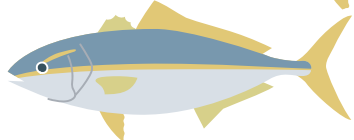




# A Storybook of Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park

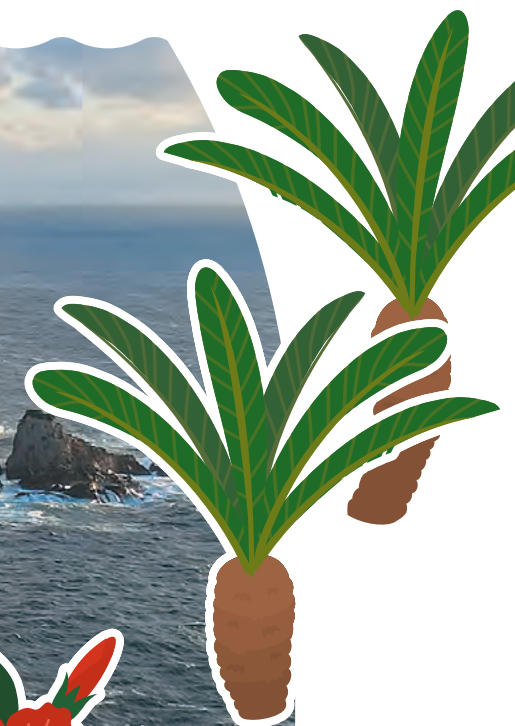
Sata Area

~ A narrative to be shared with the local community  
to enhance Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park's  
remarkable beauty and appeal ~

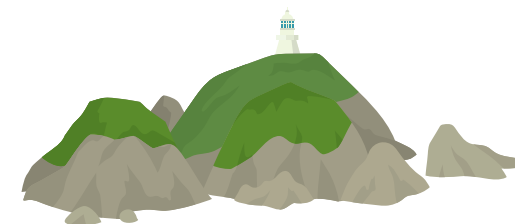


Ministry of Environment Regional Environment Office in Kyushu  
Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park Office

08.2025



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# About This Book

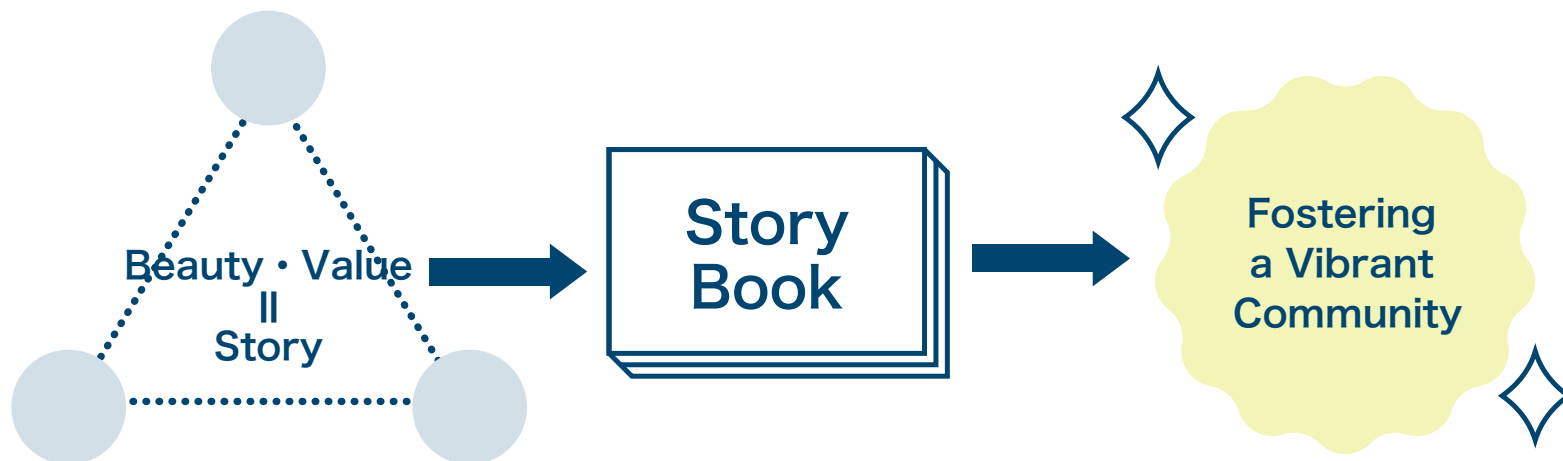
P02

As of March 2025, there are 35 national parks across Japan. These parks represent the country's most iconic landscapes and are designated to protect and utilize outstanding natural scenery that Japan can proudly showcase on a global scale. National parks worldwide are cherished and frequently visited, making them highly appealing destinations for international visitors to Japan.

Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park is one of Japan's first national parks. In addition to its breathtaking scenery, the park's rich appeal is shaped by the stories of its formation, including the culture and history nurtured by the diverse flora, fauna, and natural environment that flourish there. The brand value of national parks is enhanced when the scenic spots, history, and culture scattered throughout the park are interconnected as a cohesive story.

The conservation and management of national parks require collaboration with diverse stakeholders from local communities, each with unique perspectives. We created this storybook to share our journey with you and invite you to contribute your own unique perspectives and experiences.

We hope this storybook helps you discover and appreciate the unique beauty and significance of the Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park, serving as a gateway to understanding its remarkable heritage.



# Sharing the National Park Story with Local Community

Through the collective efforts of stakeholders sharing the National Park story, we expect that Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park's unique appeal and value will be acknowledged internationally and domestically, creating a lively and thriving Area.

Here, we offer examples of how to communicate the story effectively. We hope you find these useful and will join us in spreading the National Park story across the community.

## To All the Tour Guides and Interpreters



We hope this storybook will be utilized to offer visitors unique experiences that align with the story of Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park. Additionally, we encourage efforts to communicate the value of these regional resources to support their preservation.

### Example

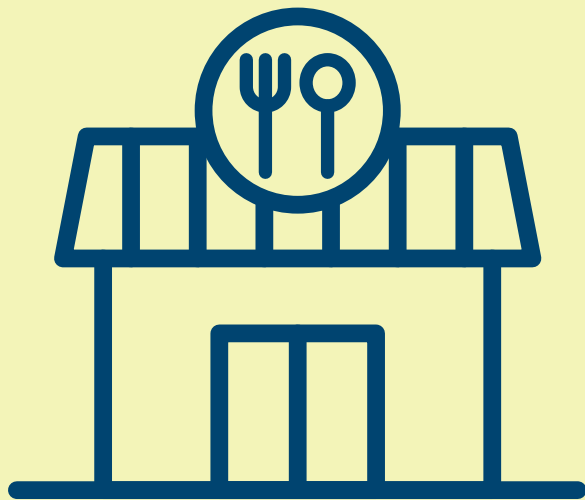
- Incorporate the "story" into guided narratives, exhibits, brochures, websites, and other materials.
- Use "The Experience We Want Visitors to Have" as a reference when designing the tour.

### Expected Outcomes

When visitors engage with the Area's unique story, their tours and activities become more meaningful and personal. This deeper connection helps them appreciate the area's distinct beauty and value, often transforming them into loyal enthusiasts who return again and again.



## To All Restaurants



Use the story as a tool when offering visitors the unique local cuisine nurtured by Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park.

### Example

- Incorporate the "story" into the products and menu.
- Incorporate the "story" when the employee explains/introduces the ingredients to restaurants.

### Expected Outcomes

By offering locally grown ingredients and dishes along with their stories, it meets the visitors' desire to taste something unique to the area, while also enhancing their satisfaction by allowing them to experience the local food culture developed over time.

## To all Accommodation Operators



Use the story as a tool to convey the charm and stories of Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park to visitors.

### Example

- Incorporate the "story" in the menu for meals, brochures, and decorations.
- Incorporate the "Showcase Places and Activities to Discover" as a reference when guiding visitors on sightseeing courses at the front desk or similar locations.

### Expected Outcomes

By experiencing local food culture, visitors not only enjoy greater satisfaction but also discover a deeper connection to the Area's heritage. When accommodations showcase these culinary traditions, they become gateways for guests to immerse themselves in local culture, creating a more meaningful and enriching travel experience.

