



The National Park Profile

The Japanese Islands -70% of the land is covered by forests and blessed with diverse biota from subarctic to subtropical zones. National park areas represent Japan's rich and beautiful nature. National Parks in Japan, founded in 1931, have a history of over 70 years. Presently, from Hokkaido to Ryukyu Islands, 29 areas have been designated national parks nationwide, amounting to 5% of land area of the country. National parks contain the nation's representative natural environments, and comprise the framework for preserving natural environments and biodiversity of Japan.

National parks in Japan not only include primeval forests and wetlands, but also agricultural lands, communities and their surrounding nature, places that developed through the interactions of humans and nature, as well as historical and cultural scenery. They are also intended for recreation, tourism, and educational activities, emphasizing the symbiosis with regional communities.

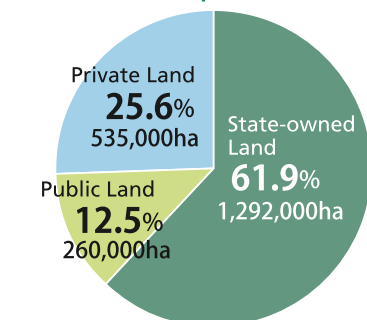
National parks in Japan are designated regardless of land ownership. Although enhancement of nature conservation has been considered, most of state-owned lands within parks

are managed and utilized for other purposes as well, such as forestry or river-coastal management. Thus on a cooperative basis, and the fostering of partnership with local communities and interest groups, the balance between conservation and sustainable use of natural resources is the foundation of national park management in Japan.

The management of national parks is carried out based on zoning. Park areas are divided into three zones according to their characteristics of the natural environment and scenery; the most strictly protected Special Protection Zone, the main component Special Zone, and the Ordinary Zone as a buffer. Activities that may affect the scenery such as cutting down trees or construction require permits from the authorities or a notification.

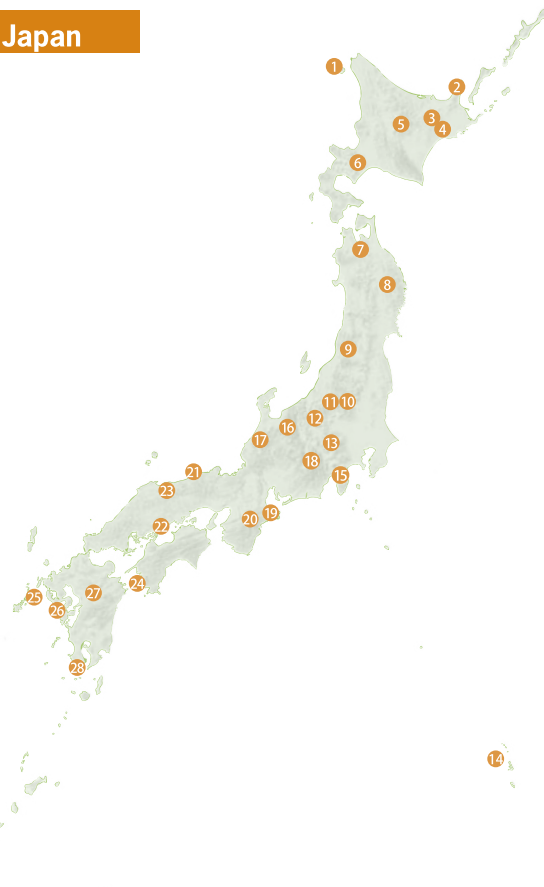
The management of national parks on site is carried out by the Regional Environment Office of the Ministry of the Environment, with the aid of local governments. National Park Rangers (The Nature Conservation Officers) are assigned at each park, making adjustments for development deals, maintenance of facilities, promoting public awareness, conducting interpretation, and closely monitoring the natural environment.

