



厚岸霧多布昆布森国定公園

Akkeshi-Kiritappu- Konbumori Quasi-National Park



Interaction between the Earth and the Sea on Wetlands and Cliffs.
-Life-Filled Wetlands and the Sea-

Akkeshi-Kiritappu- Konbumori Quasi-National Park



Quasi-National Park Regulations					
	No littering	No disturbing of flora or fauna (including eggs)	No feeding of wildlife	No smoking outside designated areas	No camping or fires outside designated areas
No straying from promenades/boardwalks	Be considerate of surroundings, including local residents and the environment.	No graffiti (or other criminal property damage)	Beware of brown bears.	Beware of herding sika deer.	

North Pacific Ocean Seaside Line —A mist-shrouded floral cape road—

This coastal route runs 320 kilometers from Hiroo to Cape Nosappu, passing through Kushiro, Akkeshi and Hamanaka in the Quasi-National Park area. With stunning views of wetlands, coastal reefs and rock formations, this mist-shrouded floral cape road is widely recognized as one of the best drives in eastern Hokkaido for its beautiful natural scenery.



Konbumori coastal area (Kushiro)



Akkeshi-Kiritappu-Konbumori Quasi-National Park

This area of eastern Hokkaido along the Pacific Ocean was designated as Japan's 58th quasi-national park and Hokkaido's 6th on March 30, 2021, more than 30 years after the previous designation of the region's Shokanbetsu-Teuri-Yagishiri Quasi-National Park in 1990. Its vast area covers 41,487 hectares (including 32,566 hectares of land) encompassing the regions of Kushiro, Akkeshi, Hamanaka and Shibecha, making it 1.4 times as large as Kushiro Marshland National Park (28,788 hectares). The park features the almost-pristine wetlands of Kiritappu Marsh (formed from coastal recession and sand deposition) and Bekanbeushi Marsh (formed from long-term riparian water presence). Its landscape is rich and varied, with wet areas left behind after marine recession (Lake Akkeshi and Hichirippu Marsh), cliffs stretching from Konbumori to Cape Shirepa and from Cape Aikappu to Biwase, and sea-surrounded land masses including Daikoku Island and Kenbokki Island.

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History of wetlands and cliffs carved into the earth

Wetlands formed from previous lakes and swamps, copious river flow in wetland areas, and rich, deep forests reaching upstream
 Sheer coastal cliffs and numerous Pacific islands
 How did this natural landscape form?



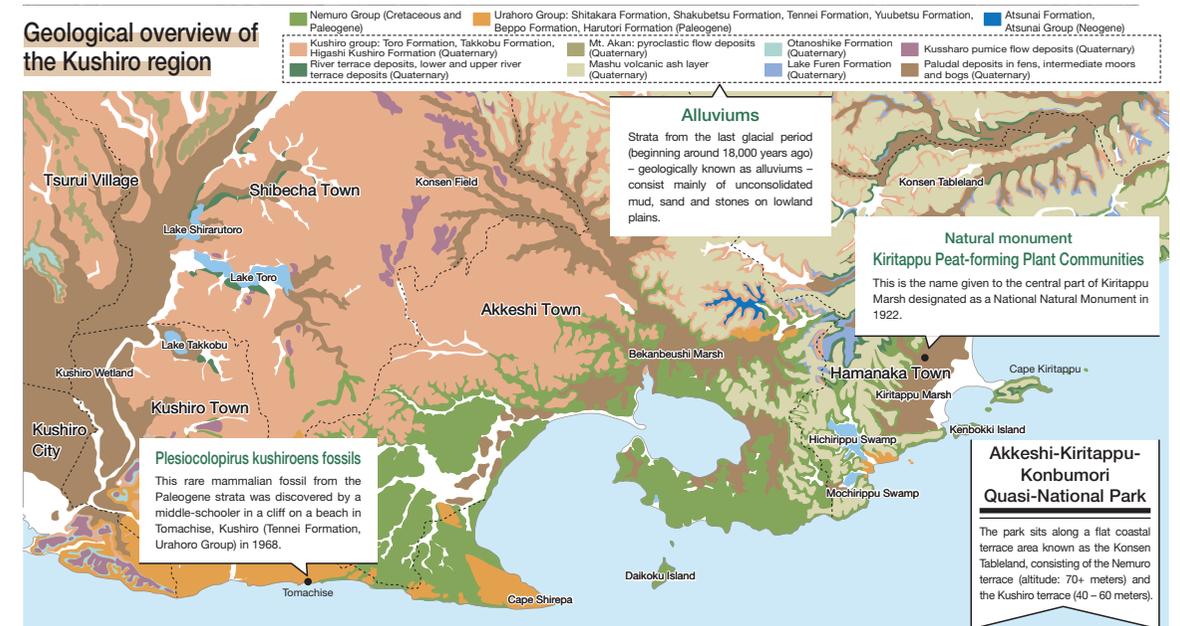
1. Bekanbeushi Marsh (Akkeshi) 2. Unusual rock formations seen from Kitoushi (Kushiro) 3. Hamanaka Kojima Island (Hamanaka) 4. Kiritappu Marsh and the Biwase River (Hamanaka)

We drive out of Shibecha away from the Japanese Larch forest in the Chanbetsu area (a designated quasi-national park). We head south on Route 391 and follow Hokkaido Prefectural Road 142 toward Nemuro, then drive along the North Pacific Ocean Seaside Line past Konbumori fishing port and on to an uphill stretch. After driving through an area of short trees typical of the Kushiro region, we come across a sign bearing a Kushiro place name that few people can read – Fushiko – marking the beginning of the quasi-national park's coastal area. Dense state-owned forests greet our entry along the road to Kitoushi Campsite. We drive along an unpaved forest road for a while, and the view suddenly opens up to reveal the campground. The outstanding view incorporates ocean waters as far as the eye can see beyond the beachfront and rocks far below. Returning to the prefectural road, we take a short break overlooking the Pacific Ocean at the Sekineppu Lookout Open Space before forging on to Cape Shirepa. A walk of around 700 meters over a wind-swept meadow ends with a vertigo-inducing view from a coastal cliff over a beach of wave-worn rocks 50 – 100 meters below. We can see a rocky mass called Hokakeiwa with a *torii* gate on top being washed by the waves. To the east, Daikoku Island and Akkeshi-Kojima Island dot the sea. The coastal stretch of hard-rock formations is punctuated by bays, inlets and capes from Kushiro to Hamanaka, along with oddly shaped isolated rocks such as Shirowa, Tateiwa, Todoiwa, Takoiwa, Rosokuiwa and

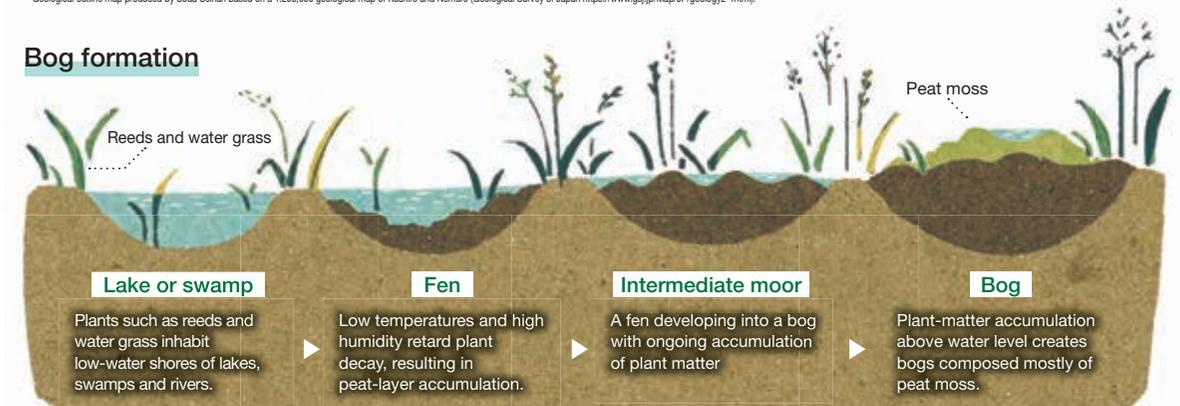
Hokakeiwa in Kushiro, Meotoiwa in Akkeshi, and Tachiiwa and Madoiwa in Hamanaka. Beautiful coastal scenery is a highlight of this quasi-national park. Heading into Senposhi in Kushiro, we see Akkeshi Bay to the right, then get onto Route 44 at Oboro toward downtown Akkeshi. As we cross the vermilion Akashi Bridge, we see Kakijima Island's Benten Shrine on Lake Akkeshi – a brackish water mass with a circumference of about 25 km fed by the Bekanbeushi River from the north. In the upper reaches of this natural river is Bekanbeushi Marsh – a primeval bog in the middle of a fen. We go to Cape Aikappu and Ayamegahara Wild Iris Garden, and then head to Hamanaka via Hokkaido Prefectural Road 123. After seeing the legendary Cape Namida, Mochirippu Swamp and Hichirippu Swamp, we get out of the car at Biwase Observatory. Overlooking Kiritappu Marsh with our backs to the Pacific Ocean, we enjoy a unique landscape with numerous freshwater lakes and swamps. As we head east and approach Biwase Bridge, Kenbokki Island appears. We pass the former Biwase Elementary School (now part of the Kiritappu Wetland National Trust) and view the coastal landscape on the right overlooking Hamanaka Kojima Island, with Cape Azechi and Kiritappu Marsh on the left. We drive through the Sakaki area of Hamanaka and head straight onto Prefectural Road 142, then go through a tunnel and over some hills. A sea mist covers the whole area as we reach Poroto Swamp at the eastern end of the park.

