

Daisetsuzan National Park

National
Parks
of Japan



National Parks of Japan



A national park is designated by the Japanese government as a natural landscape that represents Japan based on the Natural Parks Act. Thirty-four national parks are designated from Hokkaido in the north down to Okinawa and the Ogasawara Islands in the south, and more than 300 million people visit them every year. These national parks are full of precious treasures such as wild animals and plants, history and culture in addition to the scenic beauty. Japan's national parks are characterized by various environments such as forests, farmlands, villages, etc. While some are untouched, the local history and culture derived from nature and people's lives can be appreciated. Come visit our national parks to fully enjoy the beautiful nature of Japan that shows off various sceneries in each season.

Characteristics

A Large Roof Spreading in the Middle of Hokkaido Kamuy Mintar - "God's Playground"

Daisetsuzan National Park is Japan's largest mountain park, located in the central part of Hokkaido. Daisetsuzan is a mountain group featuring Hokkaido's highest mountain "Asahidake" as its main peak, including the source areas of Hokkaido's representative rivers: Ishikawa River and Tokachi River. Daisetsuzan is called "the Roof of Hokkaido." The national park can be roughly divided into three areas: the Omote-Daisetsu area, the Tokachi Mountain Range area, and the Higashi-Daisetsu area. The Omote-Daisetsu area is the core of the park, including the Daisetsu volcanic group centered on Mt. Asahidake and the majestic mountain top plateau located in the south. This mighty presence of massive mountains and deep canyons overwhelms people. The Tokachi Mountain Range area is a volcanic group with an active volcano, Mt. Tokachi, in the center. The famous views of Biei's wide fields at the mountain foot and the ridgelines and valleys of the mountain range across agricultural fields and forests far from the Kamifurano area are spectacular. The Higashi-Daisetsu area is the Tokachi River basin area, which is a mountainous area with its own charm. The area includes the mountains and deep forests of the Higashi-Daisetsu such as Mt. Nipetsotsu, Lake Shikaribetsu, Lake Nukabira, and the Tokachi-Mitsumata caldera, etc. There are abundant hot springs at the foot of the mountain, and it is a prime tourist attraction for domestic and international visitors alike.

[Date of Designation] December 4, 1934 [Relevant Prefectures] Hokkaido Pref.
[Area] 226,764 ha



Terrain Geological Features Landscape

The Daisetsuzan National Park consists of the Daisetsu Volcanic Group forming the bowl-shaped caldera, the Tokachi Mountain Range with the active volcano, Mt. Tokachi, the Shikaribetsu Volcanic Group surrounding the Lake Shikaribetsu as well as the Ishikari Mountain Range formed by Paleozoic strata of the Hidaka zone. Among them, active volcanoes are Mt. Asahidake (altitude of 2,291m), Mt. Tokachi (altitude of 2,077m), and Higashi-Daisetsu-Maruyama volcano (altitude of 1,692m), and Mt. Tokachi, in particular, has erupted repeatedly in recent years. Joints in rock cliffs of gorges like Sounkyo and Tenninkyo make them look like a series of polygonal pillars standing on both sides of the gorge. This is a scenery derived from the phenomenon of columnar jointing and the erosion effect of the river which scrapes these rocks. The columnar jointing is formed by regular fractures occurring when pyroclastic flow sediments from eruptions cool down and slowly become rocks. In addition, there is a caldera topography which is a characteristic topography of volcanic activity. It has been revealed in recent years that a basin of Tokachi-Mitsumata, extending over 10km in diameter, is



Volcanic Activity



Columnar Jointing (Tenninkyo Gorge)



Ohachidaira



Massive forest of Tokachi-Mitsumata



Permafrost



Hagoromo Falls
(Photograph provided by
Higashikawa Tourism Association)

Conservation Efforts

- Park Volunteer Activity -

Park volunteers at the Daisetsuzan National Park have been providing nature interpretation to visitors, beautification and cleaning of the park, alien species control, anti-theft patrol, maintenance of mountain trails and signs and have been assisting a variety of projects that the Ministry of the Environment promotes.

- Collaborative Maintenance and Management of Mountain Trails -

Erosion and scouring of mountain trails and destruction of vegetation due to human treading or running water have become an issue of the Daisetsuzan National Park. A system of maintenance and management of mountain trails, where not only the concerned administrative agencies but also a wide range of stakeholders such as alpine clubs and other entities and volunteers involved in mountain climbing can collaborate, has been being formulated in order to protect and utilize sustainable natural environment of this vast mountainous area.