Land Ownership



National Park in Japan

- 1 Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu
- 2 Shiretoko
- 3 Akan
- 4 Kushiro-Shitsugen
- 5 Daisetsuzan
- 6 Shikotsu-Toya
- 7 Towada-Hachimantai
- 8 Rikuchu-Kaigan
- 9 Bandai-Asahi
- 10 Nikko
- 11 Oze
- 12 Joshinetsu-Kogen
- 13 Chichibu-Tama-Kai
- 14 Ogasawara
- 15 Fuji-Hakone-Izu
- 16 Chubu-Sangaku
- 17 Hakusan
- 18 Minami Alps
- 19 Ise-Shima
- 20 Yoshino-Kumano
- 21 Sanin-Kaigan
- 22 Setonaikai
- 23 Daisen-Okii
- 24 Ashizuri-Uwakai
- 25 Saikai
- 26 Unzen-Amakusa
- 27 Aso-Kuju
- 28 Kirishima-Yaku
- 29 Iriomote-Ishigaki



National Parks in Hokkaido

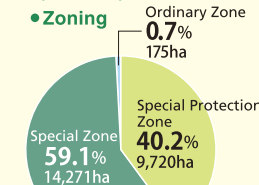


1 Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu

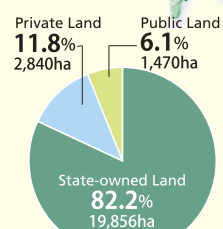
Designated on September 20, 1974 / Land area: 24,166 ha

The northernmost national park in Japan. Comprised of three areas; isolated peak Rishiri Island on the ocean, Rebun Island with endemic plants, and the magnificent Sarobetsu wetland extending from the mouth of Sarobetsu River. Its dynamic scenery and biota are its prominent features.

Total Visitors : 1,170,000 (in 2007)



Land Ownership



6 Shikotsu-Toya

Designated on May 16, 1949 / Land area: 99,473 ha

Principle attractions are the scenery created by caldera lakes and volcanoes, which continue to be very active, the park encompasses highly natural forests. Being close to the Hokkaido metropolitan area, it is popular as a recreational field due to its high accessibility.



3 Akan

Designated on December 4, 1934 / Land area: 90,481 ha

One of the most historical national parks in Japan. Primeval forests of Sakhalin Fir and Ezo Spruce, and lakes of various sizes shaped by volcanic activities are the core of its scenery. It is a park that lets you feel the intricacy of nature typical of Hokkaido. There are some volcanoes that are still active and hot springs at various places.

2 Shiretoko

Designated on June 1, 1964 / Land Area: 38,633 ha

The park area extends from the center to the tip of Shiretoko Peninsula. There are almost no human settlements, and thus pristine ecosystems in which sea and land have remained virtually untouched. It is the habitat of large wild animals such as the Brown Bear, the Steller's Sea Eagle, and the Northern Sea Lion. The area was designated a World Heritage Site in 2005.



4 Kushiro-Shitsugen

Designated on July 31, 1987 / Land Area: 26,861 ha

A relatively new national park, designated in 1987. Kushiro Shitsugen is the largest wetland in the country, expanding around the Kushiro River basin (with plants such as the sedges), it is a precious habitat for wild, endangered species such as the Red-crowned Crane and rare Japanese Huchen (Hucho perryi). It was included in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance in 1980.



5 Daisetsuzan

Designated on December 4, 1934 / Land area: 226,764 ha

With a total area 226,000ha, it is the largest national park in Japan. A chain of 2000m-class mountains, it is known as the "roof of Hokkaido". There are expansive clusters of alpine plants on the mountains. It is a highly primeval park, and home to various wild animals including the Brown Bear.



Photo: Takashi Unno, Toshiharu Ohashi, Masakazu Koike, Makoto Kobayashi, Eriko Komiyama, Katsuchi Sano, Tomoyuki Tachibana, Natsuhiko Morimoto, Masakazu Yagi, Ryozyo Yamada, Takashi Hyakutake, Rebun-cho, Rishiri-cho, Japan Wildlife Research Center, Hokkaido Art Co.