A series of sea cliffs facing the Pacific Ocean (Hamanaka)

Geological overview of the Kushiro region



Bog formation



Wonders of nature embracing wetlands and cliffs



Marshlands and cliffs shrouded in sea fog are a common early-summer sight in eastern Hokkaido that is often cited as an earliest memory by Kushiro locals. This mysterious natural phenomenon is still not fully understood.

Sea fog covers coastal areas of the quasi-national park for up to around 100 days a year, especially in spring and summer. Understanding of this Kushiro phenomenon requires knowledge of ocean currents and air masses in the seas around Japan. The main currents are the warm Kuroshio and Tsushima flowing northward from near the equator and the cold Oyashio and Liman flowing southward from the Arctic Circle. The Kuroshio and Oyashio play significant roles in sea fog generation.

In summer, moist southerly winds blow in association with the onset of Japan's Pacific High, which creates clockwise circulation. These winds become heated over the Kuroshio current, producing moist, warm air that is subsequently cooled over the Oyashio north of 40 degrees latitude near northern Iwate Prefecture. As warm air holds more water vapor than cold air, this rapid cooling produces fog, just like a person's breath steaming on a cold day.

This is known as sea fog, as it forms over sea areas before being blown inland by southerly winds. The phenomenon seldom lasts throughout the day, instead moving repeatedly onshore and offshore – a fact useful for budding sea fog specialists.

Conversely, eastern Hokkaido's clear winter air brings fine weather and more hours of daylight, along with lotus leaf-shaped sea ice formations on cold still mornings. This phenomenon is observed when the sea temperature reaches -1.8°C and needle-like ice crystals gather on the surface to form masses between 30 – 300 cm in diameter and up to 10 cm in thickness.

On cliffs exposed to strong Pacific winds and waves, ice pillars may form like frozen waterfalls. Temperatures below minus 20°C associated with radiative inland cooling can also cause cold air to flow along rivers into the sea, and a phenomenon known as *kearashi* (fog forming from sea water vapor) occurs if the temperature difference between river and sea water exceeds $12 - 15^{\circ}\text{C}$.



1. Sea fog 2. Sea-surface lotus-leaf ice 3. Frozen cliff 4. Kearashi fog

Trivia Interesting place names

This is a quiz on place names in the Kushiro, Akkeshi, Hamanaka and Shibechea areas of the quasi-national park. There are three levels of difficulty – even some locals can't read them. Can you?

Lv.1 Reading level: Good!

- 跡永賀 ()
- 茶安別 ()
- 末広 ()
- 奔幌戸 ()

Lv.2 Reading level: Fantastic!

- 浦雲泊 ()
- 五十石 ()
- 愛冠 ()
- 火散布 ()

Lv.3 Reading level: Genius!

- 重蘭窮 ()
- 片無去 ()
- 別寒辺牛 ()
- 嶮暮帰 ()

* For answers, see p. 31.

The story of Cape Namida and Tachiwa

Once upon a time during the glory days of the herring fisheries industry, a young Akkeshi fellow and the daughter of a fishing business owner in Kiritappu fell in love. One day, the young man's ship ran aground during a storm on the way from Akkeshi to Kiritappu, and he was lost to the ocean. The girl was inconsolable and stood on the cliff there, crying and shouting his name as loudly as she could. Even today, her sad face can be made out in the surface of the cliff. The Tachiwa formation also looks like the young man trying to return to her. It's said that the girl's sobbing and the young man's expressions of love for her can be heard in the wind on stormy nights.



Flora in wetlands and cliffs

Kushiro has Japan's coolest climate, with low temperatures all year round. Alpine plants otherwise seen only in mountainous areas grow in coastal grasslands and wetlands there.



Yachibozu

Bekanbeushi Marsh is home to a number of rivers, including the Oboro and the Bekanbeushi. Most of the area is fenland covered with reeds, sedges and alder trees, but in 1989 an almost-pristine bog area hosting Iso-tsutsuji (*Ledum palustre*) and rusty peat moss communities was discovered there. Precious plants such as Himemizutombo (*Habenaria yezoensis*) and Kushiro-Hanashinobu (*Polemonium caeruleum*) can also be seen in the fen area surrounding the bog. Lake Akkeshi, into which the Bekanbeushi River flows, is also well known for its Akkeshi-so (Common Glasswort) – a typical Hokkaido salt plant. The Obetsu River basin on the northwestern side is the only place in Japan known as a habitat for four-leaf mare's tail (*Hippuris tetraphylla*).

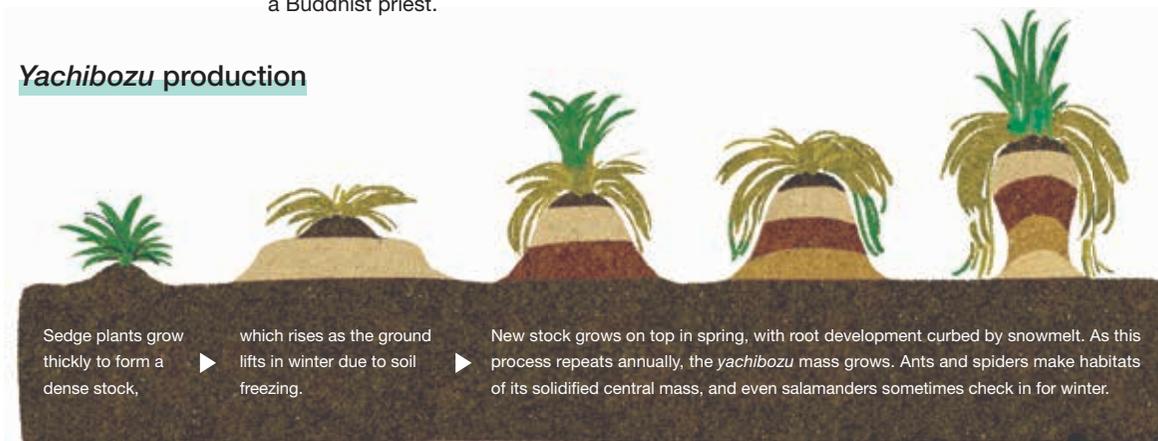
The coastal Kiritappu Marsh, with its numerous sand dunes, is extensively registered as a Ramsar site along with Hichirippu Swamp and Mochirippu Swamp to the west for a total of 2,504 hectares. Its central part is also designated as a National Natural Monument for its peat-forming plant communities. The area's various characteristics include fens with lines of *yachibozu* growing among reeds, sedges and alder trees, intermediate floral

moors full of colorful blooms from spring to autumn, bogs where alpine plants such as cranberry and *Empetrum nigrum* grow thickly on peat moss balls, daylily and *watasuge* (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), and salt marshes at the mouth of the river hosting saline plants such as *umimidori* (*Lysimachia maritima*). A stroll along the Yachibozu Boardwalk at the foot of Kiritappu Wetland Center, the Biwase Boardwalk along Kiritappu Marsh, the Nakanohama Boardwalk along the coastline or the Okubiwase Boardwalk along the bank of the Biwase River provides views that must be seen to be believed. The coastal area hosts forests of short windswept trees, along with *todomatsu* (*Abies sachalinensis*), Erman's birch, *mizunara* (*Quercus crispula*) and *Ezo Miyakozasa* (*Sasa nipponica*) growing over areas from the Konbumori part of Kushiro to Cape Shirepa. The Ayamegahara Wild Iris Garden in Akkeshi is a riot of color, with Arctic irises, *himeichige* (*Anemone debilis*), daylilies and other flowers. Poroto Swamp in Hamanaka is characterized by reed-covered fens, while bog-related vegetation (such as blunt-leaved bog-moss, cranberry and *iso-tsutsuji* (*Ledum palustre*)) is found on land farther from the lake shore.

Yachibozu

Anybody strolling over a moor or along a stream in the area may see 30 – 40 cm balls of grass in upside-down jars. These are stocks of sedge and related species lifted from the ground, and are grown over old stock in the same place year after year. The *kanji* characters for their name, *yachibozu*, represent a Buddhist priest on a moor, echoing their likeness to the shaven head of a Buddhist priest.

Yachibozu production



Exploring woods and trees

Trees that take root and grow over many years observe the passage of time. Here's some information on these historical witnesses.

The images in 1 and 3 below are national forests, 2 is private land, and 4 to 7 are prefectural forests. Visitors must follow the relevant guidelines. See online information for details.



Konbumori Shirepa National Recreation Forest (Kushiro)

A rich natural environment with a mixture of coniferous and broad-leaved trees. The local forest landscapes provide little-known natural spots for hiking, camping and relaxing.



1

Soryusugi, Senpozenji Temple (Kushiro)

The original Soryusugi (twin-dragon cedar) seedling brought from Aomori Prefecture around 1908 was nurtured by the temple's chief priest and designated as a protected tree in April 1974.



