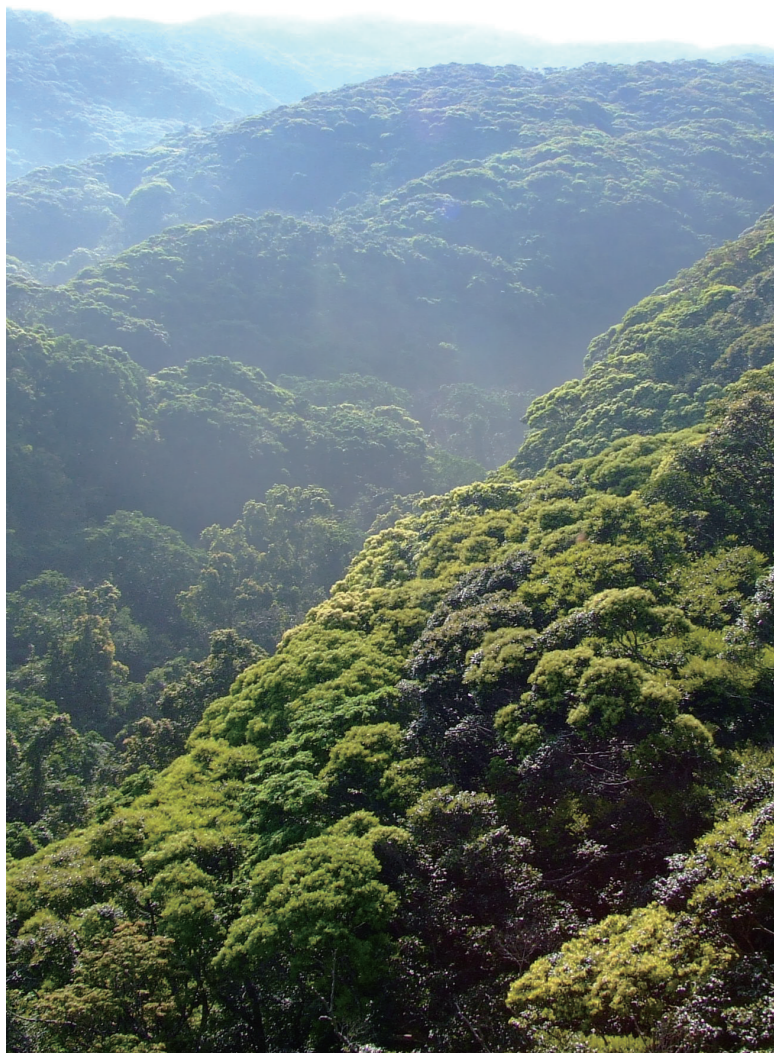
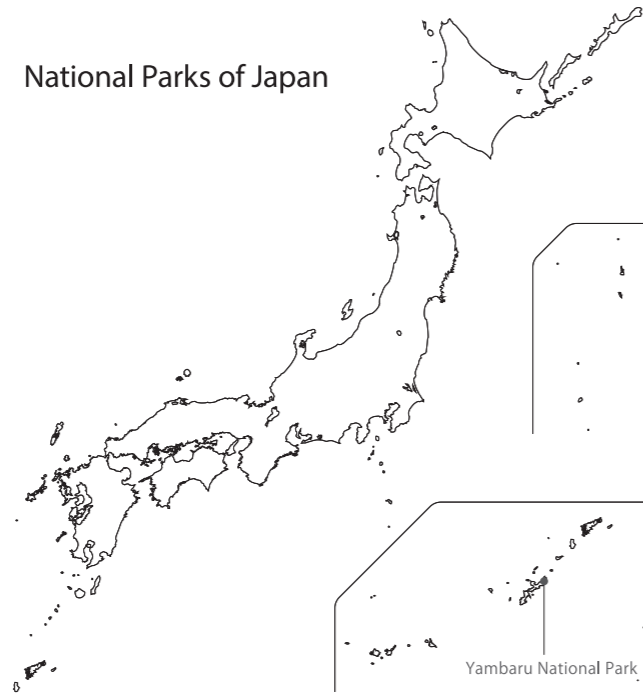


Yambaru National Park



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, 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.

