

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.

Kamikawa-Ukishima Recreation Forest Access Map



Access

By public transport:

- 25 km / 40 minutes by car from Kamikawa Station (no bus or other public transportation available)
- Asahikawa Station → Kamikawa Station (JR Sekihoku Line [Sapporo-Asahikawa-Abashiri route] 49 km / 80 minutes)

By car:

- Asahikawa Station → Hokkaido Expressway, Asahikawa Takasu IC → Pippu JCT → Asahikawa-Monbetsu Expressway, Ukishima IC → Route 273 → town road → Kamikawa-Ukishima Recreation Forest (75 km / 80 minutes) (the town road is closed to traffic in the winter)

Shirogane Recreation Forest

Address : Kamikoshi, Kamikawa Town, Kamikawa Country, Hokkaido Prefecture

Management office contact details:
Kamikawa Chubu District Forest Office
FAX : 0166-61-0690

Soukya/Kamikawa-Ukishima Recreation Forests Management Committee
(Commerce, Industry, and Tourism Group, Industry Economy Division, Kawakami Municipal Office)
FAX : 01658-2-1220

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



KAMIKAWA-UKISHIMA Recreation Forest



Enjoy the tranquility of over 70 natural ponds scattered across a high moor as they reflect the surrounding Akaezomatsu trees (Sakhalin spruce (*Picea glehnii*)), and wild flowers

Kamikawa-Ukishima Recreation Forest Map



Climate, flora and fauna

The climate is cool due to the high elevation. The moor provides a habitat for aquatic plants such as Ezo Hitsujigusa (pygmy waterlily (*Nymphaea tetragona*)), hygrophytes such as Mosengoke (roundleaf sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*)), and alpine plants such as Ezo Isotsutsuji (marsh tea (*Ledum palustre* ssp. *diversipilosum*)) and Chinguruma (Aleutian avens (*Geum pentapetalum*)). Meanwhile, the ponds are home to Ezo Sanshouo (Ezo salamander (*Hynobius retardatus*)) and are visited by a variety of wild birds.



Attractions

The moor extends over an area of about 22 ha, with a circumference of about 3 km. It has over 70 ponds both big and small, dotted with floating islands. Much of the moor's surroundings provide open views enabling easy observation of wild birds and other flora and fauna. Enjoy the beautiful natural surroundings and distinctive scenery from the boardwalks leading through the ponds.



Geographical / topographical features

Alpine moor on a lava plateau 870 m in elevation



Historical / cultural features

The moor formed approximately 2,000 to 2,500 years ago. Due to the moderate slope and high elevation, plants that withered in the autumn remained without decaying, and developed into a thick peat layer. This layer is believed to have dammed the river and formed ponds. In some ponds, there are "ukishima" (floating islands), which move when blown by the wind, and from which the name of this Recreation Forest is derived. It is a rare and precious place in which such floating islands can be seen.



Information

- Elevation(m) 760-980
- Area (ha) 601.57
- Entrance fee Free
- Opening seasons Open from sunrise to sunset from June to October. The Recreation Forest is closed during the winter (November to the following May), when the town road becomes impassable.
- Accommodation options Japanese inns in Kamikawa Town (25 km / 40 minutes by car), hotels in Soukyo Onsen (45 km / 70 minutes by car), Soukyo National Campsite (July to September), and Soukyo Auto-camping Site (mid-June to September)
- Car parking capacity / parking charges Free parking for 30 vehicles