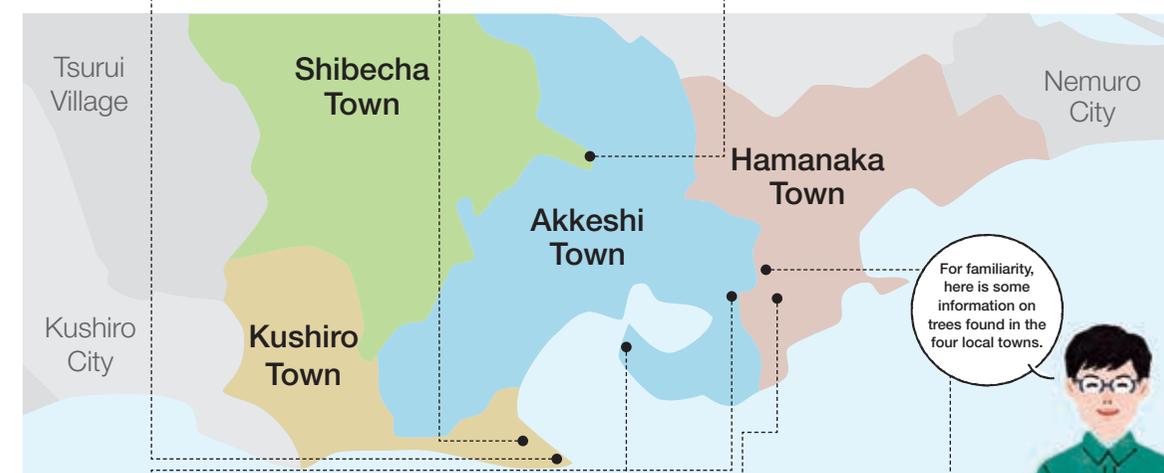
2

Pilot Forest (Shibecha and Akkeshi)

This is a 10,778-hectare area systematically created in approximately 20,000 hectares of national forest in the middle reaches of Bekanbeushi River. Development began in 1956, and a forest area of around 7,800 hectares (mainly composed of Japanese larch) was completed around a decade later. Today the area plays an important role in the supply of wood and water in the Bekanbeushi Marsh region connected to Akkeshi Bay.



3



4

Giant Japanese Lime Tree (Akkeshi)

This 200-year-old tree stands in the prefectural forest in the Bekanbeushi area of Akkeshi, a short walk from Fukan Forest Road.



5

Akkeshi Jumokuen (Akkeshi)

This natural forest area features a mixture of around 800 coniferous and broad-leaved trees (53 Hokkaido species, 16 non-Hokkaido species and 13 foreign species).



6

Ippuku no Matsu (Hamanaka)

This 400-year-old Japanese yew tree along the prefectural Hichirippu Chanai Stop route has long been revered by visitors seeking a place for respite.



7

Shiro-ezomatsu protected forest (Hamanaka)

Shiro-ezomatsu (*Picea jezoensis* f. *takadae*) is a variant of the Yezo spruce (1951, Tatewaki) and a rare species found only in eight areas of Hokkaido. The protected forest in Hamanaka has a significant cluster of the variant.

Flower calendar

Flowers and grass sprout amid the springtime snowmelt as the flowering season greets the Kushiro region. The mist-shrouded cape road that connects quasi-national park areas via Kushiro, Akkeshi and Hamanaka is a riot of pretty wild flowers in season.

* The flowering season varies with seasonal conditions. See p. 17 for contact details.

Plant	April	May	June	July	August	September
Forked-stem adonis	*	*				
Asian skunk cabbage	*	*				
Yellow star of Bethlehem		*				
Ezo-nekonemeso (<i>Chrysosplenium alternifolium</i> var. <i>sibiricum</i>)		*				
Ezo-engosaku (<i>Corydalis ambigua</i>)	*	*	*			
North Japanese hill cherry		*				
Ezo-oosakura-so (<i>Primula jesoana</i> var. <i>pubescens</i>)		*	*			
Enkoso (<i>Galtha palustris</i> var. <i>enkoso</i>)		*	*			
Yukiwari-kozakura (<i>Primula cuneifolia</i> var. <i>fauriei</i>)		*	*			
Obana-no-enreiso (<i>Trillium camschatcense</i> Ker Gawl.)		*	*			
Buckbean			*			
False helleborine			*	*		
Iso-tsutsuji (<i>Ledum palustre</i>)			*	*		
Chocolate lily			*	*		
Kushiro-hanashinobu (<i>Polemonium caeruleum</i> ssp. <i>campanulatum</i>)			*	*		
Shikotan-kimpoge (<i>Ranunculus grandis</i> var. <i>austrokurilensis</i>)		*	*	*		
Hakusan-chidori (<i>Dactylorhiza aristata</i>)			*	*		
Salweenia Baker			*	*		
Ramanas rose			*	*	*	
Toge-buki (<i>Ligularia hodgsonii</i>)			*	*	*	
Ezo-no-kawara-matsuba (<i>Gaillium verum</i> var. <i>trachycarpum</i>)			*	*	*	
Watasuge (<i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i>)			*	*		
Karamatsuso (<i>Thalictrum aquilegifolium</i> var. <i>intermedium</i>)			*	*		
Futamata-ichige (<i>Anemone dichotoma</i>)			*	*		
Daylily			*	*		
Yanagi-tora-no-o (<i>Lysimachia thyrsoiflora</i>)			*	*		
Umi-midori (<i>Lysimachia maritima</i>)			*	*		
Arctic iris			*	*	*	
Yamabuki-shoma (<i>Aruncus dioicus</i> var. <i>kamtschaticus</i>)			*	*	*	
Alpine leek				*		
Ezo-no-shimotsukeso (<i>Filipendula glaberrima</i> <i>yezoensis</i>)				*		
Ezo-kawara-nadeshiko (<i>Dianthus superbus</i> L. var. <i>superbus</i>)				*	*	
Ohanaudo (<i>Heracleum lanatum</i>)				*	*	
Iris ensata				*	*	
Ezo-furo (<i>Geranium yesoense</i>)				*	*	*
Ezo-sukashi-yuri (<i>L. pensylvanicum</i>)			*	*	*	
Nagabono-waremoko (<i>Sanguisorba tenuifolia</i>)				*	*	*
Tsurigane-ninjin (<i>Adenophora triphylla</i> var. <i>japonica</i>)				*	*	*
Hozaki-shimotsuke (<i>Spiraea salicifolia</i>)				*	*	
Sawa-gikyō (<i>Lobelia sessilifolia</i>)					*	
Noriutsugi (<i>Hydrangea paniculata</i>)					*	
Tachi-giboshi (<i>Hosta sieboldii</i> var. <i>rectifolia</i>)					*	
Ezo-rindo (<i>Gentiana triflora</i> var. <i>japonica</i>)					*	*
Karafutobushi (<i>Aconitum sachalinense</i> ssp. <i>sachalinense</i>)					*	*
Aki-karamatsu (<i>Thalictrum minus</i> var. <i>hypoleucum</i>)					*	*
Lythrum salicaria					*	*
Ezo-namiki (<i>Scutellaria yezoensis</i>)					*	*
Crimson foliage of common glasswort					*	*



1. Arctic iris 2. Least water-lily 3. Cranberry 4. Ezo-kawara-nadeshiko 5. Ezo-no-kawara-matsuba 6. Ezo-namiki 7. Toge-buki 8. Watasuge 9. Common glasswort 10. Umi-midori 11. Iso-tsutsuji 12. Ezo-furo 13. Hozaki-shimotsuke 14. Kushiro-hanashinobu

Identification of similar flowers

Single-day blooming, opening in the morning and wilting in the evening

Daylily

Upward-blooming. The inside of the petals have freckle-like spots.

Ezo-sukashi-yuri
(*L. pensylvanicum*)

The corolla lobes are split into five parts, and are unilateral.

Sawa-gikyō
(*Lobelia sessilifolia*)

Six corolla lobes with a purple streak.

Tachi-giboshi
(*Hosta sieboldii* var. *rectifolia*)

There is a purple mesh pattern on a yellow background at the base of the outer corolla lobes.

Arctic iris

There is a yellow plaque in the center of the base of the outer corolla lobes.

Iris ensata

Fauna in wetlands and cliffs

Seeing wild animals is generally uncommon in daily life, but not in Akkeshi-Kiritappu-Konbumori Quasi-National Park. Be sure to observe quietly with no audible reaction of surprise or excitement.

Walkers along the track to Cape Aikappu in Akkeshi are likely to encounter Hokkaido sika deer – males (known as gods of the forest) with their four-branched antlers and females and their offspring munching on grass – in the forest near Aikappu Museum of Natural History or on the grassland in front of the Bell-of-Love Arch at the tip of the cape. These local deer appear rather oblivious to human presence, behaving quite naturally while keeping their distance. In eastern Hokkaido, seeing Ezo red foxes, Hokkaido sika deer and wild birds such as white-tailed eagles is a part of daily life.

The marshland area here is home to the red-crowned crane, designated as a national special natural monument. Lake Akkeshi, Hichirippu Swamp and Mochirippu Swamp, which do not fully freeze over even in the deep of winter, are major destinations for migratory birds such as greater white-fronted geese and bean geese (also designated as natural monuments) and wintering grounds for geese, ducks and whooper swans. Lake Akkeshi and Kiritappu Marsh are also winter habitats for large raptors such as Steller's sea eagles and white-tailed eagles. The whole area incorporating Bekanbeushi Marsh has been designated as the Akkeshi, Bekanbeushi, and Kiritappu Bird and Animal Sanctuary by the national government, and was registered as a Ramsar site in 1993. It is an internationally important wetland home to a wide variety of waterfowl

species, as well as being a habitat for Hokkaido sika deer and Ezo red foxes. Other rare species found here include the Ezo lesser pygmy shrew; this is one of the smallest mammals in existence, and Hokkaido is its only habitat in Japan. The area is also home to various birds (including land-based species such as black woodpeckers and Narcissus flycatchers, and a variety of waterfowl), amphibians (such as Hokkaido salamanders), fish (such as Japanese huchen) and insects (such as Coenagrion hylas).