## To all the Souvenir Shop Staff



Use the story as a tool to develop the products that allow visitors to take home the story of Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park.

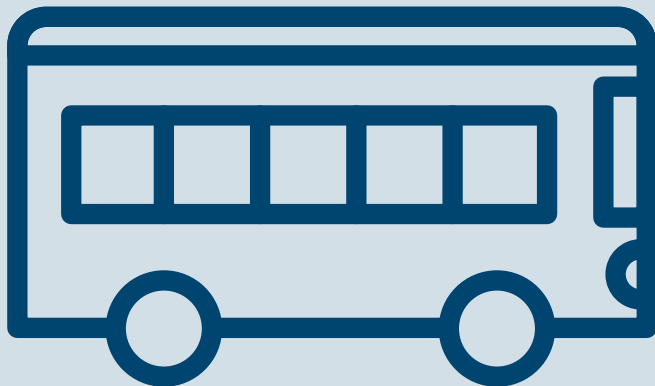
### Example

- Incorporate the "story" when developing products or designing packaging.
- Incorporate the "story" into conversations with customers.

### Expected Outcomes

When visitors purchase souvenirs and local specialties linked to the story, they are prompted to recall their experiences in the Area. This could lead to continued purchases through online services, mail order, or other means. Additionally, those who receive the souvenirs may become new visitors themselves.

## To All the Transportation Operators



Use the story as a tool to share the beauty and story of Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park with visitors.

### Example

- Incorporate the "story" into the announcements on board planes, cars/buses, and ships.
- Use the "story" as a tool when creating brochures and other materials.

### Expected Outcomes

As visitors discover the Area's story throughout their journey, they develop a deeper appreciation for the area. These meaningful encounters create lasting memories that visitors can reflect upon and cherish long after returning home.



## To All School Staff



Use the story as a tool to help the local children and students rediscover the beauty and value of Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park.

### Example

- Use the "story" as teaching material during integrated activities or inquiry-based learning sessions.
- Use "Showcase Places and Activities to Discover" as a tool when choosing field trip destinations.

### Expected Outcomes

It is expected that by learning the Area's story, children and students who will shape its future will develop a stronger sense of attachment and pride in their community.

## To All the Government Employees



Use the story as a tool to promote Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park in various ways, both within the Area and beyond.

### Example

- Use the "story" when introducing the value and beauty of the Area
- Use the "story" when creating policies for resource conservation.

### Expected Outcomes

It is expected that not only will the beauty and value of the Area be understood by people inside and outside the area, but the story will also serve as a guideline for the conservation and utilization of each resource.

# KIRISHIMA-KINKOWAN NATIONAL PARK

## What is the Purpose of National Parks?

Our purpose is to preserve Japan's natural landscapes while promoting their use, contributing to the public's health, recreation, and education, as well as supporting biodiversity conservation.

The Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park is divided into the Kirishima, Sakurajima-Inner part of Kinkowan Bay, Ibusuki, and Sata Areas.

The Kirishima Area features a spectacular volcanic landscape formed by more than 20 volcanoes of varying sizes. This dramatic terrain showcases nature's power through its diverse features - from crater lakes and steaming fumaroles to vast plateaus and therapeutic hot springs. The Kirishima Mountain Range holds deep cultural significance as a sacred site, which is legendary in Japanese mythology as the place where the sun goddess Amaterasu's grandson (Ninigi no Mikoto) descended to Earth. There are high-quality hot springs scattered throughout the foothills, with Kirishima Onsen Area being a notable hub of these natural thermal waters. In the Sakurajima-Inner part of Kinkowan Bay Area, the active volcano Sakurajima dominates the landscape, creating a remarkable setting where the sea meets volcanic terrain. Local communities have adapted to life in close proximity to this active volcano, creating a unique coexistence between nature and human settlement. Heading south, you'll find two notable features: Mt. Kaimon, located in Ibusuki Area, nicknamed 'Satsuma Fuji,' rises as a landmark on the Satsuma Peninsula, while Sata Area includes Cape Sata on the Ōsumi Peninsula, marks mainland Japan's southernmost point, its subtropical plants creating a tropical feel.

Volcanoes that continue to erupt not only bring "disasters" but also nurture a variety of hot springs and food culture, providing countless blessings to people's lives.

Land, sea, and people  
coexisting with active volcanoes

Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park  
Designation: 03.16.1934

Area: 36,624ha (Land Area), 37,855ha (Marine Area)

Extend Across Kagoshima and Miyazaki Prefecture



Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park features active volcanoes and enormous caldera formations created by large-scale eruptions in the past. These dramatic geological features emerged from tectonic plate activity, where one plate slides beneath eastern Kyushu. A remarkable chain of calderas—the Kakuto, Kobayashi, Aira, and Ata—stretches in a north-south alignment across southern Kyushu, telling the story of the Area's volcanic history.

The Sakurajima-Inner part of Kinkowan Bay Area showcases remarkable volcanic features, with the Sakurajima volcano rising from the southern edge of the Aira Caldera, while the Ata Caldera lies further south. The Aira Caldera, now a scenic inland bay, was formed by an enormous volcanic eruption and subsequent collapse. This maritime caldera stands as one of Japan's most spectacular geological formations, where land meets the sea in a dramatic fashion. As its name suggests, Sakurajima (the jima of Sakurajima means “island”) was once an island. Although once separate, a lava flow from the 1914 Taisho eruption has attached it to the Osumi Peninsula, making it part of the mainland. ※Saigo Takamori, who lived during the late Edo and Meiji periods, would have viewed a different landscape of Sakurajima than the one we see today.

The volcanic landscape of Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park is constantly evolving, offering visitors a rare glimpse of Earth's raw power in action. Here, you can not only contemplate our planet's ancient geological history but also witness and experience these dynamic natural forces firsthand—a unique feature that makes this Area truly extraordinary.

※Saigo Takamori : A Japanese samurai, politician, and military leader during the late Edo and early Meiji periods. Born in the Satsuma domain (now Kagoshima Prefecture). He is still widely respected in Japan as a hero due to his loyalty, integrity, and commitment to his principles.

Sakurajima and Kinkowan Bay



The diverse landscapes of mountains and seas  
created by the caldera clusters

Eruption of Mt. Shinmoedake



Cape Sata





Sakurajima, Kagoshima's iconic active volcano, looms over Kinkowan Bay, just 4 kilometers from downtown Kagoshima city, home to 600,000 people. Despite its frequent eruptions, 3,500 residents live on the volcano. The ever-present volcanic risks significantly influence their daily lives. Residents regularly check ashfall forecasts and stay alert for potential eruptions, with weather reports often including wind direction to help them prepare. This adaptation to living alongside an active volcano stands as one of the most striking examples of human resilience and coexistence with nature.

Local residents have built their livelihoods around the volcano, harnessing its benefits for farming, fishing, and tourism while respecting its powerful presence. While ashfall is a major threat to agricultural products, it sometimes gives birth to unique local products. The "Sakurajima Daikon," which thrives in volcanic ash soil, is a prime example. The warm and humid climate is ideal for producing fermented foods; in Fukuyama, Kirishima city (outside of the national park), a landscape of rows of jars used for fermenting and aging black vinegar stretches out, creating the scene of a "tsubo-batake (jar field)." Additionally, the water filtered by the mountains supports the shochu culture of southern Kyushu and produces high-quality tea leaves.

One of the greatest gifts of the volcanoes is the hot springs that emerge throughout the Area. In addition to the diverse hot springs with various types of mineral water in the Kirishima Onsen area and Ibusuki Onsen, where visitors can experience the geothermal "sand baths," there are also hot springs where historical figures such as Saigo Takamori and 〓Sakamoto Ryoma once enjoyed bathing during the Bakumatsu period. Additionally, Kirishima is the birthplace of the hot spring culture known as "family baths," where small groups can enjoy private hot spring facilities. Furthermore, there are villages where each household is equipped with a "natural steam stove (sume)," utilizing heat from the earth.

