

Joshin'etsukogen National Park

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. While some are untouched, the local history and culture derived from nature and people's lives can be appreciated.

Please visit our national parks to fully enjoy the beautiful nature of Japan that shows off various sceneries in each season.

Characteristics

A Recreation World Beautifully Colored by the Mountains and Highlands

Joshin'etsukogen National Park consists of mountains and highlands ranging from Mt. Tanigawadake (altitude of 1,977 m), Mt. Naeba (altitude of 2,145 m), Mt. Kusatsu-Shirane (altitude of 2,160 m), Mt. Azumaya (altitude of 2,354 m), and Mt. Asama (altitude of 2,568 m). It has a diverse mountainous landscape including many of Japan's 100 most famous mountains such as Mt. Tanigawadake, where gigantic rock walls rise, Mt. Asama and Mt. Kusatsu-Shirane which are volcanoes. Highlands with cooler climate spread from the mountainside to the foot of mountain of these mountains, and there are also many lakes, swamps, and wetlands. In addition, these volcanoes nurture a number of hot springs, which is one of the biggest charms of this park. A lot of people visit to appreciate charms of nature in various ways, including mountains for mountaineering and skiing, highlands for cool destinations in summer, and many hot springs.

[Date of Designation] September 7, 1949
[Relevant Prefectures] Gunma Pref., Niigata Pref., Nagano Pref.
[Area] 148,194 ha



Mt. Kusatsu-Shirane

Terrain Geological Features

This park is comprised of mountains with altitudes of 2,000-meter-range, including Mt. Asama as the highest peak and a plateau-like foot of mountain. Most of them feature volcanic topography except for the Mt. Tanigawadake area that has large rock walls like those of the Alps. There are active volcanoes that have frequent eruptions such as Mt. Asama and Mt. Kusatsu-Shirane as well as old volcanoes such as Mt. Naeba and Mt. Shiga. The appearance of these volcanoes also varies. Mt. Naeba forms lava plateaus and has vast high moors developed in its summit area. Shiga Highland has been created by lava flows, and lakes within the special protection areas such as Shibu-ike Pond are depressions of lava filled with water.



Ichinokurasawa of Mt. Tanigawadake

Mt. Kusatsu-Shirane has a unique landscape with a cobalt-green-colored volcanic crater lake, Yugama, and the surrounding volcanic desert. Mt. Azumaya is an independent stratovolcano, and Sugadaira at the western foot of mountain is a highland formed by lava flows of Mt. Azumaya. Mt. Asama is a representing volcano of Japan and continues to erupt repeatedly. A lava field called "Onioshidashi" formed with extruded lava lies at the northern foot of mountain, displaying an extraordinary view. Such varied volcanic topography is creating this diverse landscape.



Shibu-ike Pond (Formed in a Depression of Lava)



Mt. Kusatsu-Shirane (Yugama, the Volcanic Crater Lake, and Surrounding Volcanic Desert)



Onioshidashi of Mt. Asama

Conservation Efforts

- Conserving the Japanese Azalea Communities - The number of Japanese azaleas shrubs exceeds 1,000,000 in the Gomiike Hafu Highland and over 600,000 in the Yunomaru Highland.

Both used to be cattle ranches, and communities of Japanese azalea were left untouched since cattle fed on plants other than azaleas. Further, rare alpine butterflies inhabit these azalea communities.

In recent years, a decrease in the number of azaleas has been a concern since grazing has diminished. As for Yunomaru Highland, a local park management organization, the Asama International Outdoors & Nature School (nonprofit corporation) has concluded a Scenic Area Protection Agreement with landowners, and they have been working on maintaining Japanese azalea communities by cutting down tall trees, clearing weeds and ground cover plants such as broadleaf bamboos, and transporting cut trees out of the area.

- Controlling Invasive Alien Species -

Alien species such as the cutleaf coneflower and the yellow rocket spread rapidly and vigorously, and they may possibly destroy native species in the area.

For this reason, local stakeholders have been cooperating to conduct the removal work.