The southwestern part of Daikoku Island was designated as a national natural monument called the Daikoku Island Seafoam Breeding Site in 1951 for its harbor seal community and its status as a breeding ground for Leach's storm petrels. The entire island has also been designated as the Daikoku Island Bird and Animal Sanctuary by the national government. Though harbor seals are also found around Cape Shirepa and Cape Kiritappu, Daikoku Island provides an especially stable habitat supporting the maintenance of a large population during both the breeding and molting seasons. Sea otters – an endangered species – also breed in the waters around Cape Kiritappu, and their population in the area is expected to increase. Elsewhere, Kojima Island in Hamanaka used to be a breeding ground for tufted puffins – a nationally endangered species of wild fauna and flora – and efforts for rebreeding there are underway.



Sea otters



1



6



7



8



2



3



9



10



4



5

1. Red-crowned crane 2. Black woodpecker 3. Ural owl 4. Steller's sea eagle 5. White-tailed eagle 6. Harbor seal 7. Tufted puffin 8. Whooper swan 9. Young Ural owl 10. Russian flying squirrel

One of the world's smallest mammals Ezo lesser pygmy shrews

The Ezo lesser pygmy shrew – known in Japanese as the *Tokyo togari nezumi* – is a subspecies of the northern Eurasian lesser pygmy shrew. Although the Japanese name includes "Tokyo" and *nezumi* (mouse), they are in fact found only in Hokkaido, not in Tokyo, and belong to the mole family. They are very small (45 – 49 mm) with a tail around 30 mm long, weigh only around 2 grams (equivalent to the weight of a couple of small aluminum coins) and have a long protruding nose. The Japanese name is thought to result from a misunderstanding after their discovery as a new species in 1903, when *Yedo* (Tokyo) instead of *Yezo* (Hokkaido) was mistakenly written on a sample label. They were previously considered a little-known species with a habitat on Japan's main island of Honshu until being discovered in Hokkaido in 1957. They are designated as an endangered species by Japan's Ministry of the Environment.

Facts

Ezo lesser pygmy shrews live in soil habitats such as the humus layer in cold regions, and do not hibernate even during very cold spells. They live on insects, centipedes, worms, spiders and other small soil dwellers.



Ezo lesser pygmy shrews

Hokkaido sika deer

Trivia

You can tell the age of a stag up to three years from the number of spikes on its antlers, which are shed in spring and then grow back.

			
1 yr.	1 or 2 yrs.	2 or 3 yrs.	3 yrs. or more.
Straight antlers with no additional spikes	Straight antlers with up to one extra spike	Antlers with one or two extra spikes	Magnificent antlers with two or three extra spikes

This method of aging does not apply to does.



Female Hokkaido sika deer have no antlers enabling age determination.

Wild animal parenting and offspring separation

Trivia

In eastern Hokkaido, where wild animals and people coexist, it is important to understand the ecology of wildlife.



Ezo red foxes

Ezo red foxes give birth in ground-based burrows between March and April, and raise their young until April to August. In September or October, the cubs leave their parents and move away from their birthplace.



Hokkaido sika deer

Hokkaido sika deer give birth between May and July. A mother and her fawn may live alone or in a community of dozens. Older stags tend to subsist alone, while young ones sometimes form groups.



Brown bears

Brown bears give birth between late January and early February during the period of hibernation. Cubs are raised exclusively by females, and start to become independent in summer at one or two years old. Young males sometimes stray into residential areas.



Sea otters

Sea otters give birth all year round, with a peak between May and June. Pups are raised exclusively by females, who teach their offspring how to dive, groom, eat and use tools such as stones before leaving them to become independent when the time is right.

Bird calendar

The Akkeshi-Kiritappu-Konbumori Quasi-National Park – home to two Ramsar wetlands – is recognized as one of Japan's best twitching sites for its status as a habitat to various rare species. It is a natural gem where wild birds can be observed all year round.

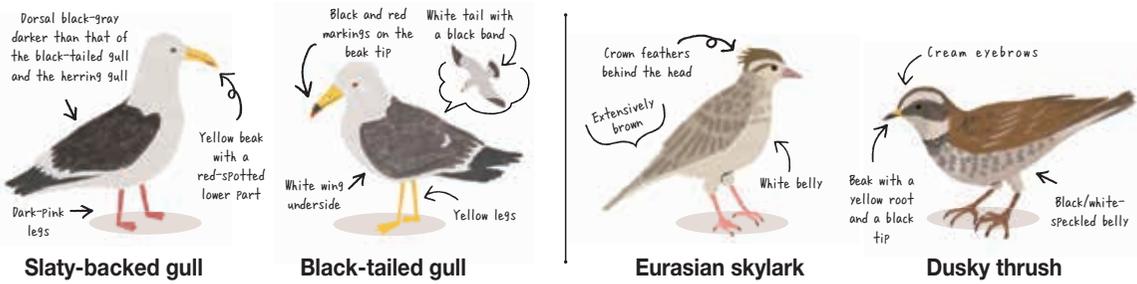
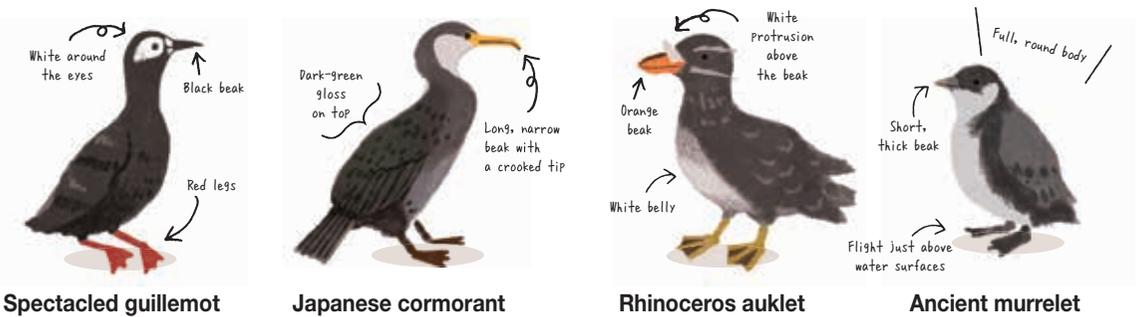
* The ability to spot particular species is not guaranteed due to their wild nature. * For details, inquire at the facilities listed on p. 17.

Bird type	Time of year	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
White-tailed eagle	sedentary	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Red-crowned crane	sedentary	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Hazel grouse	sedentary	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Marsh tit	sedentary	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Miyama-kakesu (Garrulus glandarius brandtii)	sedentary	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Grey-headed woodpecker	sedentary	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Long-tailed tit	sedentary	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Treecreeper	sedentary	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Coal tit	sedentary	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Eastern buzzard	sedentary	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Japanese robin	summer		Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Japanese bush warbler	summer		Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Gray's grasshopper warbler	summer		Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Long-tailed rosefinch	summer	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple		Orange					
Sakhalin leaf warbler	summer		Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Eurasian wren	summer	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Siberian blue robin	summer	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Siberian stonechat	summer	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Himalayan cuckoo	summer		Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Latham's snipe	summer	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Middendorff's grasshopper warbler	summer		Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Lanceolated warbler	summer		Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Siberian rubythroat	summer		Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Red-flanked bluetail	summer	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Reed bunting	summer	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple							
Leach's storm petrel	summer	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple		Orange	Orange				
Oriental greenfinch	summer	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple		Orange	Orange	Orange			Green
Eurasian skylark	summer	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple							Green
Goldcrest	winter								Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Dusky thrush	winter								Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Eurasian wigeon	winter								Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Common goldeneye	winter								Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Common pochard	winter								Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Common shoveler	winter	Red						Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Long-tailed duck	winter								Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Red-breasted merganser	winter								Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Common merganser	winter								Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Black coot	winter								Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Black scoter	winter								Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Asian rosy finch	winter								Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Whooper swan	winter	Red							Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Steller's sea eagle	winter							Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green
Spectacled guillemot	sedentary/winter	Red	Red	Red	Purple	Purple			Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green

Identification of similar wild birds

Visitors to Kushiro will see wild birds on beaches, wetlands, grasslands, forests and other places. This guide presents just a few, but will hopefully enable identification.

Trivia for enjoying wildlife observation more



Akkeshi Waterfowl Observation Center

This information center for Lake Akkeshi and Bekanbeushi Marsh (which gained Ramsar site registration in 1993) features a ground-floor exhibition area with wetland images displayed on a large screen and a second-floor observation area. Tel. +81(0)153-52-5988



Aikappu Museum of Natural History (Akkeshi)

Run by Hokkaido University's Akkeshi Marine Station, this museum features a permanent display of around 2,000 specimens of marine life, land mammals, birds, insects, flowering plants, fungi, minerals, and fossils from eastern Hokkaido. Tel. +81(0)153-52-2056



Kiritappu Wetland Center (Hamanaka)

The center runs exhibitions featuring Kiritappu Marsh and its natural environment, provides information on appreciation of wetlands, seasonal flowers and birds, and arranges ecotours. Carvings of 45 typical Hamanaka bird species are also displayed. Tel. +81(0)153-65-2779



Shibecha Museum (Nitai-to)

In the Ainu language, *nitai* means "forest" and *to* means "lake." The museum provides opportunities to learn about Shibecha's natural environment and history as well as Ainu culture. Insect specimens produced by Kazuo Iijima, who helped to categorize the insect fauna of Shibecha and other parts of eastern Hokkaido, are a highlight of the exhibits. Tel. +81(0)15-487-2332

From forests, rivers to the sea

Protecting nature and nurturing life

The area's rich, beautiful natural environment plays an important role in promoting the region as a tourist destination, as well as improving the quality of water sources via flood mitigation and water purification. The benefits of local biodiversity in the area support many people's livelihoods.

