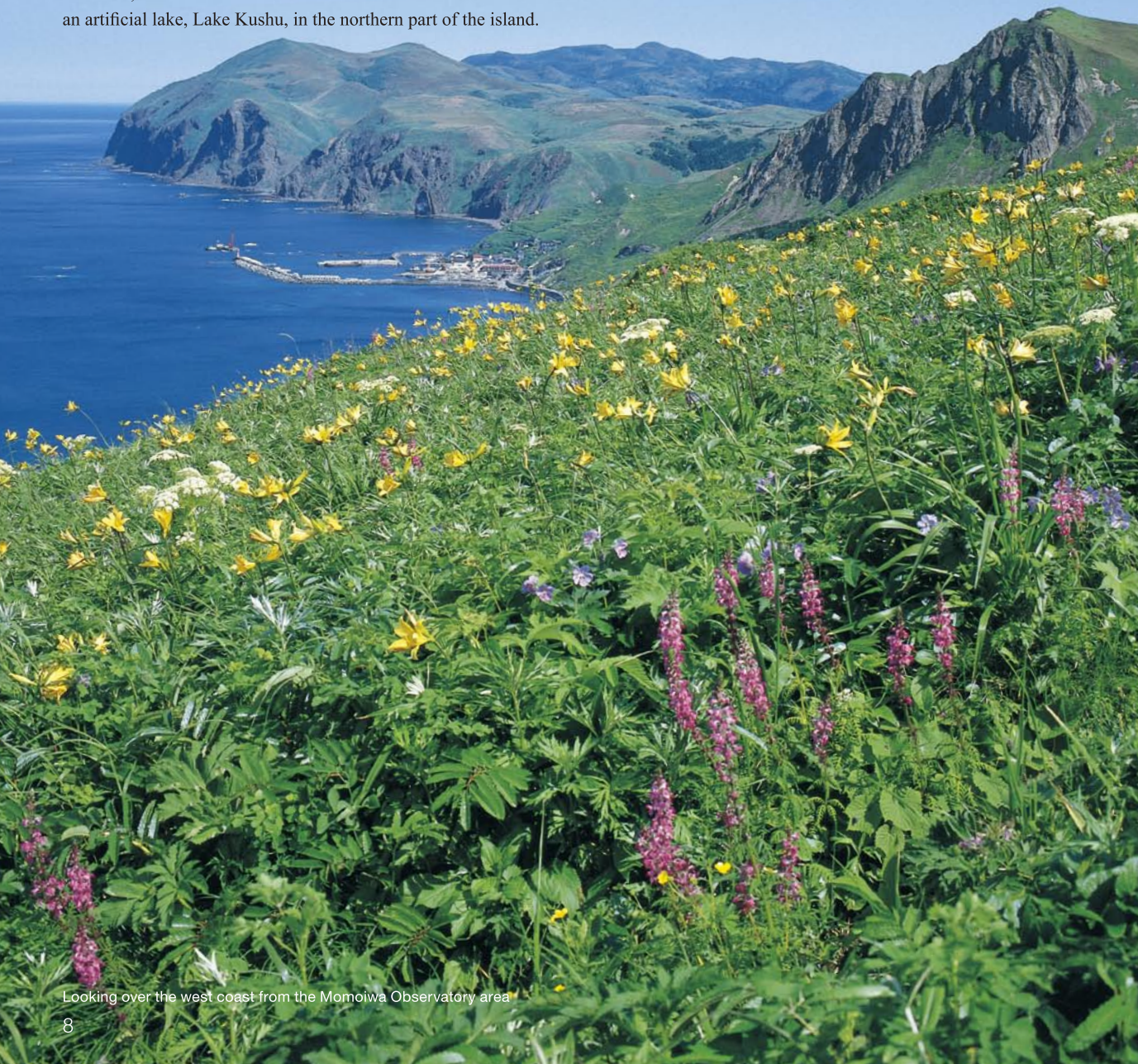


Island of Flowers, Rebun Island

The Contrast Between Smooth Terrain and Sea Cliffs

Rebun Island is located about 8km northwest of Rishiri Island, only about 5km from east to west, but stretching about 20km from north to south. In contrast to Rishiri Island, it is a long, narrow non-volcanic island. Overall, it is hilly and its highest point is Mount Rebun with an elevation of 490m. Cliffs predominate on the west coast. However, the east side slopes gently toward the coast, and thus communities are concentrated here. There is an artificial lake, Lake Kushu, in the northern part of the island.



Looking over the west coast from the Momoiwa Observatory area

Alpine Plant Community Appearing from the Coastline

Plants typically found in cold regions and alpine plants appear even at sea level since the island is not only under cold climatic conditions, but is also geologically old, and has not been invaded by plants from warmer climates. This is why the Island is called the floating island of flowers. A few forests still exist, but this was not the case in the olden days. Many forests were destroyed by bushfires, and many trees cut down for fuel during the peak period of Pacific Herring (*Clupea pallasii*) fishing. Many of the historic forests have turned into fields of bamboo grass since the forests could not regenerate due to the harsh climatic conditions.

Narcissus-flowered Anemone



Miyama Columbine

The Difference Between the East and West Coasts

Since Rebun Island is a long, narrow island, there is a striking difference between the east and west sides. Seasonal winds are strong in the winter and sea cliffs prevail on the west coast. A variety of flowers bloom in the expansive grasslands on the slope above the cliffs, where no snow accumulates due to the strong winds. On the east coast, where the seasonal winds are not as strong as the west coast people live in small communities. Expansive fields of bamboo grass populate the terraces on the slope.



The west coast with the Woolly Geranium in bloom



Rebun Island viewed from the southern sky

Column

Endemic Plants of Rishiri and Rebun Islands

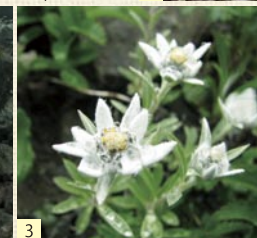
On Rishiri and Rebun Islands, isolated in the ocean, many endemic plants can be found that have evolved uniquely over the long history. Species endemic to Rishiri Island include the Rishiri Poppy (*Papaver fauriei*) and the Moran Gold Cup (*Trollius riederianus* var. *pulcher*). Those endemic to Rebun Island include the Rebun Globeflower (*Trollius ledebouri*), the Rebun Lady's Slipper Orchid (*Cypripedium macranthum* var. *rebunense*), and Rebusuyukiso (*Leontopodium discolor*). In addition, there are numerous species with very limited distribution in Japan, such as the Rebun Primrose (*Primula modesta* var. *matumurae*).



- 1 Rishiri Poppy
- 2 Rebun Lady's Slipper Orchid
- 3 Rebusuyukiso (*Leontopodium discolor*)
- 4 Rebun Globeflower
- 5 Rebun Primrose



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