Clearing the Broadleaf Bamboo, Weeds and like Removing Invasive Plants

Contact List

Shin'etsu Nature Conservation Office
Nagano Joint Government Building No. 1, Asahi Town 1108,
Nagano City, Nagano Prefecture
380-0846
TEL: 026-231-6570 FAX: 026-235-1226

Shigakogen Ranger Office
Hirao 7148, Yamanouchi Town, Shimotakai County,
Nagano Prefecture
381-0401
TEL: 0269-34-2104 FAX: 0269-34-3828

Manza Ranger Office
2F, Tsumagoi Village, Commerce and Industry Building,
Mihara 679-3, Tsumagoi Village, Agatsuma County,
Gunma Prefecture
377-1526
TEL: 0279-97-2083 FAX: 0279-97-4302

Tanigawa Ranger Office
Tsukiyono 1744-1, Minakami Town, Tone County,
Gunma Prefecture
379-1313
TEL: 0278-62-0300 FAX: 0278-62-0301

Chubu Regional Environment Office
Sannomaru 2-5-2, Naka Ward, Nagoya City,
Aichi Prefecture
460-0001
TEL: 052-955-2130 FAX: 052-951-8889
URL: <http://chubu.env.go.jp/>



Joshin'etsukogen National Park Website
<https://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/nps/park/joshinetsu/index.html>

For Safe Travel
Please download below application in order to get information about warning for earthquake, volcanoes, tsunami and so on.
*Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=jp.crcs.safetyTips.android>
*iPhone: <https://itunes.apple.com/jp/app/safety-tips/id858357174?mt=8>



Supported by Japan Tourism Agency (<https://www.jta.go.jp/safety-tips/eng/app.html>)

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* 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.

Vegetation Animals

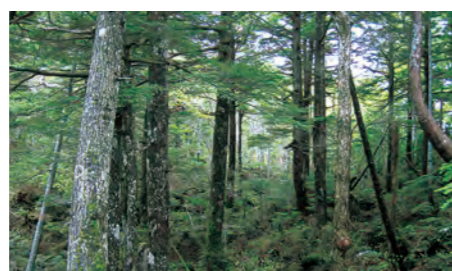
- Vegetation -

Deciduous broadleaf forests of Japanese beech and the like cover the mountains of this park from the base up to the altitude of around 1,500 m, and subalpine coniferous forests including the Northern Japanese Hemlock and *Abies mariesii* (a kind of a fir) can be seen commonly above this point.

In addition, there are many mountains with distinctive vegetation due to differences in ages of volcanoes, heavy snowfall in winter, etc.

Current active volcanoes still erupting, such as Mt. Kusatsu-Shirane, have dwarf plants such as the Japanese Rowan (a kind of Rosaceae), *Empetrum nigrum L. var. japonicum K. Koch* (a type of crowberry), and the northern bilberry growing instead of forests.

In Mt. Kusatsu-Shirane and Shiga Highland, Siberian dwarf pine trees grow even under the altitude of 2,000 m,



Subalpine Coniferous Forest (Mt. Shiga)



High Moors (Shijuhachi-like Marshland)

and alpine plants can be seen in volcanic screes.

In addition, many of high moors and ponds situated in Mt. Naeba and Shiga Highland have developed in the rough, uneven shapes of volcanic products such as lava. This diversifies the park's flora such as communities of *Schoenoplectiella hotaruji* (a kind of sedges, with similar appearance as the rush).

A variety of plants unique to mountains and highlands can be found in this park.

Especially, alpine plants growing in the subalpine zones, blooming flowers in wetlands, and the Japanese azalea of Yunomaru Highland are very well known and attracting a large number of visitors.



Dicentra peregrina (a.k.a. a "Queen of Alpine Plants," grows in a Harsh Rowing Environment of Sand and Gravel Areas)



Geranium yezoense var. nipponicum (Grows in Heavy Snowfall Areas)

Fringed galax (Grows in Clusters in Grasslands and Rocky Areas of Alpine and Subalpine Zones)



Triantha japonica (Grows in Wetlands, etc.)

Lake Nozori and Daylilies (Locally Called "Nozorkisuge," Meaning Nozori's Daylily)

- Animals -

As for mammals, the Asian black bear, the Japanese serow, the Japanese macaque, the Japanese squirrel, the stoat, and the Japanese dormouse inhabit the park. Regarding birds living in alpine zones, raptors such as the golden eagle and the mountain hawk-eagle, standing at the top of food chain, as well as the Spotted Nutcracker and the house martin have been confirmed.

As for insects, rare alpine butterflies including *Erebia nipponica* (a kind of brown butterfly) live in the park as well.



Japanese Serow

Stoat



Erebia nipponica

Spotted Nutcracker

Culture

This park has a concentration of volcanoes and is naturally blessed with abundant hot springs (Onsen). Hot springs such as Shima Onsen, Kusatsu Onsen, Kazawa Onsen, and Yamada Onsen have been renowned for ages, and they have a history of being favored by many writers and artists.