Efforts are made to protect this rich natural environment and the high-quality water resources created by circulation in forests, rivers and oceans.



Forestation

Efforts to create mixed forestation of coniferous and broadleaf trees, similar to the composition of a natural forest, are made in various areas with planting of Mizunara (*Quercus crispula* Blume), Manchurian ash, Aodamo (*Fraxinus lanuginosa* f. *serrata*), Yamahannoki (*Alnus hirsuta* var. *sibirica*), Japanese elm, Itaya-kaede (*Acer mono*), Ezo-yamazakura (*Cerasus sargentii* (Rehder) H. Ohba), Todomatsu (*Abies sachalinensis*) and Akaezomatsu (*Picea glehnii*). This work is based on industry-government-academia-private collaboration, with efforts such as tree planting promotions and river environment conservation efforts by fishery-cooperative women's clubs to increasing fish stocks.



Clean-up promotions

In Bekanbeushi Marsh, Kiritappu Marsh and Lake Akkeshi, along the JR Hanasaki train line and the Konbunori coast, and around Lake Toro, the local government, fishery cooperatives, agricultural cooperatives, companies, NPOs, local elementary schoolers and volunteers from the area and elsewhere regularly conduct cleanup activities and use canoes to collect fishing floats that wash ashore in the estuary.



Purchase of privately owned land for the protection of flora and fauna

The non-profit Kiritappu Wetland National Trust is seeking to purchase around 200 hectares of development-threatened land along the local coastal road from around 1,200 privately owned hectares in the Kiritappu Marsh, as well as privately owned land hosting nesting sites for red-crowned cranes. To protect these birds, the Wild Bird Society of Japan uses donated funds to purchase non-designated wetland areas upstream of Bekanbeushi Marsh.



Maintenance and management of boardwalks and promenades

Conservation activities for Kiritappu Marsh are conducted on an ongoing basis. As part of this work, the Yachibozu, Nakanohama and Biwase boardwalks in conservation areas owned by Kiritappu Wetland National Trust and others in the Okubiwase Wild Bird Park are maintained as necessary, underbrush and branches on promenades are cleared, and other volunteer activities are performed by individuals/group members and local high schoolers.



Environmental education

Students at Shibecha High School serve as guides to inform visitors of the history of wetlands on board the Kushiro Shitsugen Norokko Train on the extended service to Kawayu Hot Springs. Elementary schools in Akkeshi get children to consider environmental matters by having them give show-and-tells on the environmental conservation efforts they make at home, things they have learned about the environment, and craftwork using natural materials. At Shibecha Elementary School and Beppo Elementary School (Kushiro), fifth-graders also conduct wetland field studies. At Kiritappu Wetland Center, the members-only Kiritappu Kodomo Shizen Club for elementary schoolers organizes canoeing outings for enjoyment of the great outdoors and exploration of uninhabited-island areas.

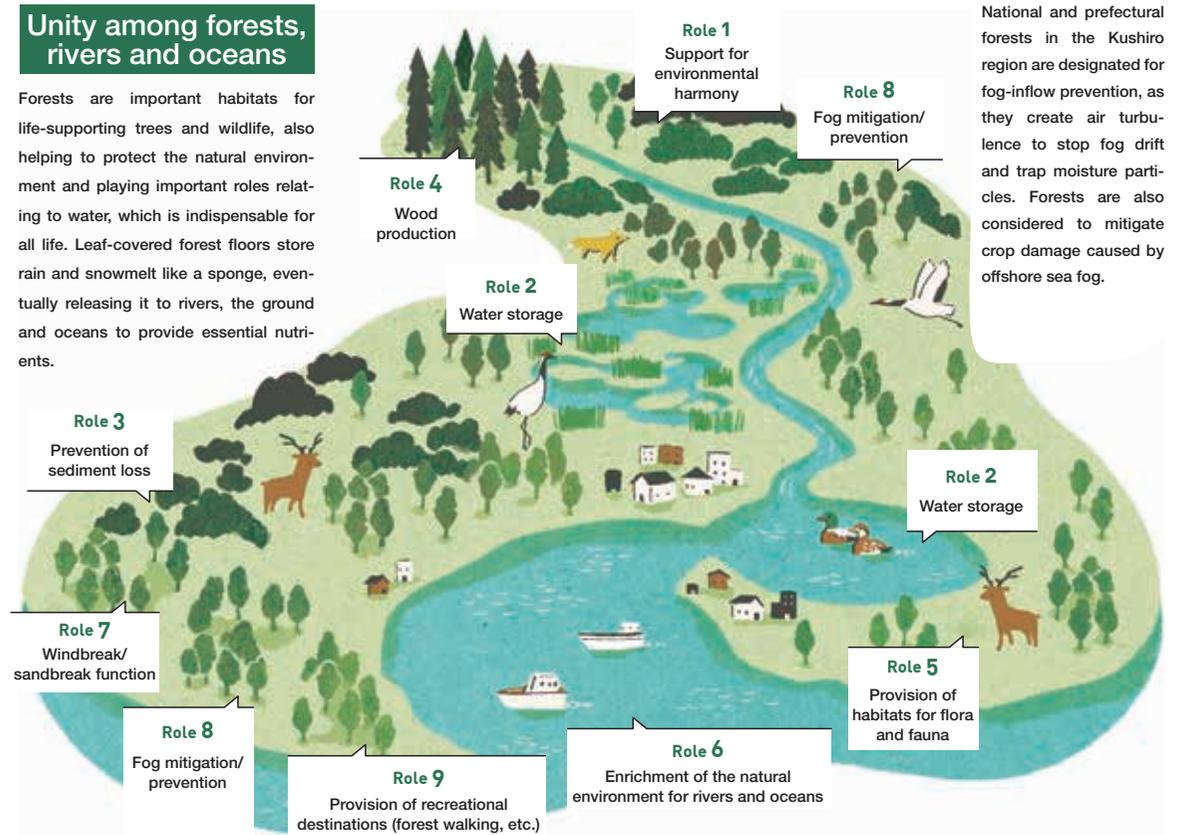


Ecotourism

In the Kushiro region, many businesses and organizations leverage the area's outstanding natural environment and its Ramsar wetlands to promote ecotourism and hands-on activities. This kind of ecotourism allows visitors to experience the attractions of the region, such as its nature, history and culture based on guidance from experts, with focus on preserving and maintaining tourism resources such as the natural environment and historical culture. The four towns in the quasi-national park offer canoe outings, nature tours, marshland trekking, bird watching and uninhabited-island exploration activities involving marshland rivers and lakes.

Unity among forests, rivers and oceans

Forests are important habitats for life-supporting trees and wildlife, also helping to protect the natural environment and playing important roles relating to water, which is indispensable for all life. Leaf-covered forest floors store rain and snowmelt like a sponge, eventually releasing it to rivers, the ground and oceans to provide essential nutrients.



National and prefectural forests in the Kushiro region are designated for fog-inflow prevention, as they create air turbulence to stop fog drift and trap moisture particles. Forests are also considered to mitigate crop damage caused by offshore sea fog.

A culture of symbiotic interaction with nature

Natural tourism resources such as marshlands, forests, lakes, rivers, coasts and wild fauna and flora are utilized locally.

People living with nature enjoy the blessings of the ocean and earth, preserve precious resources and pass down inherited local culture and scenery to the next generation.

During the kelp harvest season, numerous fishing boats set out early in the morning and soon return full of kelp, which is loaded onto trucks to be taken to the *kamba* facility where the crop is dried. Here, candy-colored kelp pieces are carefully arranged individually by hand, with their unique scent filling the air. Oyster and clam culturing also flourishes in Lake Akkeshi. Fishermen actively harvest local eelgrass beds for marine resources, including icefish in spring, Hokkai shrimp, and in winter saffron cod and Japanese surfsmelt. Semi-natural

grasslands have been created in the area through pasturage of native Hokkaido horses (Dosanko) in the Ayamegahara Wild Iris Garden of Akkeshi and in the Biwase and Tofutsu areas of Hamanaka. In 1956, work was begun on the planting of a pilot forest incorporating the Shibecha and Akkeshi areas on land ravaged by fires from burning for land reclamation. Today this vast forest of larch trees plays a major role as a water source for Bekanbeushi Marsh.