Living close to the volcano is one of the key factors shaping the unique food and hot spring cultures of Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park.



Black Vinegar Jar Field



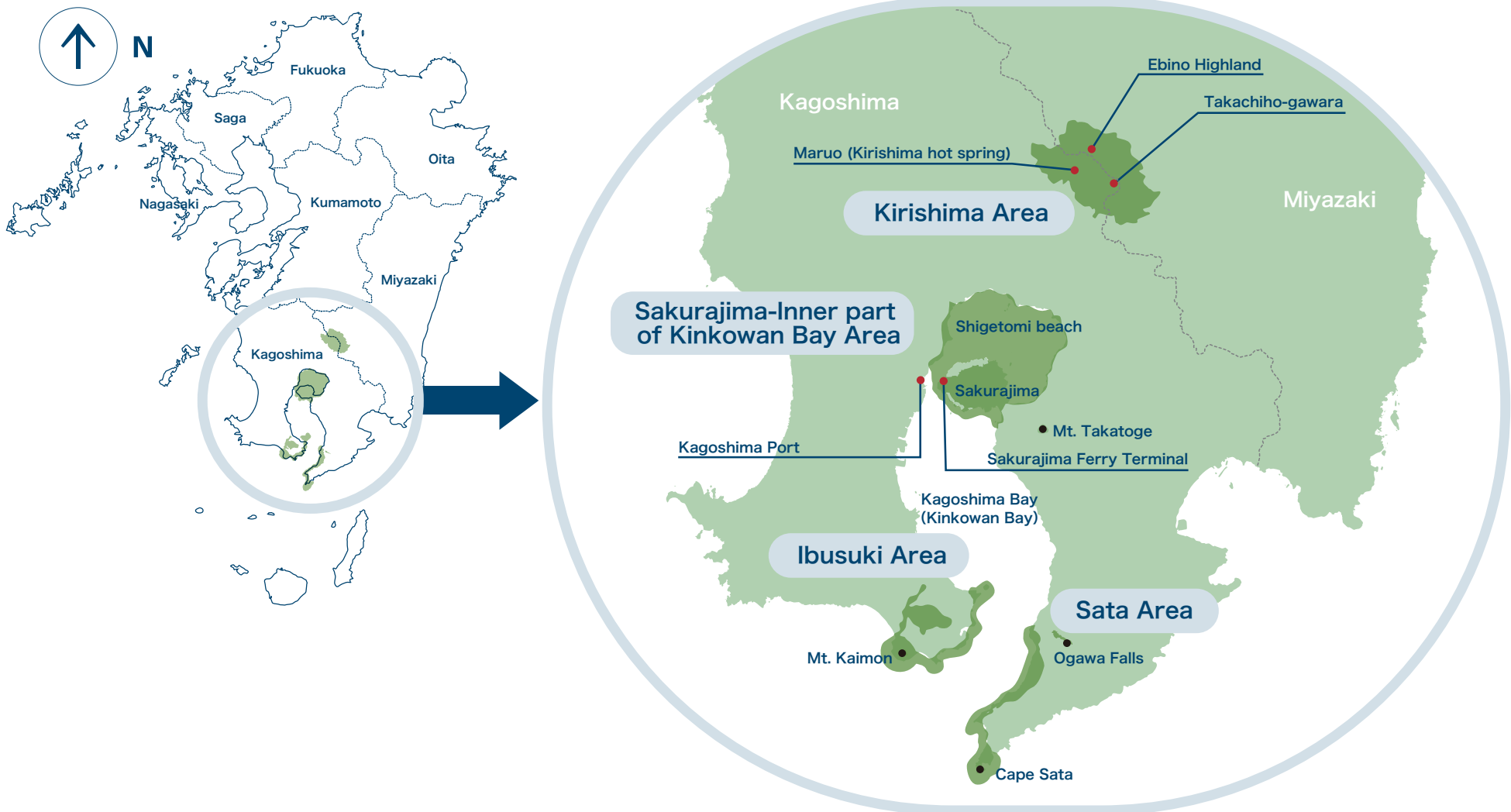
Ibusuki Steam Sand Bath

© K.P.V.B



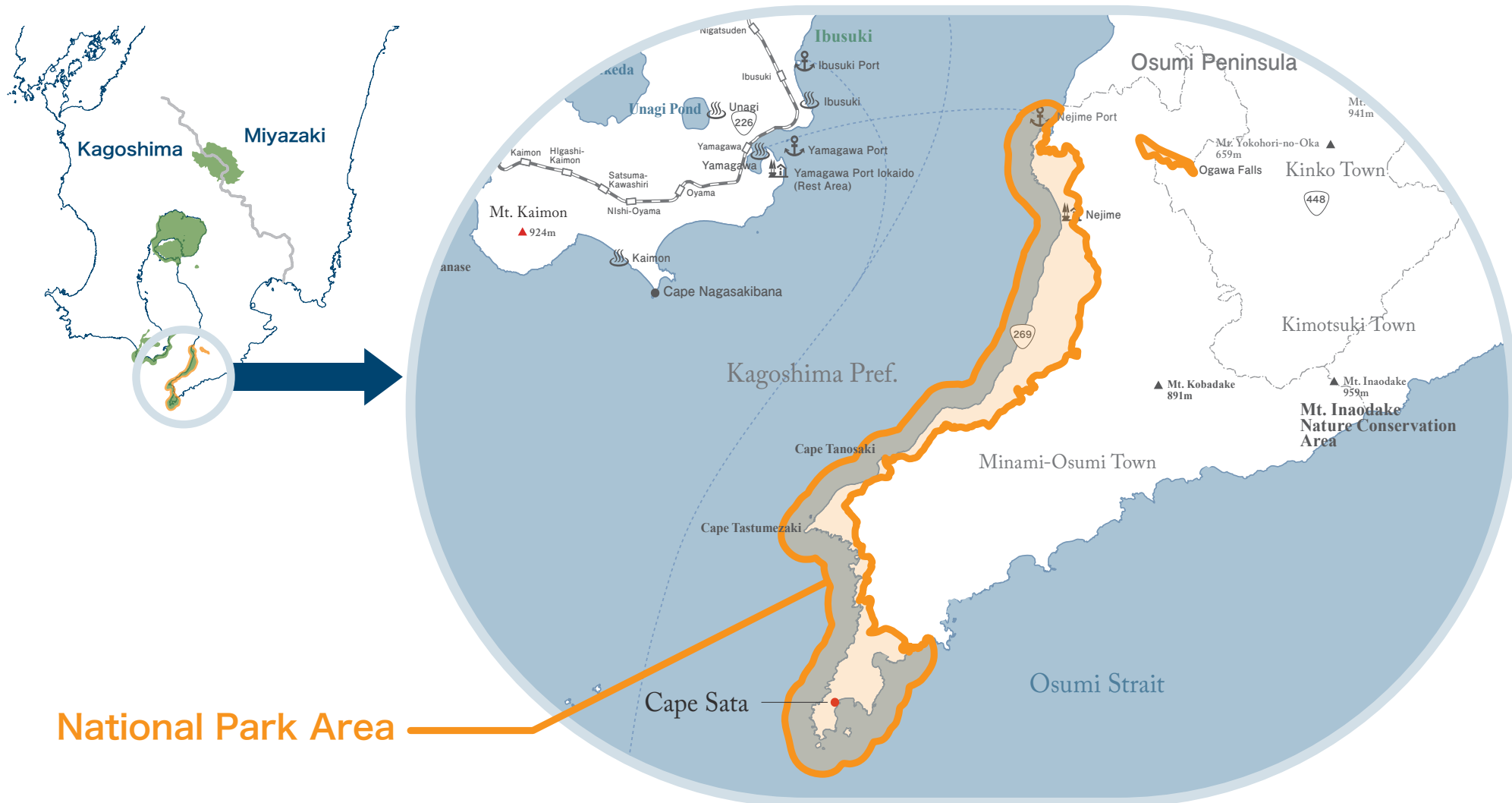
Sakurajima from  
Shiroyama Observatory

**The Rare Proximity of Volcanoes  
and  
Human Life in the World**

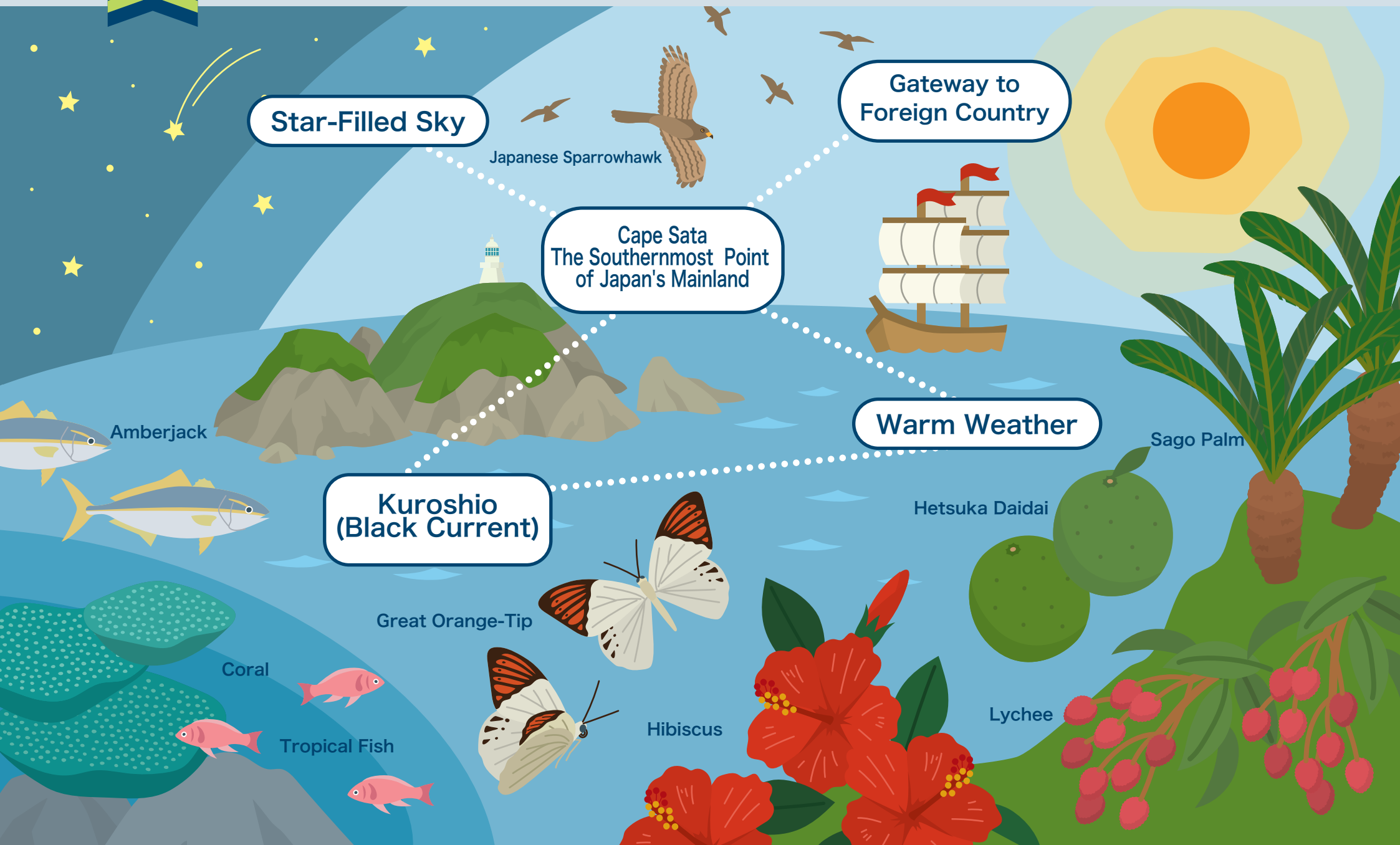


# Map of Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park

## -Sata Area Detailed Map-



National Park Area







©Yoshinari Nakamura

A distinctive relationship that captures the Area's essential character

**The mild climate and the gifts of the Kuroshio  
※ have nurtured the tropic Area's unique food  
culture**

#### Essential Resources of the Area

Tropical Fruits Pinapples, Hetsuka Daidai, Lychee etc.

the Gifts of the Kuroshio Moray Eel, Japanese Spiny Lobster etc.

※Kuroshio:

Black Current, also called the Japan Current  
named for its deep, dark blue waters,  
flows north from the East China Sea  
along the Pacific coast of Japan

Left: Lychee

Middle: Hetsuka daidai

Right: Sun drying of moray eels



© Daimtech LLC



© Ryoji Matsumoto (Shoueimaru)



## Sata Area Story ①

Cape Sata opens to the Pacific Ocean, where its subtropical climate supports a diverse ecosystem of various plants and butterflies, creating an almost tropical atmosphere. During the Edo Period, Japan's southernmost Medicinal Garden, "Sata Former Herb Garden," was established here. The garden cultivated rare medicinal herbs and tropical fruits imported from China and Southeast Asia, including the lychee tree, whose fruit was reportedly a favorite of the legendary Chinese imperial consort ※Yang Guifei. Such southern fruits, along with rare citrus varieties like the native "Hetsuka daidai," have a long history of being cultivated in households up to the present day. Sata Area has been cultivating domestically grown tropical fruits since the Edo period, and today, pineapples, passion fruits, and avocados are primarily grown. Due to its long history, this area could be called a 'long-established tropical fruit producer'.

At the rocky shores around Cape Sata, the southernmost point of the Japanese mainland, you can catch Japanese spiny lobsters, fish, and shellfish known as 'semono' and seaweed. The waters south of Cape Sata are influenced by the Kuroshio, bringing a variety of fish from the open ocean. The Kuroshio benefits traditional fishing methods, such as using bait to gather schools of wild yellowtail. The relatively warm seawater, even in winter, is ideal for kampachi (amberjack) farming. From December to March, the local sun-dried eel, called "Kidaka," is made and is a typical dish served during regional celebrations, highlighting the strong connection between the community and the sea.