This park has also been a place for mountain worship since long ago, and pilgrims climbed and visited on Mt. Naeba and Mt. Tanigawadake.

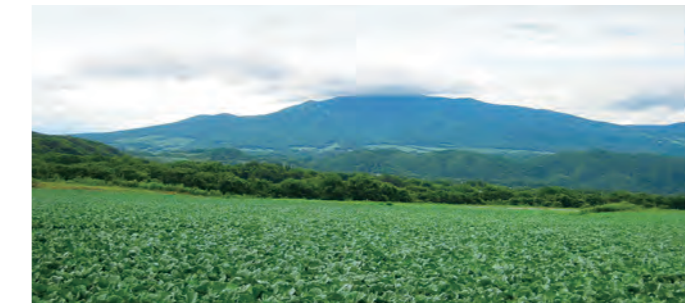
In addition, Fudo Falls of Yonako Falls has been a place for mountain ascetic training together with Okunoin (training hall) of the Yonako Takizana Fudoji Temple since ancient times, and ascetic trainees performing their ablutions under the falls can be seen in summer.

Furthermore, the mountains have been used for mountaineering and skiing since the dawn of the modern mountaineering, and Kazawa Onsen is also the birthplace of "Yukiyama Sanka (Hymn of Snow-covered Mountain)."



Yonako Falls (Left: Gongen Falls, Right: Fudo Falls)

Vast vegetable fields at the foot of Mt. Asama display a harmony between human life and climate of volcanic highlands.



Vegetable Fields in Highlands

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.
- Stay on the path at all times. Wetland plants are delicate and fragile. Do not step on the plants nor touch the plants.
- Be aware of Asian black bears.
- Choose a hiking trail suitable for your physical strength and climbing skills. Also, be well prepared with sufficient equipment and have enough room in your climbing plan or itinerary in order to have a safe and pleasant visit.
- Trails may have no lavatories. Make sure to use a lavatory before starting and consider using your "portable toilet" while climbing.
- Volcanic Alert Levels are used to define certain volcanoes within the national park. Obtain the latest information and incorporate it into your climbing plan.



The vicinity of Mt. Naeba is world famous for heavy snowfall, and Japanese beech forests cover the foot of the mountain. Alpine plants such as the tussock cottongrass spread all over the vast highlands around the summit.



It is composed of non-volcanic mountains in the 2,000-meter range of altitude, including Mt. Tanigawadake, Mt. Shigekura, Mt. Mantaro, and Mt. Tairappo. Mt. Tanigawadake is one of the three major rock walls in Japan, and it is a Mecca for rock climbing, represented by Ichinokurasawa. Views of the Tanigawa Mountain Range can be appreciated relatively easily from the top station of the ropeway and a chairlift are used.



Onuma-ike Pond

Vigorous volcanic orogenies have formed a complex terrain in the Shiga Highland area, and there are as many as 70 ponds, swamps, and high moors of various sizes that can be found throughout the area, including Onuma-ike Pond, Shijuhachi-ike Pond, and Chigo-ike Pond. Shiga Highland has been developed as one of the best ski resorts in Japan; however, in contrast with its image, it shows various expressions with dense primeval coniferous forests, consisting of the Northern Japanese Hemlock, Abies mariesii, and the Japanese Thuja, covering its subalpine zone.



Chigo-ike Pond



This hot spring resort has been well known since ancient times. A retro townscape suitable for being a "Retreat of Kanto" can be seen, and an Onsen town is formed in a location with full of nature embraced by the mountains along with Shima River. (The first Hot Spring Health Resort in Japan)



Yugama is a volcanic crater lake with 300 m in diameter and 30 m in depth. It is also one of the world's most acidic lakes. It displays a view with a unique contrast of a cobalt-green lake surface surrounded by bare exposed rocks with no vegetation at all



This hot spring resort is located on a tall mountain with an altitude of 1,800 m. It is yielding a large volume of hot spring water and is known as one of the most famous hot springs since long ago. An abundance of nature can be experienced and appreciated in all four seasons through remaining snow and lush new greens of spring, cool climate of summer, colorful autumn leaves of fall, and skiing in winter.



This is one of the most famous hot springs in Japan, and a quaint old Onsen town surrounds a "Yubatake (hot spring field)," which is a place to collect sinter from hot springs. Sainokawara, located within the national park, is a stream bed where hot springs gush out from every part of the stream bed and flow out as a hot water river.



