

# Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park

National  
Parks  
of Japan



## National Parks of Japan



A national park is designated by the Japanese government as a natural landscape that represents Japan based on the Natural Parks Act. Thirty-four national parks are designated from Hokkaido in the north down to Okinawa and the Ogasawara Islands in the south, and more than 300 million people visit them every year. These national parks are full of precious treasures such as wild animals and plants, history and culture in addition to the scenic beauty. Japan's national parks are characterized by various environments such as forests, farmlands, villages, etc. While some are untouched, the local history and culture derived from nature and people's lives can be appreciated. Come visit our national parks to fully enjoy the beautiful nature of Japan that shows off various sceneries in each season.

## Characteristics



### Hot Springs Created by the Giant Calderas and the Bountiful Sea

Kirishima Massif, Kinko Bay, and Sakurajima Volcano

Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park was born in 1934 as Kirishima National Park, which was one of Japan's first national parks. This park is largely divided into the northern and southern parts, and each has its own characteristic landscapes as the Kirishima area and the Kinko Bay area, respectively. The Kirishima area, the northern part of the park, has a series of more than 20 volcanoes of various sizes as well as much native vegetation along with crater lakes, fumaroles and hot springs all created by this volcanic activity. The main attractions of the Kirishima area such as Ebino Highland, Kirishima Onsen (hot spring), Takachihogawara Riverbed, and Kirishimajingu Shrine are visited by many tourists and others. The Kinko Bay area, on the southern part of the park, has unique scenery centered on an active volcano, Mt. Sakurajima which is a symbol of the area. It includes Mt. Kaimondake, Lake Ikeda and Chiringashima Island of the Satsuma Peninsula as well as Cape Sata, the home of many subtropical plants, on the Osumi Peninsula along with coral reefs and the area of hydrothermal vents on the ocean floor.

[Date of Designation] March 16, 1934  
[Relevant Prefectures] Miyazaki Pref., Kagoshima Pref. [Area] 36,605 ha



## Terrain Geological features landscapes



South Kyusyu, where this park is located, is an area of frequent volcanic activity. Active volcanoes and large calderas (craters formed by the eruption with large volumes of magma) formed by the past massive eruptions can be seen. This volcanic activity is due to the movement of a plate deep in the ocean floor of the eastern Kyusyu, and the Kakuto, Kobayashi, Aira, Ata and other calderas are lined up vertically. In addition, sediments of volcanic ash and pyroclastic flow deposits from the past large eruptions have formed the Shirasu plateau and have had large impacts on terrain and geological features of the southern Kyusyu. The Kirishima area is often referred to as the "Museum of Volcanoes" since it is located in the south of Kakuto and Kobayashi calderas as well as in the cluster of more than 20 various volcanoes such as one of the tallest mountains, Mt. Karakunidake (1,700 m) and Mt. Takachihonome (1,574 m). The volcanic activity in the area is still vigorous with a massive eruption of Mt. Shinmoedake in 2011 and another eruption in 2018. The Kinko Bay area has Mt. Sakurajima, one of the world's famous active volcanoes, located in the south of the Aira caldera, and the Ata caldera lies on its south. The lava flows from the large-scale eruption about 100 years ago (in 1914) connected Mt. Sakurajima, a former island, with the Osumi



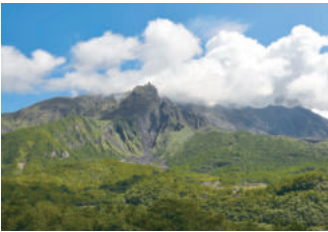
Mt. Takachihonome (Photograph provided by Takeharu Nagatomo)



Mt. Shinmoedake (Erupted in 2011)



Lake Onami



Mt. Sakurajima

## Conservation Efforts



- Conservation of *Malus Spontanea* (Local Rose) -  
*Malus spontanea* growing only in the Kirishima area in the world can be found around the Ebino Highland area. However, they are in serious danger of extinction (Endangered IB by IUCN Red List) due to damages by surrounding tall trees (large roots, too much shade, etc.), bark damages by Sika deer rubbing, and root scouring. Thus, government agencies, researchers, volunteers and others have been cooperating in protecting the species by installing deer fence and tree guards for the young trees, thinning immature trees, implementing scour prevention measures, etc.