The mild climate and the gifts of the Kuroshio have nurtured the tropic Area's distinctive food culture.

※Yang Guifei: Empress of the Tang Dynasty, China. She was known for her unparalleled beauty



Cape Sata: the southernmost point of Japan's Mainland

## Sata Area Recommended Places and Experiences to Truly Feel the Story ①

### The Experience We Want Visitors to Have

What visitors are invited to discover and experience  
through activities and encounters at the destination

- Encourage visitors to visit the Sata Former Herb Garden and see the descendants of trees planted during the Edo period grow in subtropical weather, such as the Chinese and Southeast Asian lychee (reishi) and longan varieties. Picture the time when the same tropical fruits have been cultivated since then. → ❶
- Encourage visitors to sample fruits harvested in this Area, such as the long-established Hetsuka Daidai, pineapples, and passion fruits, to experience the mild climate. → ❷
- Encourage visitors to see the vibrant corals and tropical fish that color the ocean and experience the rich, diverse subtropical underwater landscape influenced by the Kuroshio. → ❹
- Encourage visitors to sample wild yellowtail and fish from the open sea and feel the gifts of the Kuroshio. → ❸
- Encourage visitors to sample “Kidaka” (sun-dried moray eel) and have a deeper understanding of the connection between the local lifestyle and the ocean.



## Sata Area Recommended Places and Experiences to Truly Feel the Story ①

### Showcase Places and Activities to Discover

1

#### Visit the Sata Former Herb Garden



Visitors can see the descendants of trees planted during the Edo period, such as Chinese and Southeast Asian lychee (reishi) and longan varieties, allowing you to feel the remnants of that time.

2

#### Enjoy Hetsuka daidai



Visitors can purchase juices and seasonings made from the extracted or fruit juice at local agricultural and livestock product markets and regional souvenir shops.



## Sata Area Recommended Places and Experiences to Truly Feel the Story ①

3

### Enjoy local seafood (such as Amberjack)



© Nejima Fisheries Cooperative

In the surrounding area, visitors can enjoy seafood caught in the area at local sushi restaurants, izakayas, and diners that focus on using regional ingredients.