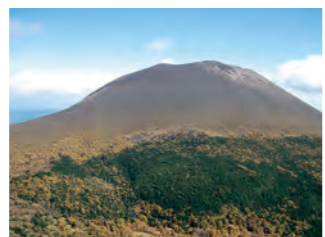
Mt. Nekodake and Mt. Azumaya, one of Japan's 100 most famous mountains, have excellent views and a variety of flowers, which are attracting many mountaineers. Sugadaira at the western foot of mountain is a highland formed by lava flows of Azumaya Volcano, and a number of plants and wild birds can be found in the Sugadaira Wetland.



Yunomaru Highland is famous for allowing one to see 600,000 azalea bushes at a single glance. These Japanese azaleas bloom profusely in early summer. Kazawa Onsen and Shin-Kazawa Onsen are located at the foot of the mountain.



Various flowers, including the Siberian iris and Dicentra peregrina in July, the fireweed in August, and Scabiosa (a dwarf, alpine form of Pincushion Flower) in fall, can be observed. It is easily enjoyed by people with no climbing experience since the trail is well maintained.



Mt. Asama is one of the representative volcanoes in Japan, and the volcanic plume rising from the summit with the clear blue sky in the background creates a perfect photogenic scene. Onioshidashi lies at the northern foot of mountain. Takamine Highland is an epicenter for skiing and mountain climbing as well as hot springs.



Since foreigners visited this place seeking a cool climate during summer in the Meiji period, it has evolved into the most famous summer resort in Japan. "Karuizawa National Wild Bird Sanctuary Forest" is said to have up to 130 different bird species that inhabit it.



Minakami Town has been promoting ecotourism for the purpose of passing down the beautiful nature of Mt. Tanigawadake to future generations while protecting and appreciating this very beautiful natural scenery. Eco tours are conducted by guides who thoroughly know Mt. Tanigawadake, and not only you can experience the charms of Mt. Tanigawadake more deeply but also you can appreciate outstanding nature walks.