- Limited Passenger Car Access -

The Daisetsuzan National Park regulates vehicle traffic traveling toward the Daisetsu Kogen Onsen and Ginsendai during autumn leaf season from the beginning of September to the beginning of October in order to protect the natural environment by alleviating traffic congestion and reducing automobile greenhouse gas emission within the park. During the period of limited passenger car access, transportation by designated shuttle bus is provided for the park visitors.



Park Volunteer Activity
(Restoration of Wetland Vegetation)



Collaborative Efforts for Maintenance and Management of the Trail

Contact List

Hokkaido Regional Environment Office
3F, Sapporo Joint Government Building No.1, North 8 West 2 Kita Ward,
Sapporo City, Hokkaido Prefecture
060-0808
TEL: 011-299-1950 FAX: 011-736-1234
URL: <http://hokkaido.env.go.jp/>

Kamikawa Ranger Office
Chuocho 98-4, Kamikawa Town, Kamikawa County,
Hokkaido Prefecture
078-1751
TEL: 01658-2-2574 FAX: 01658-2-2681

Higashikawa Ranger Office
Higashimachi 1-13-15, Higashikawa Town, Kamikawa County,
Hokkaido Prefecture
071-1423
TEL: 0166-82-2527 FAX: 0166-82-5086

Kamishihoro Ranger Office
Kamishihoro Higashi 3-sen 235-33, Kamishihoro Town, Kato County,
Hokkaido Prefecture
080-1408
TEL: 01564-2-3337 FAX: 01564-2-2933

Daisetsuzan National Park Website
<https://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/nps/park/daisetsu/index.html>



Wild Animals and Plants Ecosystem

Diverse vegetation corresponding to the topography and harsh weather conditions is formed in the enormous Daisetsuzan. Grand forests of coniferous and broad-leaved trees can be seen at the bottom, but they change to forests of coniferous trees and Abies sachalinensis, and further to the forest limit and Siberian dwarf pine areas as it moves to higher altitudes. Approximately 250 species of alpine plants, which is equivalent to 40% of alpine plants in Japan have been confirmed in the alpine plant communities near the summit. These also include many rare species such as *Oxytropis japonica Maxim. var. japonica* and *Lagotis yesoensis*, which are Daisetsuzan endemic species, and *Gentiana jamesii*, which has limited distribution. Its appearance with colorful alpine flowers can be said suitable for what the Ainu call "Kamuy Mintar (God's Playground)." In addition, the wetland area of its plateau contains high moor, and wetland plants, and dwarfed *f. chlorocarpa Miyabe et Kudô* can be found.

Abundant biodiversity of Daisetsuzan corresponds to the enormous size of the park. Mammals such as the brown bear, the Ezo sika deer, the Ezo Stoat, and the Hokkaido Squirrel as well as many birds such as the Blakiston's fish owl, Japan's Natural Monument, and the black woodpecker inhabit vast forests of Daisetsuzan. In addition, extremely rare sighting of the Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker has been confirmed as well. As for fish, the dolly varden, Salmonidae, inhabit the area, and its subspecies that lives only in Lake Shikaribetsu is called "Miyabeiwana (*Salvelinus malma miyabei*)."

Breeding of the Pine Grosbeak, the Spotted Nutcracker, etc. has been confirmed in the alpine area. There are many animals that can be found only in Daisetsuzan. Some of them are called "relic species," which have only survived in the cold alpine area due to global warming, after moving from the continent during the ice age. Such animals include the Japanese pika and alpine butterflies such as *Parnassius eversmanni daisetsuzanus* and the Freyja's Fritillary, which inhabit only Daisetsuzan.