4

### Take a ride on a semi-submersible sightseeing boat and peek into the underwater world



© Yoshinari Nakamura

Visitors can observe vibrant corals, clusters of seaweed, and colorful tropical fish and sea turtles swimming through them, allowing you to experience the richness of marine life.





A distinctive relationship that captures the Area's essential character

## The geographical significance of the Southernmost Point has shaped the nature and history of this Area

### Essential Resources of the Area

**Cape Sata** Wildlife at the northernmost,  
Migratory birds and butterflies,  
The beauty of ocean depths and the night sky,  
A gateway to foreign lands,  
The oldest lighthouse

Left: Misaki shrine  
Middle: Japanese sparrowhawk  
Migration  
Right: Hibiscus





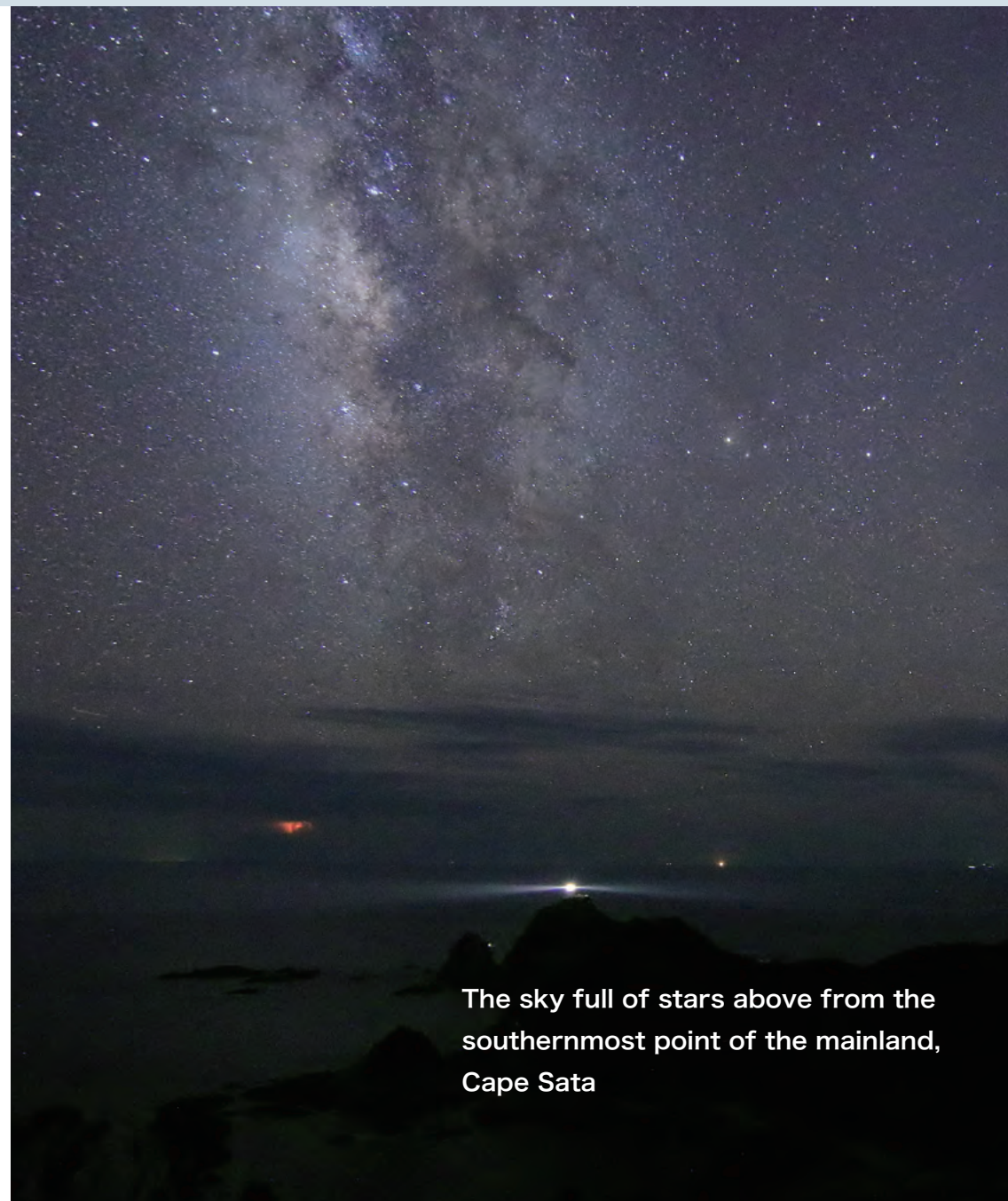
## Sata Area Story ②

Cape Sata is the southernmost point of the mainland, facing three seas: Kagoshima Bay, the Pacific Ocean, and the East China Sea. Against cliffs rising from the sea, hibiscus and cycad trees flourish while tropical butterflies such as the Tsumabenichou (Great Orange-Tip) flutter around. The sea is home to coral reefs and tropical fish, filling the underwater world with vibrant colors. The darkness unveils a sky full of stars, including ones rarely seen from the mainland, like Canopus.

These breathtaking sceneries can only be found at the southernmost point of the mainland of Japan. The Sata Area is the northernmost limit of many plants that cannot survive further north, making it a unique habitat for these species. The ocean is crystal clear because of the absence of river runoff and the influence of the Kuroshio, which keeps the water clear and warm. Cape Sata serves as a sanctuary for migratory birds and butterflies during migration, and they can be seen during the migratory season. For example, thousands of Sashiba hawks migrate to Cape Sata from across Japan every autumn, converging in large flocks as they travel south to the islands.

Cape Sata, overlooking three seas, has long served as a gateway to foreign lands. The Cape Sata Lighthouse, one of Japan's oldest lighthouses, had looked out for many vessels traveling the route between Yokohama and Hong Kong. The lighthouse keeper lived a harsh life at Cape Sata, traveling by ship or gondola to the lighthouse and working to ensure the safety of maritime navigation. Cape Sata has also been a place of worship, with local people praying for safe voyages and abundant catches at Misaki Shrine for over 1,300 years.

The distinctive geographical feature of being a gateway to the outside world for both nature and humans has created a unique landscape that can only be found at the southernmost point of the mainland.



The sky full of stars above from the southernmost point of the mainland, Cape Sata

## The Experience We Want Visitors to Have

What visitors are invited to discover and experience  
through activities and encounters at the destination

- Encourage visitors to encounter the unique plants and animals found only at the southernmost point of the mainland, such as hibiscus, cycad trees, and Tsumabenichou (Great Orange-Tip). → ❶
- Encourage visitors to go stargazing and witness a sky full of stars, including those rarely seen from the mainland, like Canopus, which is unique to the southernmost point. → ❷
- Encourage visitors to look for Sashiba hawks and Asagimadara butterflies, which migrate long distances from Cape Sata depending on the season, and imagine their epic adventure waiting ahead. → ❸ ❹
- Encourage visitors to imagine the harsh environment of the southernmost point of the mainland, where the lighthouse keeper worked to ensure the safety of navigation while observing the lighthouse at Cape Sata. → ❺
- Encourage visitors to visit the Misaki shrine, a sacred place for maritime safety and abundant catches for over 1,300 years, and immerse themselves in the enduring traditions and faith of the local people. → ❻

## Showcase Places and Activities to Discover

- 1 Visit Cape Sata Observatory to enjoy panoramic views of the coastline
- 2 Go stargazing at Cape Sata



Visitors can experience the tropical atmosphere with subtropical plants such as hibiscus and cycad trees. From spring to autumn, there is a high chance of encountering the Tsumabenichou (Great Orange-Tip), which lives in southern Kyushu and beyond.



Visitors can enjoy the sky full of stars at the entrance of Cape Sata and other areas. Canopus can be seen particularly during the winter season.



3

### Observe migratory butterflies



Visitors can observe migrating butterflies, “Asagimadara,” resting their wings or sipping nectar from flowers along the trails of Cape Sata.