### - Park Volunteer -

This is an organization of volunteers mainly working in the national parks. They conduct activities such as nature observation sessions, cleanups and conservation management of wild animals and plants, etc.



Malus Spontanea (Photograph provided by Takeyoshi Kamamiya)



## Contact List

**Kyusyu Regional Environment Office**  
4F, Kumamoto Regional Joint Government Building B,  
Kasuga 2-10-1, Nishi Ward, Kumamoto City, Kumamoto City,  
Kumamoto Prefecture,  
860-0047  
TEL: 096-322-2412 FAX: 096-322-2447  
URL: <http://kyushu.env.go.jp/>

**Ebino Ranger Office**  
Suenaga 1495-5, Ebino City, Miyazaki Prefecture,  
889-4302  
TEL: 0984-33-1108 FAX: 0984-33-6160

**Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park Ranger Office**  
2F, Kagoshima Regional Joint Government Building No. 2,  
Higashikorimoto Town 4-1, Kagoshima City, Kagoshima Prefecture,  
890-0068  
TEL: 099-213-1811 FAX: 099-251-2145

**Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park Website**  
<http://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/nps/park/kirishima/index.html>



**For Safe Travel**  
Please download below application in order to get information about warning for earthquake, volcanoes, tsunami and so on.  
・Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=jp.co.nsc.safetyTips.android>  
・iPhone: <https://itunes.apple.com/jp/app/safety-tips/id858357174?mt=8>

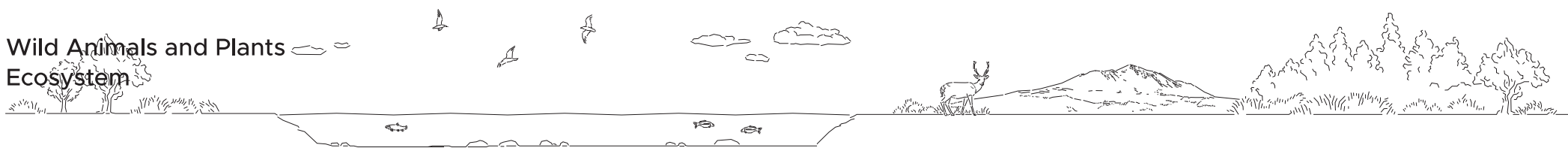
**Supported by Japan Tourism Agency** (<https://www.jnto.go.jp/safety-tips/eng/app.html>)



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\* Please note that the highlights & guide map's purpose is to show an overview of the designated area; therefore, a margin of error shall be allowed.

## Wild Animals and Plants Ecosystem



The Kirishima area is the home of varieties of birds such as the very rare pitta and the ruddy kingfisher that has distinctive descending calls as well as insects such as The Wonderful Green Hairstreak, in the southmost distribution range, and local butterfly (*Antigius butleri*). Abundant of wild birds such as the sunda scops-owls, the Japanese paradise flycatchers and the mandarin ducks can be observed especially in the nationally designated "Miike Wild Birds' Forest" that is located at the foot of Mt. Takachihonome. The number of Sika deer has recently been increasing, and their insatiable appetite has a large influence on vegetation in general. The local pelican (the Brown Booby and the Japanese Cormorant) can be found on the Matagoshi Island off the coast of Takeyama as well as rare and stray butterflies such as the southern great orange-tip and the peacock pansy can be seen in the Kinko Bay area. In addition, the rare species of dragonfly (Bekko tombo) can be found around the ponds and swamps near Ibusuki, and the tropical giant mottled eel, the designated natural monument of Japan, with a length of more than 2 m live in various places including Lake Ikeda. Meanwhile, the Sata district is not only the home of insects such as local cicada (*Meimuna kuroivae*) and local longicorn beetle (*Antimpaza setigera japonica*) but also a migratory bird sanctuary for several migratory birds such as kinds of hawk (the Grey-faced buzzard and the Chinese Sparrowhawk), and many bird watchers visit there during the season.