Contact List

Okinawa Amami Nature Conservation Office of the Ministry of the Environment

1F, Naha Joint Government Building No. 1,
Higawa 1-15-15, Naha City, Okinawa Prefecture
900-0022
TEL: 098-836-6400 FAX: 098-836-6401
URL: <http://kyushu.env.go.jp/naha/>

Yambaru Ranger Office of the Ministry of the Environment

(Yambaru Wildlife Conservation Center, Ufugi Nature Museum)
Hiji 263-1, Kunigami Village, Kunigami County, Okinawa Prefecture
905-1413
TEL: 0980-50-1025 FAX: 0980-50-1026
URL: <http://www.env.go.jp/park/yambaru/index.html>

Yambaru National Park Website

<https://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/nps/park/yamb>



The number of roadkill records involving Okinawa Rails and Ryukyu Long-haired Rat has been increased in Yambaru region. If you come upon an injured or dead endangered species, such as Okinawa Rail and Ryukyu long-haired Rat, please report the incident to the following phone number

For injured or dead endangered species
Yambaru Ranger Office of the Ministry of the Environment
| TEL | 0980-50-1025

For injured endangered species only
KUIINA DIAL(Okinawa Animal Hospital)
| TEL | 090-6857-8917

In Yambaru, be sure to drive slowly.

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



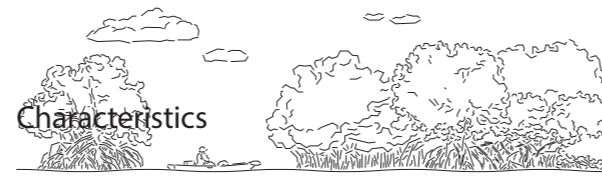
Supported by Japan Tourism Agency (<https://www.jtto.go.jp/safety-tips/eng/app.html>)



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Year published: 2020
Revision: 2022

* 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.

Characteristics



"Yambaru" the Subtropical Forest
Vibrant Mountains That Nurtures Habitats of
People, Plants, and Animals

The Yambaru region features the largest subtropical laurel forest in Japan. Its diverse natural habitats were formed as a result of the geological processes that formed the Ryukyu Islands. A wide variety of endemic and rare flora and fauna such as the Okinawa Rail inhabit the area with limestone sea cliffs and karst topography and mangrove forests. It also features a cultural landscape with the thriving tradition of Yambaru, which is rooted by living in close harmony with such a natural environment. In recognition of these natural and humanistic landscapes, Yambaru National Park was designated as the 33rd national park on September 15, 2016. In addition, part of the national park was registered as a World Natural Heritage Property on July 26, 2021 as "Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, Northern Part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island" in global recognition of its biodiversity. A variety of recreational activities such as tours of scenic spots, trekking, canoeing, spending time by the river, and scenic drives have been thriving in this magnificent subtropical nature. The Yambaru National Park offers places and opportunities for visitors to interact with wonderful nature.

[Date of Designation] Sep 15, 2016
[Relevant Prefecture] Okinawa Pref. [Area] 17,352 ha (Land area only)



A View from Pinaisara-no-Taki Falls

Wild Animals and Plants



The Yambaru region is a habitat of endemic species, including Okinawa Rail, Okinawa woodpecker, Ryukyu long-haired Rat, Okinawa Spiny Rat, Ishikawa's Frog, and Yambaru Long-armed Scarab Beetle.

In some high-altitude areas, cloud forests grow well, and epiphytic ferns and orchids such as the *Dendrobium okinawense* (an epiphytic orchid with delicate white flowers) inhabit the area.

Rheophytic plants that are unique to tropical and subtropical zones are distributed along the mountain streams ranging from upstream to downstream. Further, these are also spawning grounds and habitats for endemic amphibians of Yambaru.

Cavities are formed in the trunks of *Castanopsis sieboldii*, *Quercus miyagii*, and other hardwoods as the trees grow in diameter. Over the years, these become tree hollows.

Okinawa woodpecker, Ryukyu long-haired Rat, Yambaru Long-armed Scarab Beetle and the like utilize these environments and rely on forests with many trees with large diameter.



Culture



The Yambaru region had played an important role as a place for the production and supply of forest products to be used for firewood, charcoal, and construction of city walls as well as ships from the era of the Ryukyu Kingdom to recent years.

Up until the Showa period, marine transportation was mainstream for trade. Especially, the trade carried out by "Yambaru Ships" flourished between the Yambaru region and the mid-south part of Okinawa Island.

The Kunjansabakui, a song sung by many people who carried heavy lumber from the Kunigami region to the Ryukyu Kingdom capital, has been handed down to the present.