4

### Observe migratory birds



©Minamikaze Library

On clear autumn days, visitors might be able to observe migratory birds such as “Sashiba” heading south from the entrance area of Cape Sata or Cape Sata Observatory.

## Sata Area Recommended Places and Experiences to Truly Feel the Story ②

5

## Visit Misaki Shrine



Visitors can experience the tropical atmosphere as they see the Misaki Shrine sitting amidst the lush growth of plants like cycas and banyan trees. The long-standing local worship passed down through generations is also palpable.

6

## Learn history of Sata lighthouse



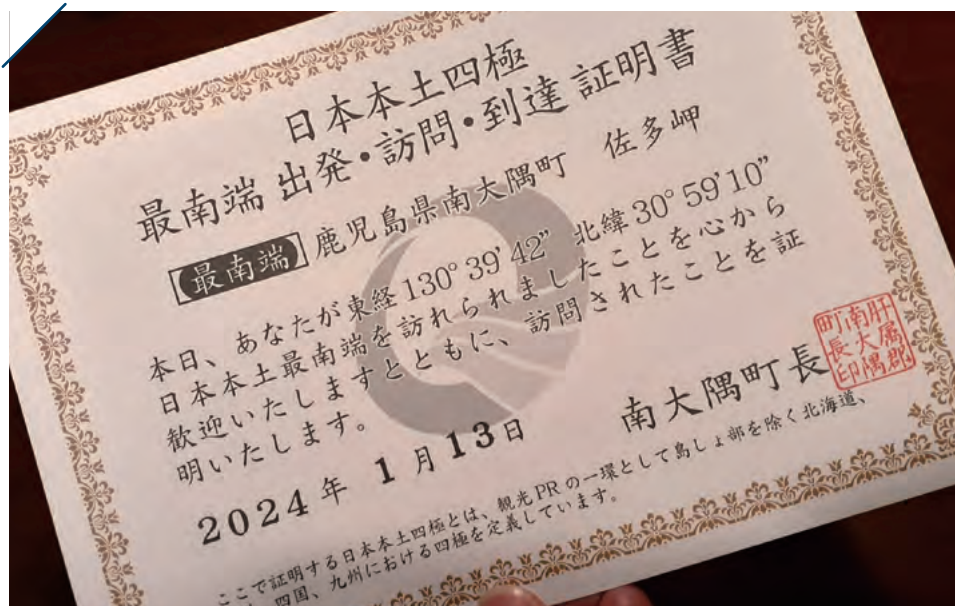
Visitors are invited to explore memoirs written by the lighthouse keeper's family, displayed at the Cape Sata Tourist Information Center. These memoirs provide a glimpse into the harsh life they experienced at the time. At the site of the former lighthouse keeper's residence, outdoor exhibits showcase parts of the old residence and the gondola used during that era.



## Sata Area Recommended Places and Experiences to Truly Feel the Story ②

7

### Receive “Certificate of the Southernmost Point of Japan's Mainland “



Visitors can receive a "Certificate of the Southernmost Point of Japan's Mainland" at the Cape Sata Tourist Information Center as proof of their visit to the southernmost point of Japan's mainland, Cape Sata. This certificate is available for free.





A distinctive relationship that captures the Area's essential character

## Ogawa Falls: Shaped by Time, Cherished by the Community

### Essential Resources of the Area

Ogawa River

Ogawa Falls

Hydropower Plant

Left: Ogawa falls

Middle: Rice farm

Right: great camphor tree





The Ogawa River, which runs east to west across the Osumi Peninsula, has nourished the rice fields in its surrounding basin, supporting the Area's agriculture. In 1920, one of Kagoshima Prefecture's largest hydroelectric power stations was built in the river basin, which has been operating for over 100 years. The river flows into Kagoshima Bay, where a large camphor tree, said to have once served as a mooring point for Nanban trade ships, still stands at what was once the river's mouth. The Ogawa River has played a significant role in the Area's agriculture, electricity, and trade and is now recognized as one of Japan's representative scenic areas.

The Ogawa Falls, located in the middle reaches of the Ogawa River, were formed when an ancient volcanic pyroclastic flow created a plateau that was gradually eroded by the river over time. The geometric patterns on the rock face where the waterfall cascades are called "columnar joints," which were formed when the pyroclastic flow cooled and solidified, creating these distinct geometric fractures.

The cascading water creates a vivid emerald-green pool at the base of the falls. Until the Edo period, this site served as a training ground for ascetic mountain priests (Shugendo practitioners) who performed waterfall meditation rituals here. The mystical beauty created by volcanic activity and the passage of time has enchanted visitors, and the falls gained nationwide fame in recent years after being featured as a filming location for movies and TV dramas.

However, the depiction of Ogawa Falls in the Sangoku Meishō Zue (a guide to scenic spots around the Satsuma Domain, similar to modern-day travel guide) shows a much greater flow of water, with little of the rock face or plunge pool visible. It is said that the rock face and plunge pool have become more prominent today because a hydroelectric power facility was built upstream, allowing for the regulation of the waterfall's flow. It may be said that the way local people have made use of the river and waterfall has ultimately led to showcasing their natural beauty.



Ogawa falls

## The Experience We Want Visitors to Have

What visitors are invited to discover and experience  
through activities and encounters at the destination

●Encourage visitors to reflect on the significance of the Ogawa River while viewing the great camphor tree that once served as a mooring point for Nanban (European) trading ships, understanding how this river was an essential and integral part of local life. → ❷

●Encourage visitors to reflect on the significance of the Ogawa River while viewing the great camphor tree that once served as a mooring point for Nanban (European) trading ships, understanding how this river was an essential and integral part of local life. → ❶



## Showcase Places and Activities to Discover

1

## View the beauty of Ogawa Falls



Visitors can get a close-up view of the rock face and waterfall basin from the Ogawa Falls observation deck. Visitors can observe as the water cascades in thin streams between the geometric columnar joints, and on clear days when the water volume is lower, visitors can see the stunning emerald-green pool at the base of the falls

2

## Visit the Great Camphor Tree That Moored Nanban Ships and Reflect on History



Near the mouth of the Ogawa River, visitors can see the massive camphor tree estimated to be over 1,000 years old. It is said that Nanban (European) trading ships were once moored to this tree, allowing visitors today to imagine how the Ogawa River prospered during the era of European trade. (Note: Located outside the National Park)