Dryas octopetala
var. asiatica



Lagotis yesoensis



Gentiana triflora var. japonica subvar. Montana



Blue Mountainheath



Hypericum yojiroanum
Tatewaki & Koji Ito



Communities of the Aleutian avens and
Others



Blakiston's Fish Owl



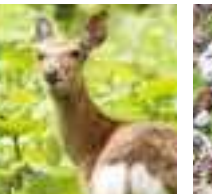
Pine Grosbeak



Siberian Rubythroat



Brown Bear



Ezo Sika Deer



Parnassius eversmanni daisetsuzanus



Japanese Pika



View of the Mt. Tomuraushi looking from
the Numa-no-Hara High Moor



Alpine Plant Communities

Culture

- Tradition of Ainu Culture -

The "Sounkyo Onsen Gorge Fire Festival" is held at the Sounkyo Onsen every summer. In this Gorge Fire Festival, people can experience the Ainu culture which has been passed down from generation to generation between Hokkaido's indigenous Ainu people. This festival includes the Ainu's traditional ritual, the Owl Ritual (to send off souls of animals hunted for food with gratitude to nature) and the Ainu Dance with music. The Fire Festival Drums resonating in the gorge and fireworks display are highlights as well.

- Pioneer Heritage -

There are many concrete arch bridges of the old Japanese National Railway's Shihoro line, which was discontinued in 1987 left along the national highway No. 273, which vertically goes through the city of Kamishihoro, Nukabira Gensenkyo, and mountain forest area of Tokachi-Mitsumata. These arch bridges are now presenting themselves as a modern industrial heritage to convey a history of the development of Higashi-Daisetsu. Especially, the Taushubetsu River Bridge over the Taushubetsu River sinks to the bottom of Lake Nukabira (dam lake) when the water level rises from June to October. It is also known as "a phantom bridge" since it reappears above the frozen lake surface in January when the water level decreases. These bridges were selected as Hokkaido Heritage sites in 2001 as "a Group of Concrete Arch Bridges of the Old Japanese National Railway's Shihoro Line."



Sounkyo Onsen Gorge Fire Festival
(Photograph provided by Tourism Association of Sounkyo)



Taushubetsu River Bridge

National Parks Etiquette

Please keep in mind the importance of nature and observe the following while staying in the national park so that everyone can enjoy.



Do not litter.



Do not pick plants.



Do not feed any wildlife.



Do not catch/capture any wildlife.



No smoking is permitted while walking.



Bonfires shall be built within
the designated area only.

In the mountains of Daisetsuzan, spring comes late and autumn comes early. A so-called "mountaineering season" goes from late June to the end of September since there is a large remnant of snowy mountains and snowy fields around the summit even in the middle of summer, and the first snowcap occurs by the middle of September. Please observe the following while staying in the national park so that everyone can enjoy.

- Do not approach nor provoke a brown bear in case of a bear encounter.
- Make sure to check the grading of Daisetsuzan. <http://www.daisetsuzan.or.jp/enjoy/grade/>
- Keep in mind the natural hazard, risks, and threats that nature can impose at all times.
- Make sure to submit a climbing registration form beforehand.
- Stay on the mountain trail or path at all times.
- Use proper mountaineering gear such as a safety climbing helmet and trekking poles when climbing.
- Bring your own portable toilet.

* Please note that the highlights & guide map's purpose is to show an overview of the designated area; therefore, a margin of error shall be allowed.

This onsen town with an altitude of approximately 1,050m is located at the foot of Mt. Asahidake. Together with the Souunkyo Onsen, it is a base for mountain climbing the Omote-Daisetsu area. It is nationally well-known as a place that has the longest ski season in Japan (from November to early May).



The volcanic plume rising from the crater of Mt. Asahidake can be seen up front as one gets off the Sugatami Station of the Asahidake Ropeway. There is a hiking course of about 2.5 hours from this place via Sugatamino-ike Pond to the summit of Mt. Asahidake, which is the highest peak in Hokkaido.

The Bogakudai Observatory can be easily accessed through the road from the Shirogane Onsen, and the view of Mt. Tokachi shooting up volcanic plume can be observed up front. A lot of Pennellianthus frutescens can be found in the surrounding gravel lands.



There are many craters including the Taisho crater (craters created by eruptions during the Taisho period) and the ground crater around the summit of Mt. Tokachidake, which is still an active volcano. Be sure to check volcanic information prior to climbing.



Mt. Tomuraushi of 2,141m in height is located in the boundary between the Omote-Daisetsu and Higashi-Daisetsu. It is also known as a "Retreat of Daisetsu." Tragic mountaineering accidents have happened; therefore, mountain climbing must be carefully planned beforehand.