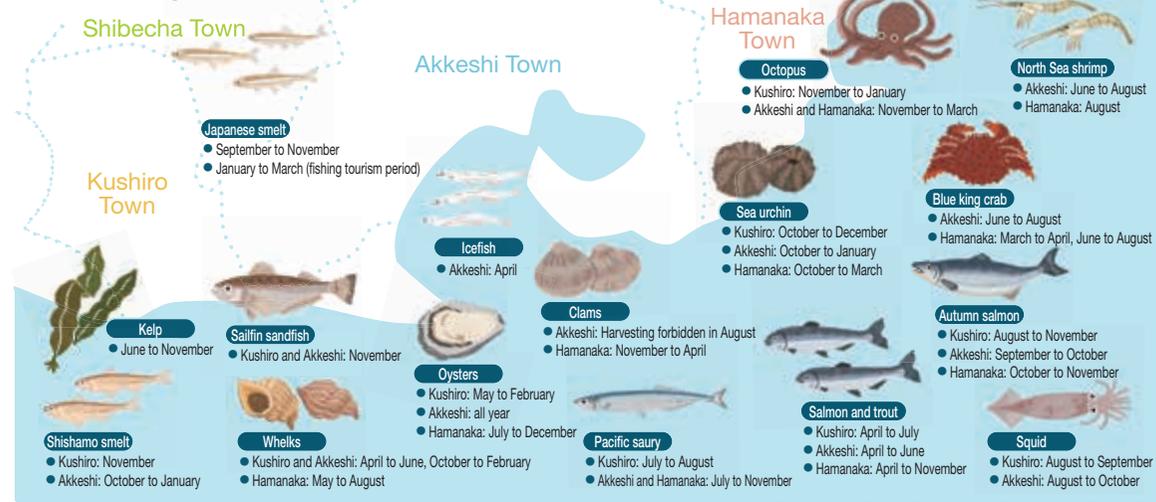


Oyster fishing at Lake Akkeshi (Akkeshi)



1

Blessings of the sea



2



3



4



5



6

1. Simultaneous start of kelp harvesting (Akkeshi) 2. Clam harvesting on Hichirippu Swamp (Hamanaka) 3. Fixed-net fishing for autumn salmon (Kushiro) 4. Kelp drying (Kushiro) 5. Dairy-cattle grazing (Hamanaka) 6. Grazing Hokkaido native horses in Ayamegahara Wild Iris Garden (Akkeshi)

Blessings of the earth

	Heads of dairy cattle	Heads of beef cattle	Milk production	Processed goods
Kushiro	553	51	2,625 t	-
Akkeshi	13,473	169	69,941 t	Cheese, milk, butter, ice cream
Hamanaka	23,920	2,434	100,269 t	Beef, milk, ice cream, cheese, yogurt drinks
Shibecha	48,450	17,371	172,479 t	Milk, cheese, ice cream, yogurt, butter, boiled beef, beef cooked in soy sauce with sugar and ginger

As of the end of June 2021

Toward an Akkeshi all-star whisky

Akkeshi Distillery began whisky production in 2016 amid the local environment of sea fog, ocean breezes, clean air, abundant peat, a cool climate and the Homakai River with its cold, clear peat-filtered water. These conditions echo those of Islay – the sacred land of Scotch, where peat-filtered water is also used for distillation and whisky is matured day after day. Islay is known for fine oysters in the same way as Akkeshi, where they are doused in local whisky and consumed as a special delicacy. Akkeshi Distillery aspires to produce superior whisky using only local raw materials and equipment, including water, barley and the barrels used for aging.



Activity Canoe tours

Canoe tours in the quasi-national park and elsewhere are provided for enjoyment of the Bekanbeushi, Kiritappu and Kushiro marsh areas. These local guided outings are ideal to gain an initial understanding of canoeing regulations and etiquette.

Rules and manners for going down the river



Navigate calmly in the presence of red-crowned cranes, and do not approach. Particular care should be taken to allow cranes with chicks to retreat.



Beware of brown bears in forest areas.



Be careful not to unsettle wildlife with flash photography.



Do not approach, feed, shout to or wave at wild animals. Observe quietly.



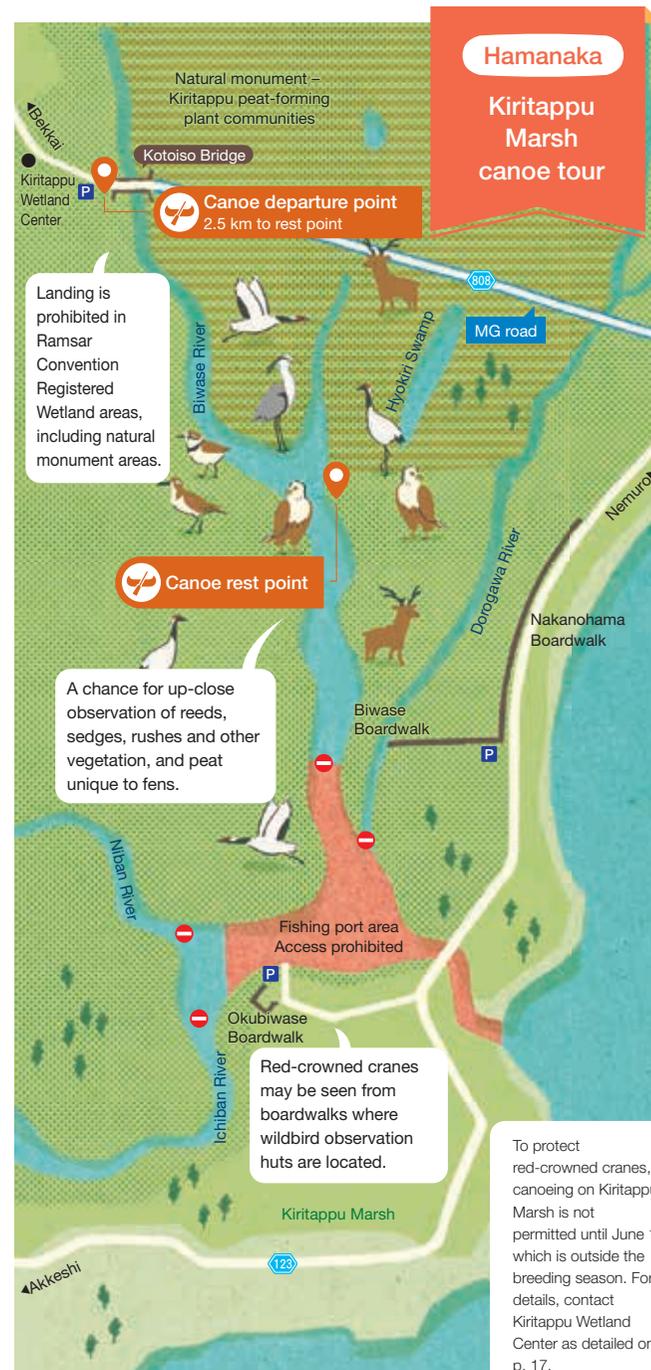
Stop only at designated canoe stops, ports and rest points.



Avoid trampling on or collecting plants, insects, amphibians, fish and other forms of wildlife.



The area is home to many wild animals and plants. Be sure to use the restroom before setting out, and take your garbage home.



Campsites in the great outdoors

One of the best parts of a local visit is the chance to camp at leisure in the green surroundings of the quasi-national park. The promenades and forest paths near the three campsites there are ideal for plant spotting and forest walks. Relax in the wilderness and forget the stress of everyday life.

Kushiro

For a peaceful experience with moonlight reflecting on the water.

Kitoushi Campsite

Sunny days offer fine views of the Pacific Ocean below. The campsite has an atmosphere of wilderness in virgin-forest surroundings, offering a truly tranquil and leisurely experience against an endless blue sea, silence surrounded by sea fog, deep-red sunsets and water surfaces glinting in the moonlight. It should be noted that the 700-meter-long forest route between the main road and the campsite is unpaved and narrow, making it a pathway for wild animals.

Open: June 1 – October 31

Facilities: Choice of camping location (free), restrooms, cooking stations, water supply

Tel. +81(0)154-62-2193 (Industrial and Economic Affairs Division, Kushiro Hall)



Hamanaka

Exhilarating ocean views

Kiritappu Cape Campsite

The site is a five-minute walk from Cape Kiritappu on a gentle hill, with 18 bungalows (fee-based), tent sites (free) and a free dog park. The rest house facilities (fee-based) offer opportunities for group barbecues as well as car/motorcycle-based camping. The hillside location affords fine views of the Pacific.

Open: Early June – early October

Facilities: 18 bungalows (power, lighting, bedding, etc. not provided), communal simple flush toilets, communal cooking station, garbage station

Tel. +81(0)153-62-2111 (Commerce, Industry and Tourism Division, Hamanaka Hall)

Akkeshi

A relaxing earthy spot surrounded by greenery

Chikushikoi Campsite

The resort offers tent sites and bungalows in lush natural settings to meet all needs, along with laundry and hot-shower facilities for guests staying for longer periods. Located near Cape Aikappu (a major tourist destination in Akkeshi), the site is close to the downtown area facing Chikushikoi Street, making it ideal as a tourist base.

Open: Saturdays, Sundays and national holidays between July 1 and September 30 and during the Oyster Festival

Facilities: Tent sites (fee-based/free), 12 bungalows (fee-based/free LED lanterns), cooking stations, restrooms (simple flushing type), communal facilities (washing machine, dryer, shower, meeting room) and management building

Tel. +81(0)153-52-6627



Campsites outside the quasi-national park

A number of campsites outside the quasi-national park in Shibecha, Kushiro and Hamanaka provide enjoyment of the natural environment and pleasant outdoor experiences.