Information	Facilities
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	Kusatsu Visitor Center Sainokawara, Kusatsu Town, Agatsuma County, Gunma Prefecture, 373-1711 [TEL] 0279-88-5705	D6
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	Takamine Kogen Visitor Center Takamine-Kogen, Komoro City, Nagano Prefecture 384-0000 [TEL] 0267-23-3124	C9
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	Asama Volcano Museum Kita-karuzawa, Naganohara Town, Agatsuma County, Gunma Prefecture, 377-0045 [TEL] 0279-86-3000	C9
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	Kazawa Information Center Tsumagoi Village, Agatsuma County, Gunma Prefecture 377-1695 [TEL] 0279-80-9119	C8
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	Yunomaru Kogen Visitor Center Yunomaru Kogen, Tomi City, Nagano Prefecture 389-0501 [TEL] 0268-62-4333	B9
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	Sugadaira Kogen Natural Museum Sugadaira-Kogen 1223-2276, Ueda City, Nagano Prefecture 386-2204 [TEL] 0268-74-2438	A8
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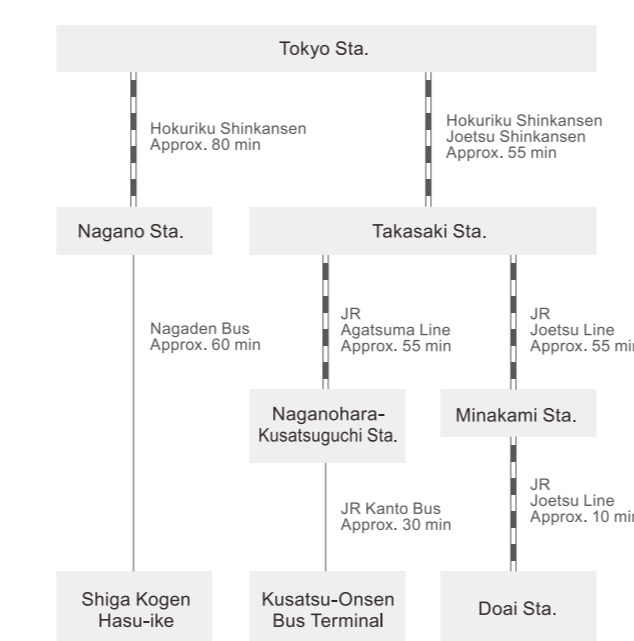
	Shiga Kogen Nature Protection Center Shiga Kogen Hasu-ike, Yamanouchi Town, Shimotaki County, Nagano Prefecture 381-0401 [TEL] 0269-34-2133	C5
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	Tanigawadake Mountain Archives Yubukiyama, Yubiso, Minakami Town, Tone County, Gunma Prefecture 379-1728 [TEL] 0278-72-6446	G4
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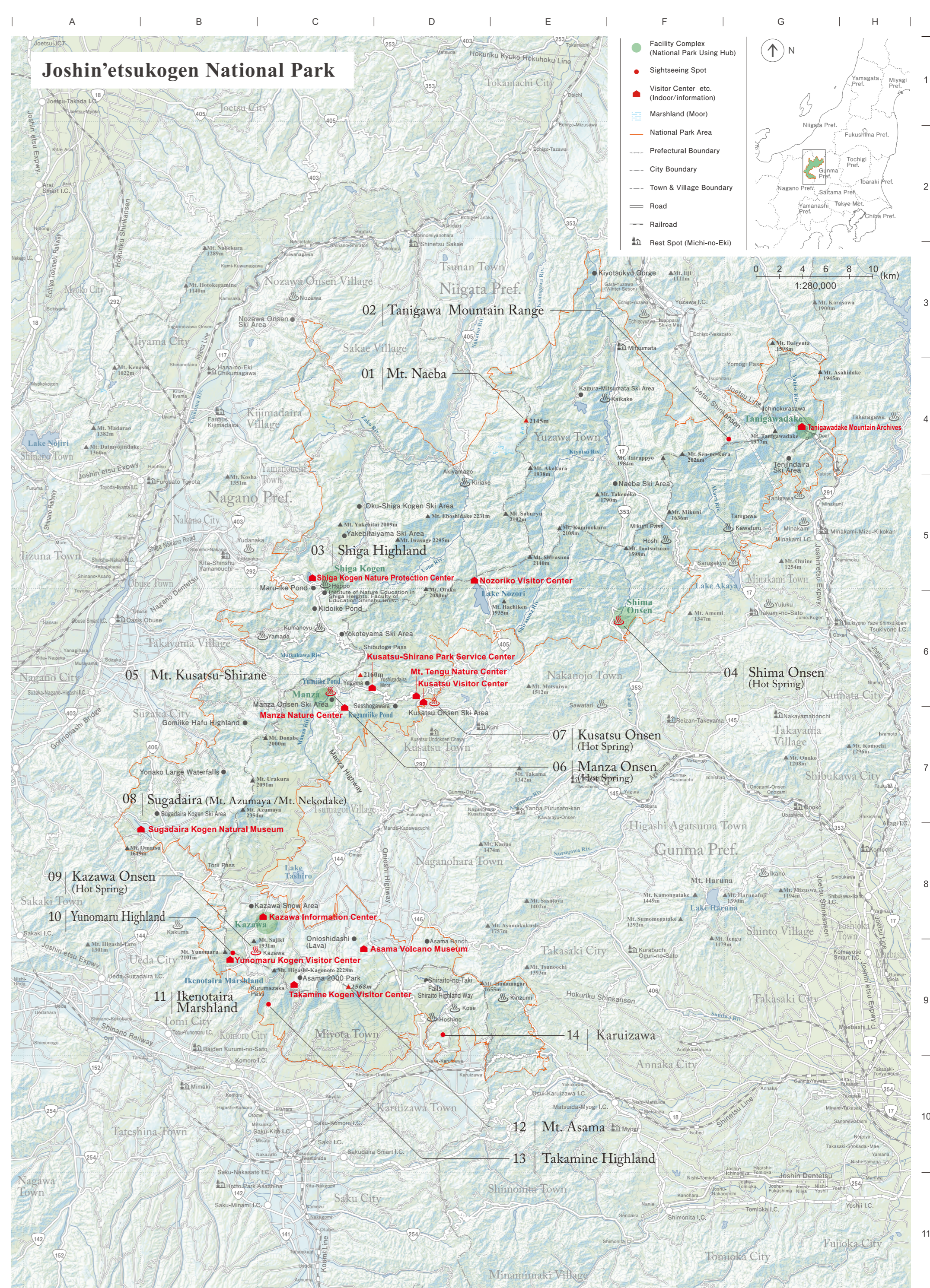
	Manza Nature Center Manza Onsen, Hoshimata 2401, Tsumagoi Village, Agatsuma County, Gunma Prefecture 377-1528 [TEL] 0279-97-4000	C7
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* Please directly contact each facility for details such as the hours of operation, etc.

Access	Transportation
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* 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 regional Visitor Center for area details.