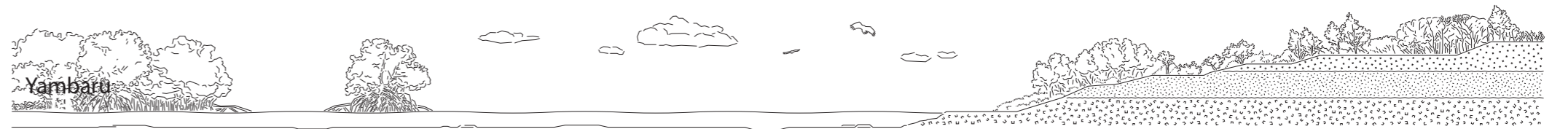
Remains of charcoal kilns and pots that kept held indigo dye still exist in various places throughout the area. The remnants of the life and occupations found in the mountains for producing firewood, charcoal, and Ryukyu indigo remain.

Villages of the Yambaru region are surrounded by the sea and mountains, and they acknowledge the sea and mountains as one, which means that nature's blessings are given from a single source.

This is expressed through the rituals and festivals that have been passed down from generation to generation as village traditions. Especially, the "Shinugu" and the "Umijami or Ungami Festival" are believed to rid the village of evil spirits as well as serving as prayers for a good harvest and a good catch. These two festivals are iconic in these areas.



Yambaru



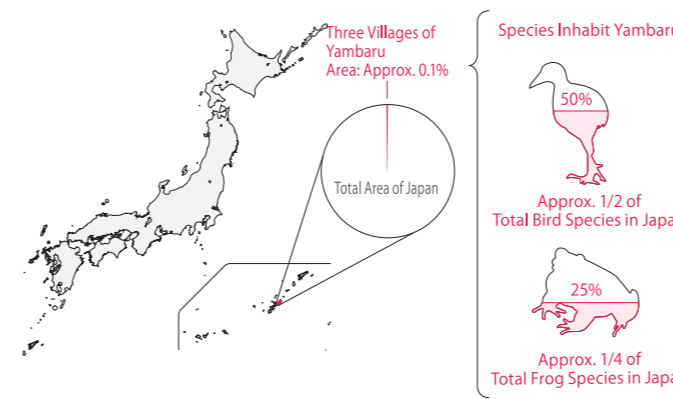
Yambaru is a word meaning "an area with a vast forest and a series of mountains," and it refers to as the northern part of Okinawa Island which is covered with subtropical laurel forests.

In particular, the areas of Kunigami Village, Ogimi Village, and Higashi Village are habitats of many endemic species including the Okinawa Woodpecker and the Okinawa Rail. It retains biologically cohesive forests in a relatively healthy condition.

- Biodiversity -

Many species of wildlife inhabit in a small area of Yambaru. A large number of truly distinctive and diverse wildlife are closely connected to each other to create complex ecosystems.

Although villages of Kunigami, Ogimi, and Higashi make up less than 0.1% of the whole area of Japan, the number of species of wild animals and plants that inhabit the area accounts for a high percentage relative to the number of wildlife found throughout Japan. For example, about half of the bird species and a quarter of native frog species that have been confirmed in Japan live in this small area.



- Subtropical Laurel Forest -

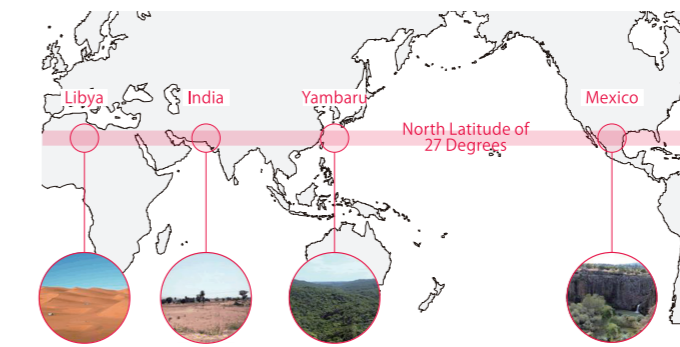
The Yambaru region is located near the north latitude of 27 degrees.

Many of the subtropical regions of the same latitude in the world have many deserts and arid areas therefore the areas with forests like Yambaru are very few.

The Ryukyu Islands have a subtropical oceanic climate that is warm and rainy due to the Kuroshio Current flowing from the equator, the seasonal rainfall, as well as typhoons (yield an annual rainfall of about 2,500 mm).

The weather in this environment has been creating and nurturing these rich forests.

Over 80% of the Yambaru region is covered with forestal Natural vegetation occupying the largest area is a subtropical evergreen broadleaf forest represented by Fagaceae trees, including *Castanopsis sieboldii* (evergreen broad-leaved species) and *Quercus miyagii* (a species of oak).