Center House, Nijibetsu Auto Campsite

Shibecha



Nijibetsu Auto Campsite

The campsite prides itself on the size of its free sites, cottages and tent spaces. With bungalows and individual spaces separated by trees, the site provides a safe and pleasant environment for families with young children and a variety of outdoor experiences.

Open: May 1 – October 31

Facilities: Choice of camping location (fee-based), Center House (washing machines, dryers, shower), cottage, 25 individual sites, 2 bungalows, party site, 5 power sites

Tel. +81(0)15-485-2111 (Tourism, Commerce and Industry Division, Shibecha Hall)

Tawadaira Campsite

Located below Tawadaira Observatory, this site offers extensive open spaces, beautiful green grass and outstanding views from tent areas. The Green Hill Tawa reception area features a restaurant serving dishes made with Shibecha fare, and also sells local products.

Open: May 1 – October 31

Facilities: Choice of camping location (fee-based), cooking stations, restrooms

Tel. +81(0)15-485-2111 (Tourism, Commerce and Industry Division, Shibecha Hall)

Toro Motomura Campsite

This site provides a sense of unity with nature along the shores of Lake Toro. The nearby Motomura House Paru leisure facility provides canoeing experiences along with a park golf course, the Arukotto Lake Toro Eco Museum Center, and Shibecha Museum (Nitai-to), making this an ideal base for sightseeing.

Open: May 1 – October 31

Facilities: Choice of camping location (fee-based), cooking stations, restrooms

Tel. +81(0)15-485-2111 (Tourism, Commerce and Industry Division, Shibecha Hall)

Kushiro

Takkobu Auto Campsite

This site is located on the shores of Lake Takkobu – a relatively small body of water with a circumference of 5 km. Visitors can observe local animals, plants and wild birds there, as well as fireflies in summer.

Open: May 1 – October 31

Facilities: Center House (including paid showers and laundry facilities), cooking building, camping sites and auto sites (fee-based), lodge/bungalow facilities and restrooms

Tel. +81(0)154-40-4448 (Center House)



Hamanaka

Motto Kazete

Fees are reasonable and facilities such as cooking stations, flush toilets, and showers are available. There is also a multipurpose square and a playground.

Open: Early May – late October

Facilities: Choice of camping location (fee-based), administration building, cooking stations, communal simple flush toilets, various experiences (pre-booking required), other

Tel. +81(0)153-64-3000 (Motto Kazete)



* Contact facilities directly for details of reservations, opening periods and fees.

* Show consideration for other facility users when enjoying the natural environment.

* Refrain from removing, damaging or disturbing flora and fauna.

* Take all precautions with regard to naked flames.

* Camping is restricted to designated areas.

* Be respectful with regard to noise, and take garbage home.



Popular routes in and around Akkeshi-Kiritappu-Konbumori Quasi-National Park

In addition to the standard eastern Hokkaido driving routes from the transportation hubs of Nemuro Nakashibetsu Airport, Tancho Kushiro Airport and Kushiro Station, wide-area routes between Akan-Mashu National Park and Nemuro also enhance enjoyment of the region.

route 01 >>> From Nemuro Nakashibetsu Airport 3 days

Start Nemuro Nakashibetsu Airport	Overnight in Akkeshi	Lunch in Hamanaka	Lunch in Hamanaka
Lunch in Nakashibetsu	Canoeing on the Bekanbeushi River	Cape Azechi	Nemuro Nakashibetsu Airport
Tawadaira Observatory	Ayamegahara Wild Iris Garden	Cape Kiritappu	
Hosooka Observatory	Biwase Observatory	Overnight in Hamanaka	
Kushiro Local Production for Local Consumption Center Lo Bazaar	Kiritappu Wetland Center	Trekking on Kiritappu Marsh	

route 02 >>> From Akan-Mashu National Park 3 days

Akan-Mashu National Park Area	Iwabokki Water Gate	Ayamegahara Wild Iris Garden	Kiritappu Onsen Yuyu
Tawadaira Observatory	Cape Shirepa	Lunch in Hamanaka	Dinner in Hamanaka
Sarubo Observatory and Sarurun Observatory	Oyster bar	Monkey Punch Collection	Overnight at Kiritappu Cape Campsite
Canoeing on the Kushiro River	Overnight in Akkeshi	Cape Azechi	Kenbokki Island
Lunch in Kushiro	Cape Aikappu	Cape Kiritappu	Toward Nemuro

route 03 >>> From Tancho Kushiro Airport/Kushiro Station 4 days

Tancho Kushiro Airport/Kushiro Station	Canoeing on the Kushiro River	Cape Kiritappu	Cape Shirepa
Lunch in Kushiro	Overnight at Takkobu Auto Campsite	Overnight in Hamanaka	Overnight at Kitoushi Campsite
Hosooka Observatory	Cycling in Akkeshi	Kenbokki Island	Kushiro Local Production for Local Consumption Center Lo Bazaar
Sarubo Observatory and Sarurun Observatory	Akkeshi Mikaku Terminal Conchigle	Lunch in Hamanaka	Kushiro Fisherman's Wharf MOO
Arukotto Lake Toro Eco Museum Center	Akkeshi Waterfowl Observation Center	Biwase Observatory	Tancho Kushiro Airport/Kushiro Station
	Yachibozu Boardwalk	A-Uroko Akkeshi Fishery Cooperative Association Direct Sales Store	

The variety of recommended routes continues.

route 04 >>> From Akan-Mashu National Park 2 days

Akan-Mashu National Park area	Biwase Observatory
Tawadaira Observatory	Overnight in Hamanaka
Hosooka Observatory	Canoeing on Kiritappu Marsh
Kushiro Local Production for Local Consumption Center Lo Bazaar	Cape Kiritappu
Akkeshi Waterfowl Observation Center	Toward Nemuro
Ayamegahara Wild Iris Garden	

route 05 >>> From Tancho Kushiro Airport/Kushiro Station 3 days

Tancho Kushiro Airport/Kushiro Station	Akkeshi Boyodai	Biwase Boardwalk	Kushiro Local Production for Local Consumption Center Lo Bazaar
Lunch in Kushiro	Overnight in Akkeshi	Lunch in Hamanaka	Tancho Kushiro Airport/Kushiro Station
Hosooka Observatory	Canoeing on Bekanbeushi River	Cape Azechi	
Sarubo Observatory and Sarurun Observatory	Ayamegahara Wild Iris Garden	Cape Kiritappu	
Shibeche Museum -Nitai-to-	Biwase Observatory	Overnight in Hamanaka	
		Kiritappu Wetland Center	
		Kokutajiji Temple historic site	

route 06 >>> From Nemuro Nakashibetsu Airport 4 days

Nemuro Nakashibetsu Airport	Sekineppu Lookout Open Space	Lunch in Akkeshi	Overnight at Kiritappu Cape Campsite
Mt. Nishibetsu climb	Cape Shirepa	Cape Namida, Tachiwa	Cape Kiritappu
Overnight in Shibeche	Canoeing on Bekanbeushi River	Biwase Observatory	Urayakotan Parking Area
Sarubo Observatory and Sarurun Observatory	Oyster bar	Biwase Boardwalk	Horseback riding
Kushiro Local Production for Local Consumption Center Lo Bazaar	Overnight in Akkeshi	Cape Azechi	Lunch in Hamanaka
	Cycling at Cape Aikappu	Kiritappu Onsen Yuyu	Nemuro Nakashibetsu Airport
		Dinner in Hamanaka	

The information here is valid as of the end of August 2021. Facility availability depends on winter breaks, regular days off, temporary closures and other factors. Visitors should inquire and book in advance. The Hokkaido Kushiro General Promotion Bureau is unable to compensate for any damages caused by actions based on the content provided herein.

The availability of direct flights from Tokyo (Haneda), Nagoya (Chubu) and Osaka (Kansai) to Tancho Kushiro Airport (a hub for access to Kushiro, Akan and Mashu) depends on demand. Check the websites of the relevant airlines for the latest information on departure/arrival times and flight availability.

Priceless treasures of nature



Hamanaka Kojima Island, Gome Island, Kenbokki Island

The uninhabited islands of Hamanaka Kojima and Gome used to be home to a large population of typical Hamanaka tufted puffins. The flat uninhabited Kenbokki Island (circumference: approx. 4.5 km; area: 0.07 km²), formed by sea-floor uplift and wave erosion around 3,000 years ago, is also a natural habitat for colonies of May lilies, daylilies, Ezo-rindou (Gentiana triflora var. japonica) and other plants as well as Ezo lesser pygmy shrews, which are among the smallest known mammals and are not found in areas of Japan other than Hokkaido. The island's grassland plateau provides an ideal habitat for seabird breeding, and represents a valuable nesting ground for the Leach's storm petrel, the Japanese cormorant, the black-tailed gull and other species.



A magnificent natural meeting of land and sea

This area represents a magnificent natural meeting of land and sea, featuring the Kushiro River and Kushiro Marshlands National Park to the north along with the Pacific Ocean and the Akkeshi-Kiritappu-Konbumori Quasi-National Park to the south along with a majestic 40-km curving coastline running from Mataitoki to Senposhi. The characteristic local summer sea fog creeps over the area's wildflower-rich grasslands and dense forests of oddly shaped windswept trees. The fantastic sights here make it feel like a magical foreign land, with views of vast landscapes over Kushiro Marshland from Hosooka Observatory providing a boost for mental wellbeing all year round.



