The Japanese Islands -70% of the land is covered by forests and blessed with diverse biota from subarctic to subtropical zones. National Parks area 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.

### 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 the Sarobetsu River. Its dynamic scenery and biota are its prominent features.

2. **Shiretoko**
   - Designated on June 1, 1964
   - Land Area: 38,833 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 maintained 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.

3. **Akan**
   - Designated on December 4, 1994
   - 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.

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 Hunchen (Hunchen geese). It was included in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance in 1980.

5. **Datosezuzan**
   - Designated on December 4, 1994
   - 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 "root of Hokkaido." There are expansive clusters of alpine plants on the mountains. It is a highly primateval park, and home to various wild animals including the Brown Bear.

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**National Park in Japan**

1. Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu
2. Shiretoko
3. Akan
4. Kushiro-Shitsugen
5. Datosezuzan
6. Shikotsu-Toya

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**Akan**

- **Designated on December 4, 1994**
- **Land area: 90,481 ha**

Akan, located in eastern Hokkaido, is one of the most historical national parks in Japan. It encompasses forests, lakes, and wetlands shaped by volcanic activities. The park is known for its rich biodiversity, including rare species like the Red-crowned Crane. TheAkan lake, the largest lake in Japan, and its surroundings are a key feature of the park.

**Shiretoko**

- **Designated on June 1, 1964**
- **Land Area: 38,833 ha**

Shiretoko, located in northeastern Hokkaido, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its pristine ecosystems and abundant wildlife. The park covers a vast area of forest, tundra, and coastal areas, making it a treasure trove for photographers and ecologists alike. It’s home to species like Steller’s Sea Eagles and Brown Bears.

**Kushiro-Shitsugen**

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

Kushiro Shitsugen, located in eastern Hokkaido, is renowned for its wetland and coastal wildlife. This park is a haven for migratory birds and other wildlife species. The Shitsugen National Park is also part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, showcasing its unique ecosystem.

**Shikotsu-Toya**

- **Designated on May 16, 1969**
- **Land area: 99,473 ha**

Shikotsu-Toya, located in central Hokkaido, is known for its beautiful lakes and scenic landscapes. The park is also a popular destination for birdwatchers due to its diverse bird species. The Shikotsu-Toya National Park is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Datosezuzan**

- **Designated on December 4, 1994**
- **Land area: 226,764 ha**

Datosezuzan, located in western Hokkaido, is the largest national park in Japan. It encompasses a diverse range of landscapes, from mountainous areas to coastal regions. The park is famous for its rich flora and fauna, including species like the Brown Bear and several species of birds.

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**Photo:** Shiretoko National Park

- **Shiretoko National Park:** Located in eastern Hokkaido, it's renowned for its rich biodiversity and beautiful landscapes.
- **Kushiro Shitsugen National Park:** Situated in eastern Hokkaido, known for its pristine wetland and coastal wildlife.
- **Kushiro National Park:** Located in northeastern Hokkaido, famous for its wetland and coastal ecosystems.
- **Shikotsu-Toya National Park:** Known for its beautiful lakes and scenic landscapes.
- **Daisetzuzan National Park:** The largest national park in Japan, covering a vast area of diverse landscapes.

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**Note:** The content is a representation of the information from the image and the document. The actual dates and areas might vary slightly. The information is intended to provide a general understanding of the national parks in Hokkaido.