A wide variety of plants grow in the Kirishima area, and various flowers can be observed throughout seasons. Early spring is the time for Far East Amur Adonis (*Adonis ramose*), the Japanese witch hazel and kinds of gentian (*Gentiana thumbergii*). From there to early summer is for the silky wisteria, the Oyama magnolia and vivid pink tiny flower (*Schizocodon soldanelloides*). The Japanese Stewartia as well as *Conandron ramondiioides* which leaves look like tobacco themselves can be appreciated in summer, and kinds of Yellow Patrinia (*Patrinia scabiosifolia*) and kinds of gentian (*Suertia japonica*) can be enjoyed in autumn. There are also many plants whose names include "Kirishima" such as Miyamakirishima (Kyushu Azalea), Kirishimamizuki (kinds of witch hazel), Kirishimagumi (kinds of silverberry), and Kirishimahigotai (local chrysanthemums). In addition, kinds of horsetail (*Balanophora tobirocola*), kinds of fempalm (*Cycas revoluta*) and the sea fig live in the Kinko Bay area. *Cratogeomys religiosa* and the fountain palm of Cape Sata as well as kinds of local orchid (*Liparis auriculata* and *Calanthe puberula*) of the cloud forest around the top of Mt. Kaimondake can be observed. Both the northern species such as kinds of broad bean (*Vicia amurensis*), kinds of buttercup (*Cimicifuga japonica*) and kinds of violet (*Viola*



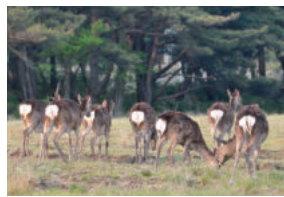
Oyama magnolia



Ficus superba



Kirishimamizuki (Kinds of Hazel)  
(Photograph provided by Takeyoshi Kamamiya)



Sika deer



Ruddy kingfisher  
(Photograph provided by Takeyoshi Kamamiya)

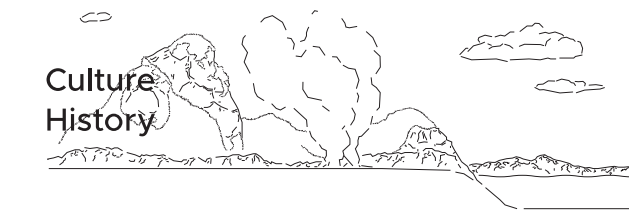


Tropical giant mottled eel

*chaerophyllioides*) and the southern species such as *Cycas revoluta* and the beach morning glory can be found especially in the Ibusuki area. Some of the reasons why various kinds of vegetation are distributed throughout this park are as follows: lively volcanic activity, climate changes of the past, altitude difference of 1,700 m from the sea level to the summit, warm current of Kuroshio which is one the world's biggest ocean currents, and the rather large annual estimated rainfall of 4,000 mm in the mountains. In the high altitude area, the solfatara fields (sparse vegetation adapted to the sulfuric condition) influenced by the volcanic activity and a colony of Miyama-kirishima are established. In the middle altitude area, the ecological system based on temperate deciduous forests such as beech, temperate coniferous forests as fir and laurel forests such as chinquapin and Cyclobalanopsis is established. Lastly, the ecosystem of the low altitude area is established based on subtropical forests such as Ficus superba. The places once impacted by the past eruptions such as lava flows have been academically valuable sites where ecological changes can be seen since vegetation with different transitional phases has been established for each eruption era. The unique ecosystem of the colorful underwater landscape affected by the Kuroshio current with stony corals and soft corals (seaweed) spreading through the seas around Mt. Sakurajima and Cape Sata can be observed along with subtropical fish such as the oriental butterflyfish and the neon damselfish.