It takes about one hour of climbing to reach its summit after taking a ropeway and a chairlift. The grandeur of the Daisetsuzan including Mt. Akadake, Mt. Hakuundake, Mt. Hokuchindake, and Mt. Ryoundake can be appreciated for its magnificent view.

Located along the national highway connecting Asahikawa, Abashiri, and Obihiro, it is also known as the largest onsen resort in the Dohoku district, which is the epicenter for tourism around Hokkaido as well as for the mountaineering of the Omote-Daisetsu.

Staff are stationed for monitoring brown bears on the climbing course that starts from the Daisetsu Kogen Onsen and goes around the swamps. Be sure to carefully listen to the lecture on rules for use at the Brown Bear Information Center located at the starting point prior to climbing.

Nukabira Gensenkyo is an epicenter of activities in the Higashi-Daisetsu area, and it is popular for Gensen Kakenagashi (free-flowing of water directly from the hot spring source without circulating it with additives and filtration). In addition, Lake Nukabira is a man-made lake for power generation built in 1956. The landscape of the lake with mountains of the Higashi-Daisetsu area at its back is a popular scenic spot.



Located in the Higashi-Daisetsu area, this is a steep independent mountain with an altitude of 2,013m. Northern pikas inhabit the areas made of layers of rocky lava, and occasionally they come out from cracks between the rocks.



This is the only natural lake in the Daisetsuzan National Park, and the natural scenery of the lake surrounded by rich forests can be appreciated. Lake Shikaribetsu is said to have been formed by volcanic activities damming the river. This is the only home for *Salvelinus malma miyabei*, subspecies of dolly varden trout.

Information	Facilities
-------------	------------

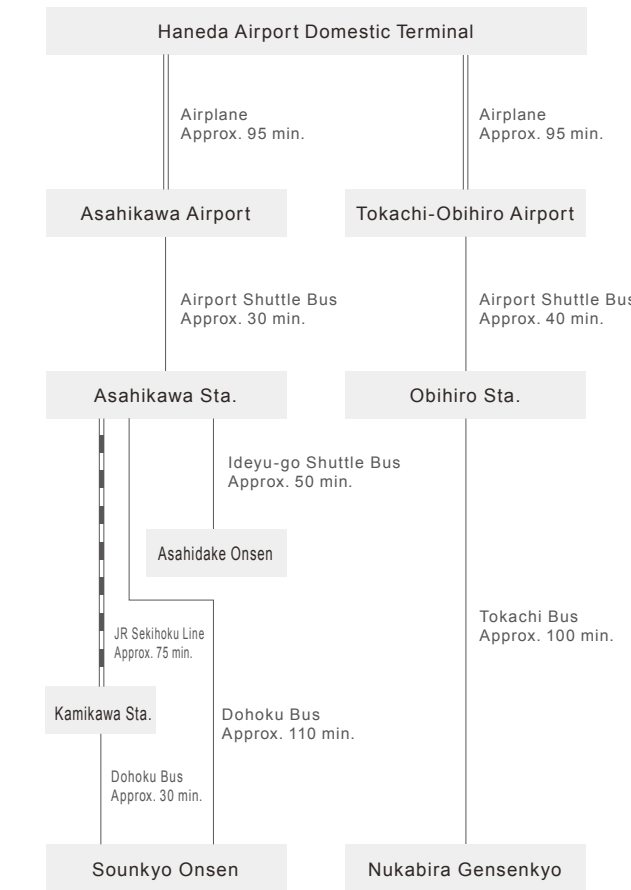
Souunkyo Visitor Center | D3
Souunkyo, Kamikawa Town, Kamikawa County, Hokkaido prefecture 078-1701 [TEL] 01658-9-4400 [OPEN] 8:00 - 17:30 (June to October) 9:00 - 17:00 (November to May) [CLOSED] Mondays from November to May (In case of a statutory holiday, the next day is closed in observance.), December 31 to January 5

Asahidake Visitor Center | C3
Asahidake Onsen, Higashikawa Town, Kamikawa County, Hokkaido prefecture 071-0372 [TEL] 0166-97-2153 [OPEN] 9:00 - 17:00 [CLOSED] December 31 to January 5

