

## Japan's Forests with Breathtaking Views: Selections from the Tourist Destinations in National Forest

Forests have provided both mankind – and indeed all living things – with safety, sustenance and security for an eternity. The lush greenery and gentle breeze of the forest is surely enough to rekindle nature's vigor in any soul.

With more than 70% of Japan landmass covered in abundant greenery, the Forestry Agency is working to create "Recreation Forests" to inspire as many as possible to rediscover the wonder of nature.

The best forests to visit have been carefully selected and compiled as "Japan's Forests with Breathtaking Views."

### Know before You Visit: General rules for visitors

- 1 Help protect wild animals and plants. When you bring your pets, please mind your manners and give consideration to the surrounding environment.
- 2 Damaging trees or stealing any forest product is penalized by law. Even collecting plants covering the ground of forest are prohibited within protection forests designated by law.
- 3 Do not enter the area beyond walking trails, or public squares. Please follow the rules for each Recreation Forest such as no camping outside the designated area.
- 4 Do not enter the area with 'No Entry' or 'Keep Out' sign.
- 5 When making a stop for rest or any other purposes, please look around and confirm that the area is safe without any risk of being hit by falling branches or rocks.
- 6 Enjoy mountaineering on your own responsibility. Please ensure that you submit your plan for mountaineering to a police station in the area as well as to your family members, your friends or colleagues after checking out climate and other necessary information for mountaineering and fully being equipped. Please also fill in 'the Name List of Climbers and Visitors', which is placed at the mountain entrance.
- 7 Do not enter forests under bad weather conditions.
- 8 Do not dispose of any leftover food in the forest. Please take your garbage home with you.
- 9 Smoking is permitted only in special areas. Make sure to extinguish any fires, e.g. after smoking cigarettes.
- 10 Mountain paths are potentially dangerous to walk. Do not use smartphone while walking. When taking photos, please remain fully aware of your surroundings and do not bother other visitors in any way.
- 11 If you wish to use an unmanned aerial vehicle (drone), you need to submit prior written notice to District Forest Office. Please contact the nearest Regional Forest Office or District Forest Office of national forest beforehand.

### Poroto Recreation Forest Access Map



### Access

#### By public transport:

- Sapporo Station (JR Muroran Main Line: approx. 60 minutes by limited express) → Shiraori Station (approx. 15 minutes on foot)
- New Chitose Airport (JR Chitose Line: approx. 3 minutes) → Minami-Chitose Station (JR Muroran Main Line: approx. 30 minutes by limited express) → Shiraori Station (approx. 15 minutes on foot)

#### By car:

- Sapporo (Hokkaido Expressway: approx. 60 minutes) → Shiraori IC (approx. 8 minutes) → Poroto Recreation Forest
- New Chitose Airport (Hokkaido Expressway: approx. 30 minutes) → Shiraori IC (approx. 8 minutes) → Poroto Recreation Forest
- Tomakomai Ferry Terminal (approx. 30 minutes) → Poroto Recreation Forest

## Poroto Recreation Forest

Address : Shiraori, Shiraori-cho, Shiraori-gun, Hokkaido

Management office contact details:

Iburi Tobu District Forest Office, Hokkaido Regional Forest Office, Forestry Agency

FAX : 0144-82-2163

### Poroto Recreation Forest Protection and Management Committee

(Shiraori Town Tourist Association)

FAX : 0144-82-4517

### National Forest Planning Division, Forestry Agency, MAFF

The Official Recreation Forests Website of the Forestry Agency  
[http://www.rinya.maff.go.jp/e/national\\_forest/recreation\\_forest/index.html](http://www.rinya.maff.go.jp/e/national_forest/recreation_forest/index.html)



# POROTO

## Recreation Forest



# Encounter AINU culture\* in a tranquil forest

(A healing forest offering stunning seasonal landscapes whenever you visit)

\*The Ainu people are indigenous people who have lived in the northern region of the Japanese Archipelago, particularly in Hokkaido, with their own language and distinctive religion and culture.

## Poroto Recreation Forest Map



## Climate, flora and fauna

The tree species planted in the Recreation Forest include Todo fir; karamatsu, Japanese larch (*Larix koempferi*); and ezomatsu, Yezo spruce (*Picea jezoensis*). Growing naturally among them are mizunara, Japanese oak mizu-nara (*Quercus crispula* Blume); harunire, Japanese elm (*Ulmus davidiana* var. *japonica*); yachidamo, Manchurian ash (*Fraxinus mandshurica* var. *japonica*); sen (harigiri) (*Kalopanax pictus*); and kuri, chestnut (*Castanea crenata*). Large trees in excess of 100 cm in diameter can be seen here and there in the forest. Poroto Recreation Forest is also home to mizubasho, Asian skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton camtschatcensis*), along with other herbaceous wetland plants. Among the animals living in the forest are ezoshika, Yezo sika deer (*Cervus nippon yezoensis*); kitakitsune, Ezo red fox (*Vulpes vulpes schrencki*); ezomomonga, Russian flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans orii*); and ezorisu, Hokkaido squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris orientis*). In addition, it provides a habitat for around 80 bird species, including akagera, great spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*); oruri, blue-and-white flycatcher (*Cyanoptila cyanomelana*); and kurotsugumi, Japanese thrush (*Turdus cardis*).



## Attractions

Poroto Recreation Forest has a walking trail (cycle track) of 6 km long around the Lake Poroto, which enables visitors to enjoy the seasonal change of nature. Other footpaths lead to an observation tower with a view of Mount Tarumae, and to Momiji-daira, where visitors can soak up the spectacular sight of red and golden leaves in autumn. The forest is equipped with all facilities to help visitors relax and unwind, including a campsite, cabins, a cookhouse, and toilets. In winter, Lake Poroto freezes over, offering the chance to enjoy ice skating and fishing for wakasagi, wakasagi smelt (*Hypomesus nipponensis*).



## Geographical/ topographical features

Poroto Recreation Forest encircles Lake Poroto (Poroto means "big lake" in the Ainu language) with a circumference of about 4 km and an area of around 33 ha. This hilly forest, while located adjacent to the urban district of Shiraai town, has a primitive and ancient air. Bougakudai Observation Platform offering panoramic views of mountains, including Mt. Tarumae, Mt. Horohoro and Mt. Shiraai, and magnificent vistas of Pacific Ocean and its coastline



Fall colors of Lake Poroto

## Historical/ cultural features

Before its designation as a Recreation Forest in 1976, Poroto forest served as a sapling nursery, where trees were grown for planting on the mountains. Among the trees cultivated here were todomatsu, Todo fir (*Abies sachalinensis*). In 2020, the Symbolic Space for Ethnic Harmony (National Ainu Museum and National Park for Ethnic) is due to open in an adjacent site, so this area is expected to become a center for disseminating Ainu history and culture.



## Information

- Elevation(m) 10-130
- Area (ha) 395.65
- Entrance fee Free
- Opening seasons Accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.  
※ However, please note that the road from the forest entrance to the Visitor Center is impassable during winter, due to snow.
- Operation hours by staff [Visitor center / Information center]  
Apr. 1 - Nov. 30 9:00 to 17:00  
(Jul. - Aug. 8:00 to 22:00)  
※ In winter, during the ice fishing season, information center will be opened.
- Car parking capacity / parking charges Space for about 50 vehicles (Free of charge)