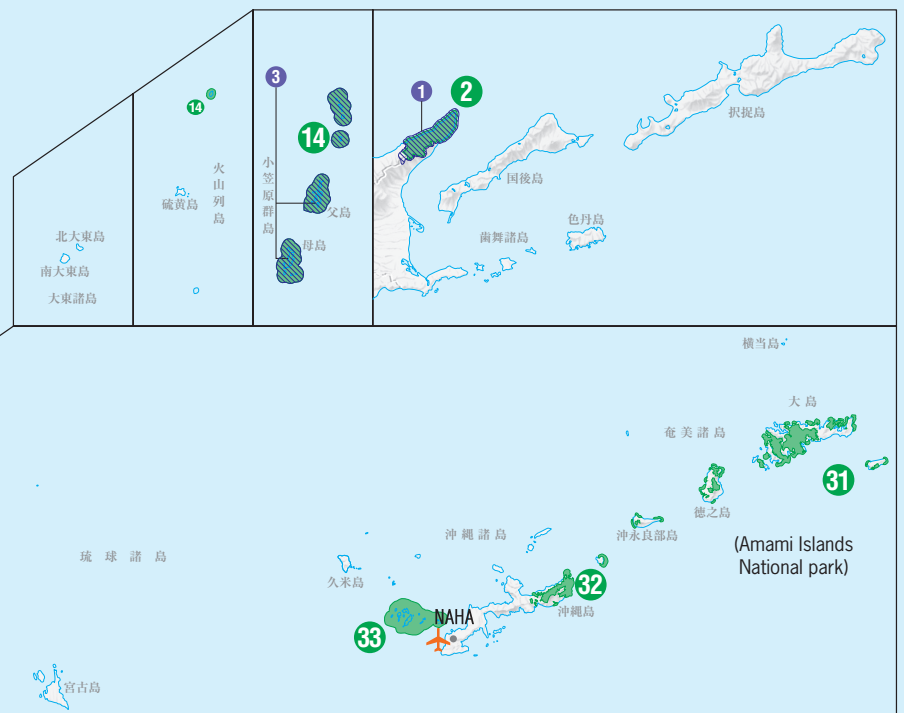
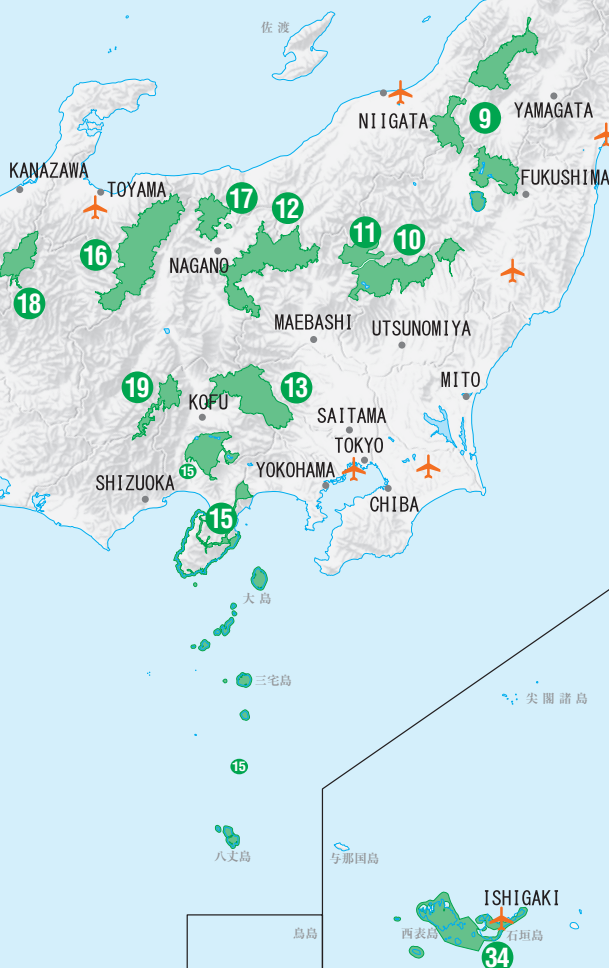
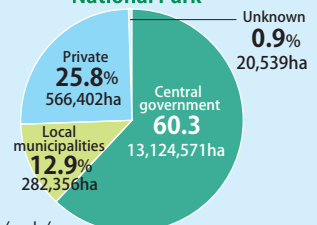
The National Park System aims at protecting the scenery that represents the Japan's natural beauty and leaving them unimpaired for future generations. Within the National Parks, while activities to cause environmental impacts are regulated under the law, the improvement of park facilities, such as trails and visitor centers, and rehabilitation of degraded areas are conducted.

Currently, 34 sites are designated as the National Parks, covering 2.19 million hectares or 5.8% of the country's ground surface. Designation and management of National Parks are administered by the Ministry of the Environment. The Ministry's staffs who are called 'rangers' work on field management in each of the National Parks.

Most nationally owned land being national forest, land for national park purposes is limited. For this reason, great importance is placed on partnership with relevant government agencies, local governments and citizens, NGOs, etc. (Each area of National Parks indicates the area of the land.)

National Parks website : <http://www.env.go.jp/park/>

### Land ownership in the National Park







**Ministry of the Environment**

<http://www.env.go.jp/park>

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Front cover: Mt. Fuji in spring, seen from the  
shores of Kawaguchi Lake

Back cover: Mt. Taisetsu in autumn color

(Photos by Toshitaka Morita)