Higashi Daisetzu Area

Lake Shikaribetsu

Lake Shikaribetsu has the most picturesque scenery in Higashi Daisetzu Area. You can get an unbroken view of the Tokachi Plain and Hidaka Mountain Range from Ogapahara, at the entrance to the park. You can take in the gorgeous natural scenery from the lakeshore, or ride out into the center of the lake in a canoe or on a cruise ship. In addition, various events are held on the ice during winter. Guided tours to Lake Toun as well as cross-country ski tours and snowshoe tours on the frozen lake are also available.

Other picturesque scenery includes the sheer cliffs, Byobubuki and Hawkodai Falls at the Shikaribetsu Gorge, which is situated on the Shikaribetsu River to the west of Lake Shikaribetsu. Hiking trails through the forests are available, and there are many hot springs along the river such as Shira-no-yu.

Lake Nukabira

Lake Nukabira is a man-made lake created upon the completion of a power generation dam in 1956. The view of the lake with the mountains of Higashi Daisetzu in the background is highly picturesque. Various nature activities are available in the area, including canoeing and an observation club for pikas. Many people visit this area to see the numerous concrete arch bridges, formerly used by the national Shihoro Line, still remain, and have been designated as a Hokkaido Heritage. The remains of the railroad along the west bank are now being converted into the Hokkaido Nature Walkway.

Miyabeiwana (Salvelinus malma miyabe)
in Lake Shikaribetsu

The Dolly Varden Trout (Salvelinus malma malma), which resembles a char but with distinct spots on the side of its body, lives in the rivers of Hokkaido. They are mainly found in mountain streams, such as those at Daisetuzan, the Hidaka Mountain Range, and the Shikaribetsu Peninsula. Those living on the Shikaribetsu Peninsula migrate to the sea to mature. However, the Dolly Varden Trout that live in Lake Shikaribetsu ascend the river to spawn, and are thus considered to be a subspecies endemic to the lake. These trout are referred to as Miyabeiwana for their special characteristics, including the structure of their fins.

The Mountains of Higashi Daisetzu

In contrast to the grandeur of Omote Daisetzu, you can experience the profound depths of nature here, where steep mountains such as the Ishikari Mountain Range, Mount Nipetsu, and Mount Upepesanke, stand tall with dense woodlands extending around them. Mountains such as Nupukaushinipu, Mount Hakuun, and Mount Tenbexu surround Lake Shikaribetsu, providing grand views of the Tokachi Plain and the Hidaka Mountain Range. Permafrost exists in some areas despite their low elevations. Many alpine plants can be seen in these areas, which are also the habitat for pikas.

Column

Tokachi-Mitsumata Now and Then

In 1939 when the national Shihoro Line began operating between Obihiro and Tokachi-Mitsumata, deforestation of the entire Mitsumata Basin increased. A sawmill was established in Tokachi-Mitsumata, and became a leading distribution center of timber in Hokkaido. The resident population increased to over 1,000 people, and became large enough that a branch school was established. However, when roads were established after the Second World War, the sawmill moved to Kamishiro, trucks gradually replaced railroad cars as the preferred means of transporting lumber, and the population declined. In 1978, the passenger service between Nukabira and Tokachi-Mitsumata was replaced with a bus line, and the remaining Shihoro lines were abolished in 1988. At present, Texas Bluebonnets (Lupinus texensis) bloom among the remains of abandoned residences. The forest environment and views of nearby mountains are well suited for nature education. In 1942, the Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker (Picoides tridactylus)—known as one of the rarest birds because it has only been observed nine times in Japan—lived in the Daisetuzan area—was first observed here. Breeding of these birds has only been confirmed once—in 1956 also in this area.