A colony of Miyamakirishima (Kyushu Azalea) spreading around the mountain peak  
(Photograph provided by Takeyoshi Kamamiya)



- Tenson Korin -  
(The Descent of the Grandson of the Sun Goddess to Earth)  
Mt. Takachihonome in the Kirishima area is said to be a sacred mountain where Tenson (Niniginomikoto, the grandson of the Amaterasu Omikami) descended to earth with the Three Sacred Treasures. "Amano Sakahoko (the heavenly upside-down spear)" on the top is supposed to have been placed by the deity when he descended to earth, and it has been worshipped as a treasure of Kirishima Higashi Shrine. In addition, Kirishimajingu Shrine and the ruins of its ancient shrine are located at the foot of the mountain, making it into a mystical area where ancient legends are still alive to this day.

### - Onsen (Hot Springs) -

In this park and its surrounding area, there are many hot springs that are blessings of the volcanoes, and they have been appreciated by many locals and visitors for their health since the ancient times. Hot springs in the Kirishima area are known for their rich spring quality such as the sulfur springs and sodium bicarbonate springs. Although it is located outside of the park, the "Sunamushi Hot Spring" (the sand bath) is also famous throughout the country.



One of the hot spring sources of Ibusuki



"Amano Sakahoko" (On the top of Mt. Takachihonome)  
(Photograph provided by Takeyoshi Kamamiya)

## National Parks Etiquette

Please keep in mind the importance of nature and observe the following while staying in the national park so that everyone can enjoy.



Do not litter.



Do not pick flowers and plants.



Do not feed any wildlife.



Do not catch/capture any wildlife.



No smoking is permitted while walking.



Bonfires shall be built within the designated area only.

・A climbing registration shall be submitted prior to mountain climbing.  
・Gather all possible information beforehand. This park consists of some active volcanoes such as Mt. Sakurajima and Mt. Shinmoedake. Therefore, make certain to gather as much information as possible particularly on the volcanic activity in the area in advance. Access to the park may be restricted depending on the status of the volcanic activity.





It is a volcano that has a beautiful mountain shape and is also a symbol of the local area. The altitude of its summit is 922 m, and it has the 360-degree panoramic view overlooking Mt. Sakurajima, the Osumi Peninsula, and as far as Yakushima Island.



It is an island located in the north of the Ibusuki hot spring and is famous for its Sunamushi hot spring (sand bath). The sandbank appears during the low tide (approximately 80 days per year) connecting to the island. It is a tidal island that can be reached in about 30 minutes on foot.



It is located in the southernmost tip of the mainland Kyusu. Various sub-tropical plants such as the fountain palm, Cycas revoluta and the flying spider-monkey tree fern are growing along the paved promenade from the parking lot to the observation deck.



This Jigoku ("Hell") is located at the foot of Mt. Kurino that is one of the oldest volcanoes of Kirishima, and it is violently discharging volcanic gases (a private property). There are the Mt. Kurino hot springs in its vicinity.



This is a volcano with an altitude of 1,344 m. Especially, the mountain seen from the north has a beautiful conical shape, and it is also called "Ikoma-Fuji" derived from the name of the base of the mountain.



This is the highest mountain of this park with an altitude of 1,700 m, and it has a crater with a diameter of 900 m and a depth of 300 m. The view from the top of the mountain is breathtaking, and not only the Kinko Bay and Mt. Sakurajima but also all the way to Mt. Kaimondake can be seen if the weather permitting.



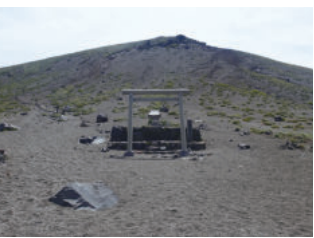
Photograph provided by Takeharu Nagatomo

This crater lake spreads under Mt. Karakunidake, and it takes about 1.5 hours to walk around the lake. In the season of autumn leaves, many colors of the leaves and the blue of the lake present a wonderful scenery.