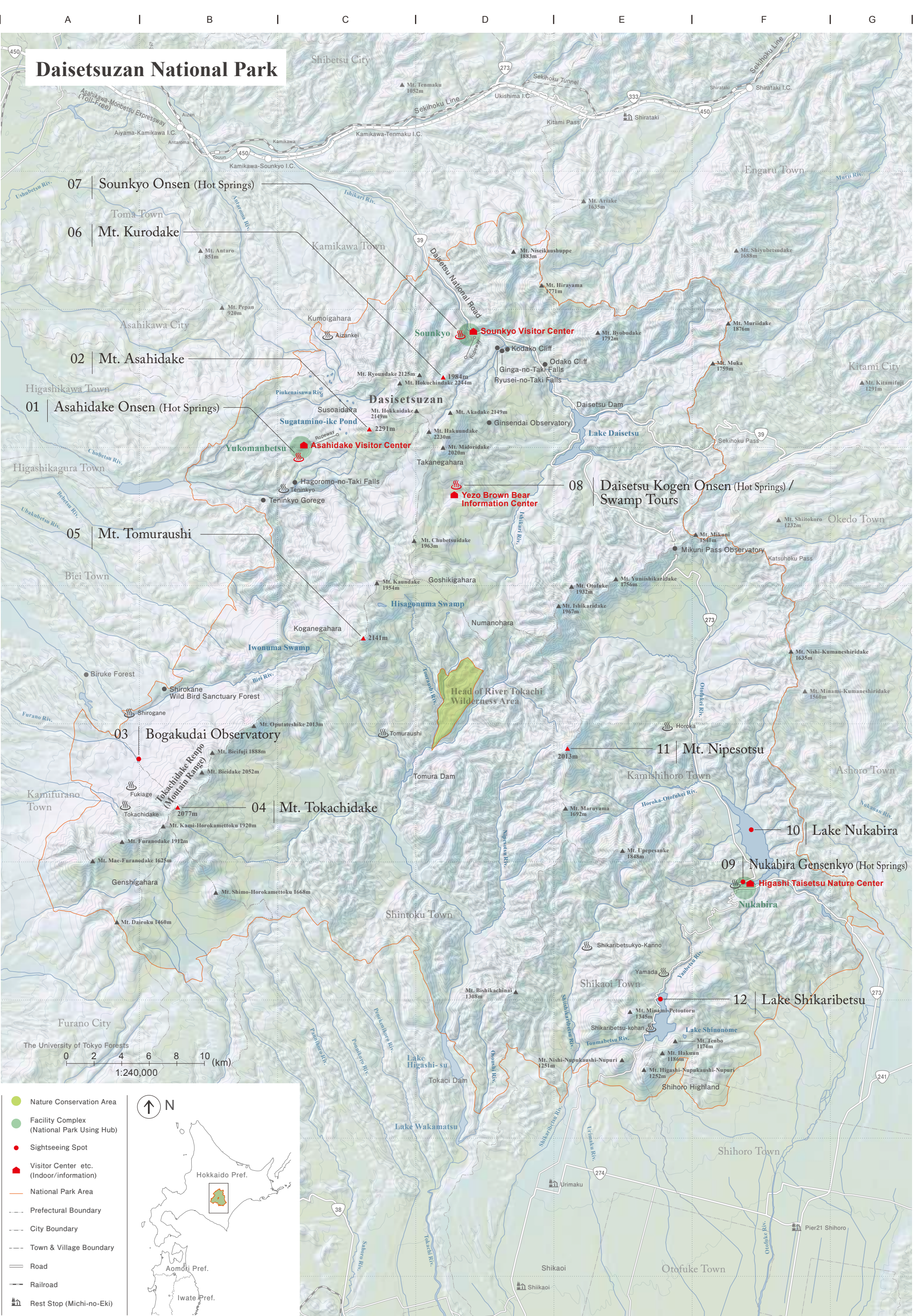
Higashi Taisetsu Nature Center | F7
Nukabira Gensenkyo 48-2, Kamishihoro Town, Katou County, Hokkaido prefecture 080-1403 [TEL] 01564-4-2323 [OPEN] 9:00 - 17:00 [CLOSED] Wednesdays (In case of a statutory holiday, the next day is closed in observance.), December 30 to January 5

* Please directly contact each facility for details such as the hours of operation, etc.

Access	Transportation
--------	----------------



* The access route above is an example. The time required for each section is an estimate only. Please contact each transportation company or check their websites for more information.



Please contact each responsible ranger office or regional environment office of the Ministry of the Environment for area details.