Akkeshi Kojima and Daikoku Islands

The southwestern part of the uninhabited Daikoku Island (circumference: approx. 6.0 km; area: 1.08 km²) incorporating Akkeshi Lighthouse was designated as a national natural monument for its status as a breeding ground for seabirds in 1951 (approx. 11% of the island's area) and as a prefectural nature park in 1964. In 1966 the entire island was designated as a special bird and animal sanctuary. The location is a paradise for seabirds such as the Leach's storm petrel, the slaty-backed gull, the Japanese cormorant and the spectacled guillemot, and is one of few breeding grounds for harbor seals. Akkeshi Kojima is a small island (circumference: 0.8 km; area: 0.05 km²) that has been uninhabited on a year-round basis since its elementary school was closed in 1975, and has around 10 residents during the kelp fishing period from July to September.



Two national parks and a quasi-national park

Shibecha measures 58.9 km from east to west and 60.5 km from north to south, creating a total area around half the size of Tokyo. The southern part of the region is an oasis of precious flora and fauna covering the widely distributed wetlands of Kushiro Marshland National Park, including Kottaro Marsh, Lake Toro and Lake Shirarutoro. The north is home to a vast core industry of dairy farming on the majestic Konsen Plateau, with the northernmost part being home to some of Akan-Mashu National Park and Mt. Nishibetsu. This magnificent natural environment, encompassing two national parks and Akkeshi-Kiritappu-Konbumori Quasi-National Park, is a priceless treasure of Shibecha. Visitors can enjoy the wonderful sunrise and sunset of Tawadaira on clear days, along with panoramic views of the Konsen Plateau and a spectacular jet-black stary sky at night.

Towns protecting and nurturing treasures and co-existing with nature



Kushiro

Kushiro is 252.66 square kilometers in size and has a population of approximately 19,000, with main industries including fishing, agriculture and commerce. In 1920 it was separated from the previous Kushiro entity (now officially known as Kushiro City) and later merged with Konbumori Village in 1955 to form ShinKushiro Village, which became the area today known as Kushiro as a result of township designation in 1980. It incorporates the areas of Beppo, Toya, Sechiributo, Toyo/Chuo and Konbumori.



Akkeshi

Akkeshi is 739.27 square kilometers in size and has a population of approximately 9,000, with main industries including fishing and dairy farming. The name Akkeshi first appeared in literature in the Kan-ai period (1624 - 1644), when the Matsumae clan (formed in 1604) set up a shipping store there. The name comes from the Ainu language.



Hamanaka

Hamanaka is 423.63 square kilometers in size and has a population of approximately 5,600, with main industries including fisheries and dairy farming. People from mainland Japan are thought to have settled in the area during the Kan-ai period from 1627 onward. The Akkeshi site was divided in 1701, and the Kiritappu site of the Matsumae clan was formed. The area is strongly characterized by its openness to the sea.



Shibecha

Shibecha is 1,099.37 square kilometers in size and has a population of approximately 7,300, with main industries including dairy and livestock farming. The name comes from the Ainu *Shipeccha*, meaning "bank of a big river." Three great rivers - the Kushiro, the Bekanbeushi and the Nishibetsu - flow through the area, underpinning the region's history of water and forests in industry and pioneering.

Ramsar sites

Ramsar wetlands are listed in the Register of Wetlands of International Importance under the provisions of the Ramsar Convention. In this context, the habitats of migrating waterfowl and the roles of various wetland ecosystems are today widely recognized as important.



Bekanbeushi Marsh (Akkeshi, registered 1993; area 5,277 ha)

Lake Akkeshi (a brackish lake bordering the Pacific) and Bekanbeushi Marsh are respectively designated as national bird and animal sanctuaries, and the special protection area incorporating the whole Akkeshi Bay area is registered under the Ramsar Convention. Bekanbeushi Marsh takes a thin branch-like form along the Bekanbeushi River, with tributaries flowing into Lake Akkeshi. It covers an area of around 8,300 hectares, most of which are wetlands covered with reeds and sedges, and retains a wholly unspoiled appearance. Its varied environments, including brackish waters and forest land, provide habitats for an estimated 240 bird species. The area serves as a stopover and a wintering ground for migratory waterfowl, such as whooper swans, geese and other ducks, and as a breeding site for endangered species such as white-tailed eagles and red-crowned cranes.



Kiritappu Marsh (Hamanaka, registered 1993; area 2,504 ha)

The central part of the marshland is designated as a national natural monument for its Kiritappu peat-forming plant communities. Two brackish lakes in the main and western parts of the marsh (Hichirippu Swamp and Mochirippu Swamp) are registered under the Ramsar Convention, with land designated as special protection areas for national birds and as animal sanctuaries. Covering an area of 3,168 hectares, the marsh stretches along the Pacific coastline of Biwase Bay and Hamanaka Bay in eastern Hokkaido. The Ramsar site designation covers 2,504 ha, with the central part (803 ha) holding the peat-forming plant community designation. The marshland includes fens, bogs and various other forms of terrain, and is home to a variety of birds and large mammals such as Hokkaido sika deer.



Akkeshi-Kiritappu-Konbumori Quasi-National Park by train

The JR Nemuro Main Line from Takikawa to Nemuro (Hokkaido's longest railway) has a section called the JR Hanasaki line connecting two cities and three towns between Kushiro and Nemuro. This stretch is well known to locals and railroad enthusiasts, with single-car trains providing unique views of sea and land, including atmospheric cliffs and marshes as well as rare local plants and animals.

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Information courtesy of:
 Konsen Seibu District Forest Office, Hokkaido Regional Forest Office, Forestry Agency
 Kushiro Wetland Nature Conservation Officer's Office, Ministry of the Environment
 Office of Forestry, Kushiro General Subprefectural Bureau, Hokkaido Government
 Akkeshi Waterfowl Observation Center
 Shibeche Museum (Nitai-to)
 Aikappu Museum of Natural History
 Kiritappu Wetland National Trust
 Ashiyan Canoe
 Lakeside Toro

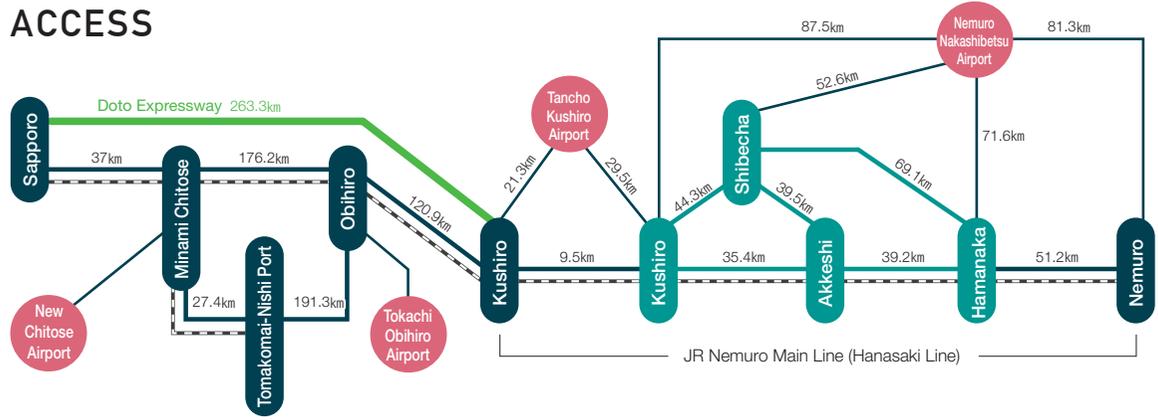
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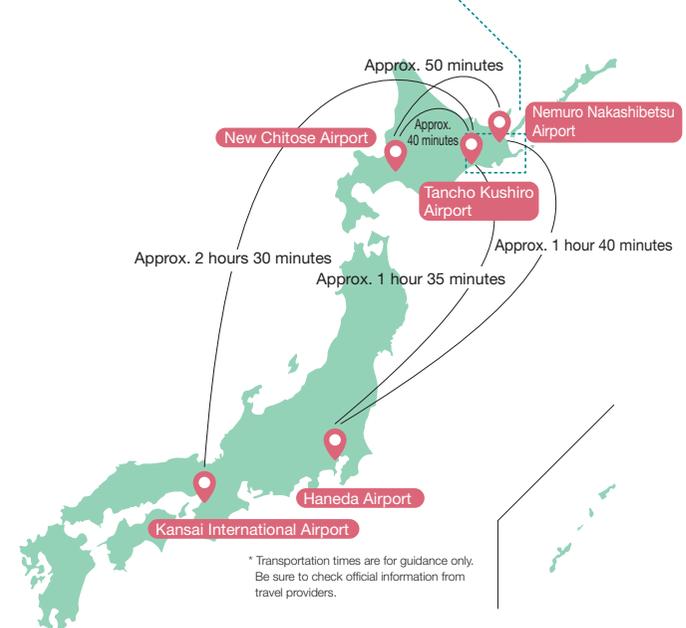
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Issued in September 2021 by Kushiro General Subprefectural Bureau, Hokkaido Government.
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ACCESS



To access Akkeshi-Kiritappu-Konbumori Quasi-National Park, take the JR Nemuro Main Line (Hanasaki Line) and intercity bus routes from Kushiro Station to Nemuro Station via Akkeshi Station. Flights operate from Haneda Airport, Kansai International Airport and New Chitose Airport to Tancho Kushiro Airport and Nemuro Nakashibetsu Airport, which are the nearest hubs to the quasi-national park area.



* Transportation times are for guidance only. Be sure to check official information from travel providers.