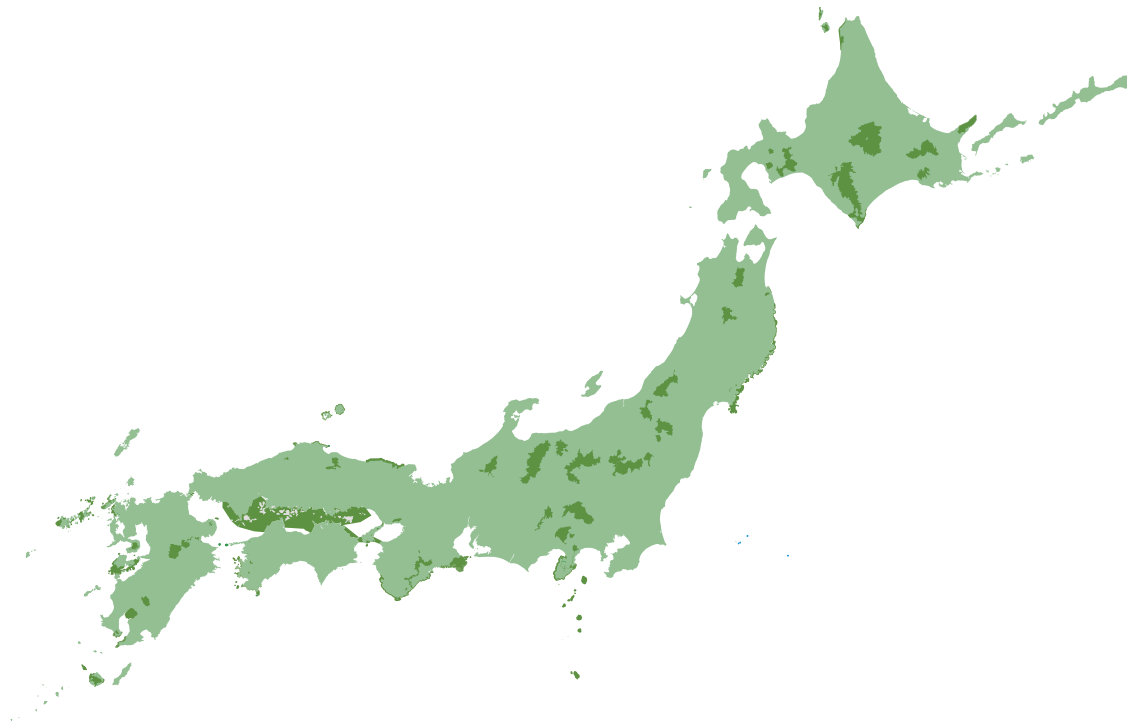
# National Parks of Japan

## (Regulations and Differences with Foreign National Parks)

### 35 Distinct and Diverse National Parks in Japan

※As of March 2025

Stretching approximately 3,000 kilometers from north to south, the Japanese archipelago offers a wide variety of natural landscapes, from snow-covered mountains to colorful coral reefs, highlighting the beauty of nature in every form. Japan's national parks are home to around 7,000 plant species, over 1,000 animal species, and between 70,000 and 100,000 insect species. Along with abundant water, active volcanoes, and untouched nature, Japan's national parks also feature areas where human intervention has helped maintain diverse ecosystems and natural environments, such as satoumi (coastal areas) and satoyama (rural forests), highlighting places where people and nature coexist.





# National Parks of Japan

## (Regulations and Differences with Foreign National Parks)

### 90-years of Preserving Nature: The Story of National Parks

National parks can be found in many countries around the world, with the first-ever designated national park being Yellowstone National Park in the United States, established in 1872. In Japan, a petition to make Nikko a national park was presented to Congress, and as public interest grew, the Natural Park Act was passed in 1931 (Showa 6). Following the enactment of this law, three areas—Seto Inland Sea, Unzen, and Kirishima—were officially designated as Japan's first national parks on March 16, 1934 (Showa 9).

The revision of the Natural Park Act in 1957 (Showa 32) created the modern framework for Japan's protected areas, establishing clear categories for national parks, national monuments, and nature parks at both state and prefecture levels. This system implemented comprehensive mechanisms for preserving Japan's scenic landscapes while ensuring their sustainable use. As of March 2025, Japan maintains 35 national parks stretching from Hokkaido in the north to Okinawa and the Ogasawara Islands in the south, attracting millions of visitors annually through careful management and conservation practices.

# National Parks of Japan

## (Regulations and Differences with Foreign National Parks)

### The National Park System of Japan

In many national parks worldwide, following the example set by the United States, the system is designed to preserve vast natural landscapes as government-owned land, protecting pristine and largely untouched environments. This is referred to as a "monument park" (Eizoubutsu Kouen). The boundaries of Japan's national parks are established regardless of land ownership, and many of these parks include areas where people live.

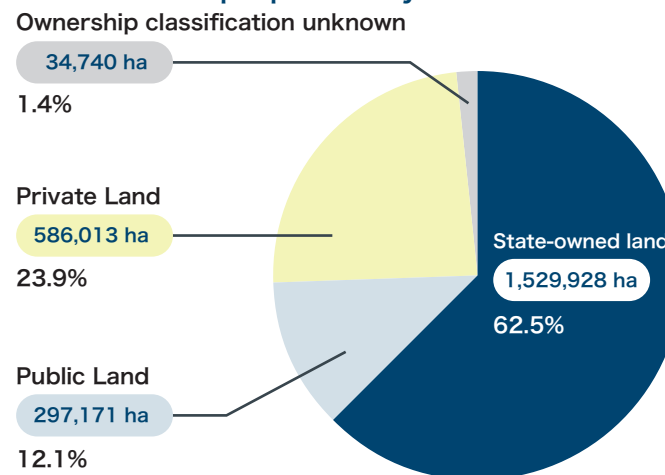
Development is restricted to protect outstanding landscapes. This type of system is called a "Japan's System of Natural Park (Zoning-System)" (Chiiki-sei Kouen). Many foreign visitors may be surprised to see people living within Japan's national parks. However, the lives of rural and fishing communities, which have developed in harmony with nature, are deeply connected to the natural environment.

Additionally, national parks are places where people can deepen their knowledge about nature and provide opportunities to engage with the natural environment for health and recreation.

#### There are 35 national parks across Japan

Japan's national parks instill the "regional nature park system," which designates areas regardless of land ownership and includes many privately owned lands.

Area proportion by landowner in national parks

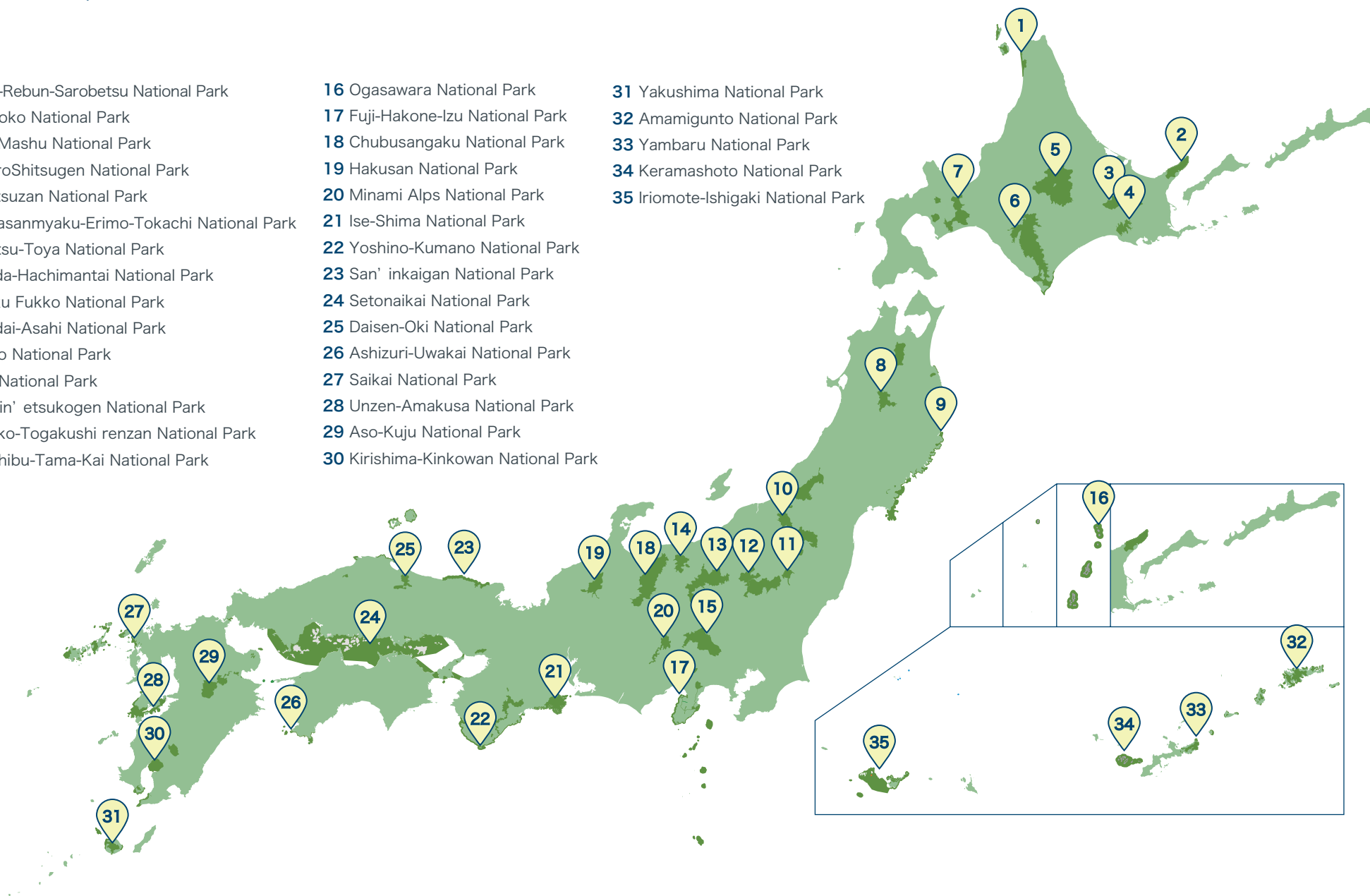


Area proportion by landowner in national parks  
As of March 31 2025  
The majority of state-owned land is national forest under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Agency  
Cited from the Ministry of the Environment website  
<https://www.env.go.jp/nature/nationalparks/about/>