Photograph provided by Takeharu Nagatomo

This is a currently active volcano in the Kirishima area, which has had a massive eruption in January 2011. Inside of the crater can be seen from the top of Mt. Karakunidake.



This is a mystical mountain with the legend of the descent of the Sun Goddess's grandson to earth (Tenson Korin), and a colony of Miyamakirishima can be found along the mountain path. The season of Miyamakirishima is from mid to late May.



It is the largest crater lake in the Kirishima area with a diameter of approx. 4 km and a depth of approx. 100 m, which was created by the largest eruption in the history of Mt. Kirishima. A campground is located on the lake shore.



Photograph provided by Takeyoshi Kamamiya

Although it was originally settled in Mt. Takachihonomine worshipping Niniginomikoto as a primary deity, it was rebuilt in the present location through Takachihogawara Riverbed due to the volcanic eruptions. Many visitors come to this majestic shrine all year round.



It features the beautiful landscape of magnificent Mt. Sakurajima along with the Kinko Bay's largest mudflat and the beach of the white sand and lush green pine trees that stretches for several hundred meters. It is crowded with many visitors for swimming in summer.



Please contact each responsible ranger office or regional environment office of the Ministry of the Environment for area details.



Located in the center of the park, this volcano can be viewed from anywhere in its vicinity. Even now it is repeatedly erupting and releasing volcanic ash, which allows you to experience the fierce energy of the earth.



The spectacular scenery including Mt. Sakurajima, Kinko Bay and Kirishima Mountain Range can be appreciated from the top. In addition, the Pass area is maintained as Takatoge Tsutsujigaoka Park, and many visitors come for cherry-blossom viewing in spring.



**Ebino Eco-Museum Center**  
D2  
Suenaga 1495-5, Ebino City, Miyazaki Prefecture, 889-4302  
[TEL] 0984-33-3002



**Takachihogawara Visitor Center**  
D3  
Kirishimataguchi 2583-12, Kirishima City, Kagoshima Prefecture, 899-4201  
[TEL] 0995-57-2505  
[URL] <http://www.fsynapse.ne.jp/visitor/>

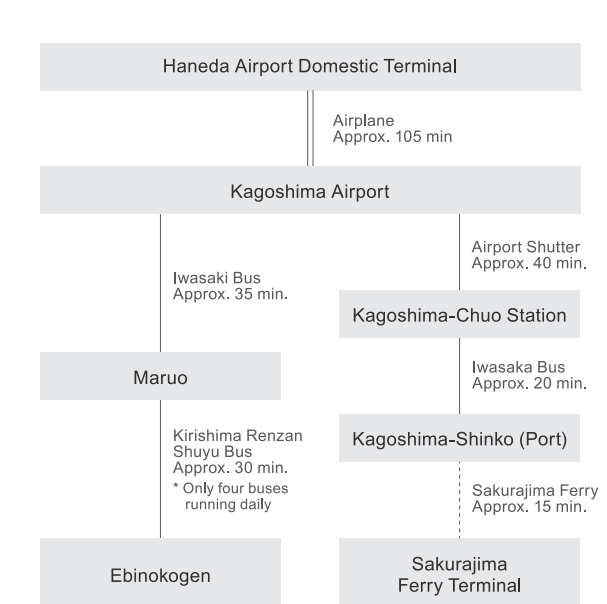


**Sakurajima Visitor Center**  
B6  
Sakurajima Yokoyama Town 1722-29, Kagoshima City, Kagoshima Prefecture, 891-1419  
[TEL] 0995-293-2443



**Shigetomi Kaigan Nature Experience Museum (Nagisa Museum)**  
B5  
Hiramatsu 7675, Aira City Kagoshima Prefecture, 899-5652  
[TEL] 0995-73-3146

\* Please directly contact each facility for details such as the hours of operation, etc.



\* The closest bus stop to the Ebino Eco-Museum Center

\* The closest station to the Sakurajima Visitor Center

\* The access route above is an example. The time required for each section is an estimate only. Please contact each transportation company or check their websites for more information.