- 1 Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu National Park
- 2 Shiretoko National Park
- 3 Akan-Mashu National Park
- 4 Kushiro-Shitsugen National Park
- 5 Daisetsuzan National Park
- 6 Hidakasanmyaku-Erimo-Tokachi National Park
- 7 Shikotsu-Toya National Park
- 8 Towada-Hachimantai National Park
- 9 Sanriku Fukko National Park
- 10 Bandai-Asahi National Park
- 11 Nikko National Park
- 12 Oze National Park
- 13 Joshin'etsukogen National Park
- 14 Myoko-Togakushi renzan National Park
- 15 Chichibu-Tama-Kai National Park

- 16 Ogasawara National Park
- 17 Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park
- 18 Chubusangaku National Park
- 19 Hakusan National Park
- 20 Minami Alps National Park
- 21 Ise-Shima National Park
- 22 Yoshino-Kumano National Park
- 23 San'in-kaigan National Park
- 24 Setonaikai National Park
- 25 Daisen-Oki National Park
- 26 Ashizuri-Uwakai National Park
- 27 Saikai National Park
- 28 Unzen-Amakusa National Park
- 29 Aso-Kuju National Park
- 30 Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park

- 31 Yakushima National Park
- 32 Amamigunto National Park
- 33 Yambaru National Park
- 34 Keramashoto National Park
- 35 Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park



### Defining the brand promise of national parks

#### Background and Purpose

National parks were positioned as one of the main pillars of the government's "Tourism Vision to Support Tomorrow's Japan" formulated in 2016, and the "National Park Enjoyment Project" has been advancing. It has been primarily implemented in the first eight parks, including the revised Natural Park Act (effective April 2022), and efforts are being made to expand this approach to all 35 parks.

As part of this, the "National Park Brand Promise" was established in 2023 to strengthen national parks' branding and outline their commitments to visitors and local communities.

This was defined as the "Common Management and Operation Guidelines for All National Parks" and aims to ensure that all stakeholders involved in the management and operation of national parks share a common understanding.

This initiative has been set up to collaborate with all stakeholders in managing and operating national parks.



## Message

"The Nature holds a story"

## Value Proposition

Through exploring the diverse natural landscapes and the rich stories embedded in the local life, culture, and history, you can immerse yourself in unforgettable, exceptional experiences.

## Brand Promise

What National Parks promise to visitors and local communities



1

Inspiring natural landscapes and beautiful scenery



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4

Facilities and services that support memorable experience

2

A shared commitment to sustainability

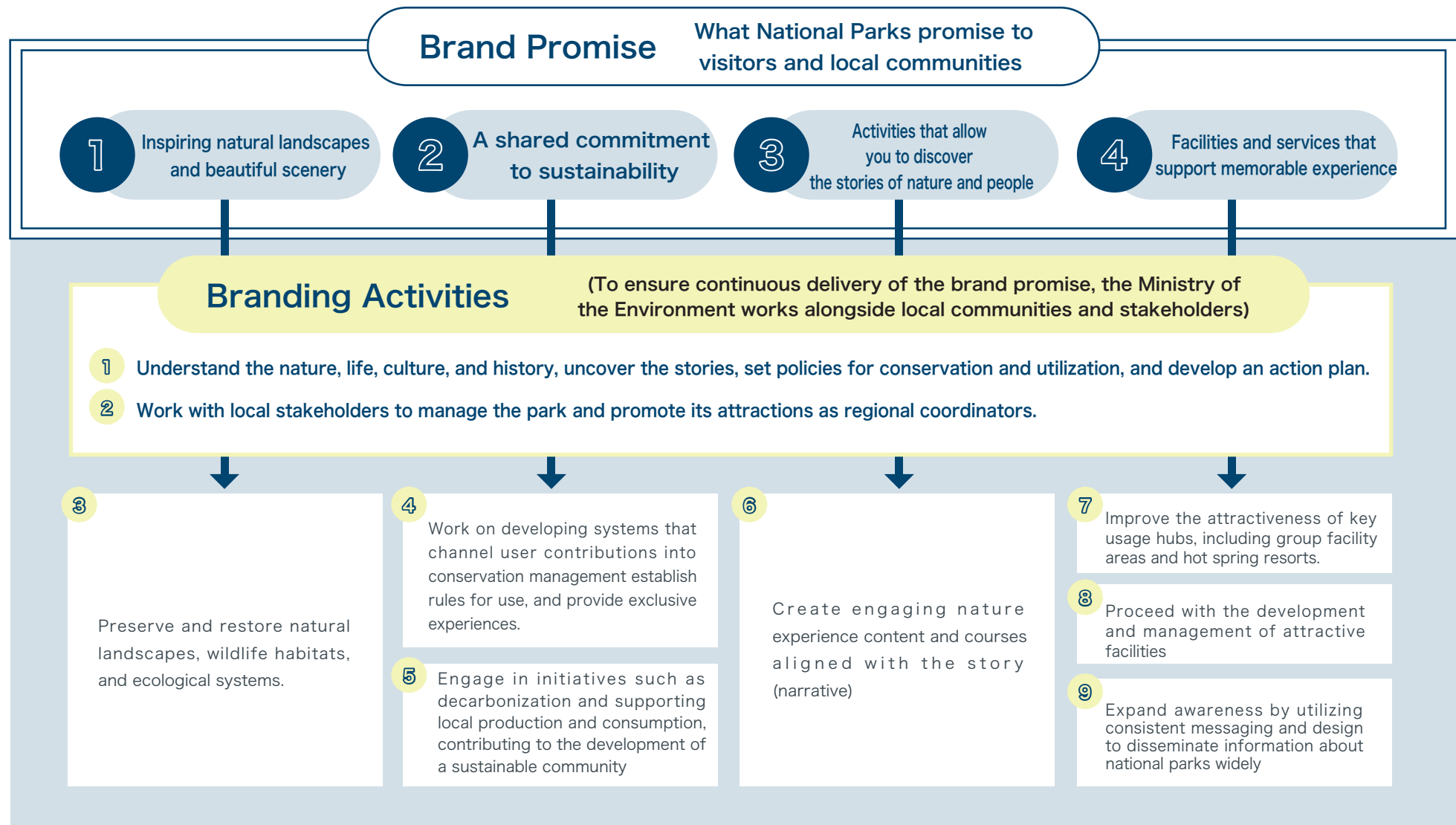


3

Activities that allow you to discover the stories of nature and people



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### **【Supervisors】**

Daisuke Fukushima (Chairman, Sakurajima Museum, NPO)  
Kiyoharu Mizuetagaya (Cape Sata Concierge)  
Tetsushi Tanaka (Former Cultural Property Advisory Committee Member,  
Minami Osumi Town)  
Naoyuki Wada (Synergy Marketing Co., Ltd.)

### **【Photo Contributions】**

Kirishima Geopark Promotion Liaison Council (Photograph by Takeharu  
Nagatomo)  
Kagoshima Prefecture Visitors Bureau (K.P.V.B), Public Interest  
Incorporated Association  
Yoshinari Nakamura, Daimtech LLC  
Ryoji Matsumoto (Shoueimaru)  
Nejima Fisheries Cooperative  
Minamikaze Library  
Kagoshima City  
Aira City  
Kagoshima Kayaks

### **【Date of Production】**

08.2025

### **【Contractor】**

Center for Environmental Studies  
Shibundo Corporation

### **【Publisher】**

Ministry of Environment Regional Environment Office in Kyushu  
Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park Office