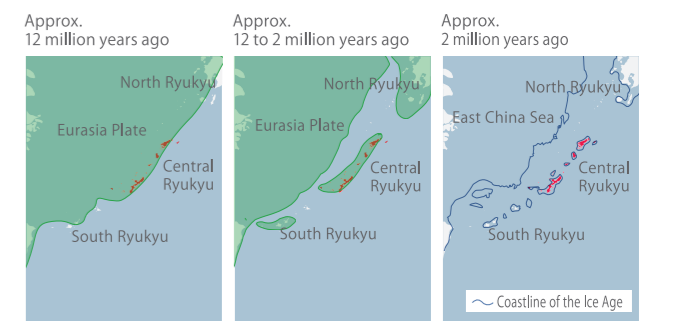


- History of the Island Formation -

The Ryukyu Islands have been repeatedly disconnected and reconnected to the continent or mainland Japan due to severe crustal deformations since the Tertiary Period of the Cenozoic Era (approximately from 23 million to 1.7 million years ago).

A variety of wildlife migrated to the Ryukyu Islands during that time.

Then, those creatures that had been confined in these islands have evolved into the unique species endemic to each island over tens of thousands of years.



Conservation Efforts



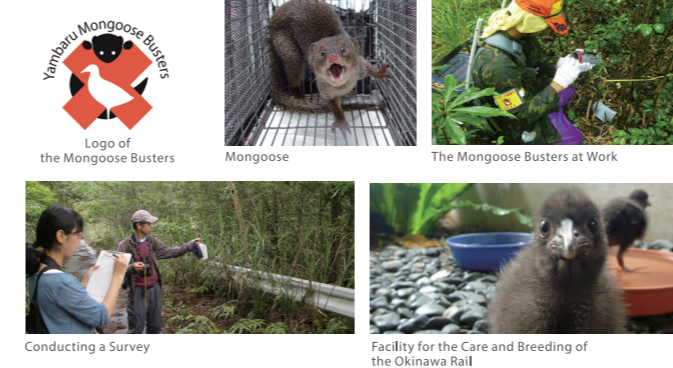
- Invasive Alien Species Strategy -

Many alien species have invaded the Yambaru region, and their impact on native ecosystems has been detrimental. Native species of Yambaru, which have evolved in an unique environment, are extremely vulnerable to invasion by alien species, therefore intentionally-introduced mongooses, feral dogs and cats and non-native plants such as Mile-a-minute weed pose a major threat to the native ecosystem. In addition, the Yambaru region is currently threatened by the new introduction of other alien species, such as Taiwan beauty snake and Tiwan habu viper.

We are working on establishing a monitoring system in cooperation with the local communities while controlling the alien species that have already introduced to Yambaru region.

- Conservation and Breeding of Rare Wild Animals -

Investigation and surveys on the habitats of the Okinawa Rail, the Okinawa woodpecker, and the Yambaru Long-armed Scarab Beetle have been conducted based on the Programmes for the Rehabilitation of Natural Habitats and the Maintenance of Viable Populations. Efforts have been put into increasing the population of the Okinawa Rail under captivity.



- Measures Against Roadkill -

Many creatures including the Okinawa Rail have been injured or killed by traffic accidents in the Yambaru region. A large number of roadkill occur along the mountain road with many curves, especially the prefectural road No. 2 and No. 70.

The traffic accident prevention campaign is being carried out, asking people to drive in a manner that is friendly to island creatures and to drive at speeds so that vehicles can avoid the animals even if they jump into the road.

Rescue efforts for injured animals are being conducted in collaboration with stakeholders.

- Poaching and Theft Prevention Patrol -

Many wild animals and plants, such as Yambaru Long-armed Scarab Beetles, *Neolucanus okinawanus* (Okinawa stag beetles), and rare orchid plants, are poached, stolen, or collected excessively by collectors or poachers for their rarity and beauty. Capturing and collecting of certain species are prohibited by law.

Even though it is not illegal, collecting or taking home wild animals and plants casually can create a big impact as the number accumulates.

Patrols of forest roads are being conducted with the cooperation of local residents in order to prevent poaching and thefts.

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 gather plants, insects or other creatures.
- Do not catch/capture any wildlife.
- Do not litter.
- No fires permitted outside campgrounds.
- When driving, watch out for animals on the road.
- Be aware of hazardous creatures such as venomous vipers (Habu viper; *Protobothrops flavoviridis*).
- Do not bring in any invasive plant or animal species.
- Do not enter communities, worship sites or other such areas.

01 | Cape Hedo | C1



Cape Hedo is at the northernmost tip of the Okinawa main island. From atop the sheer cliffs formed as the coral reef pushed up, there are breathtaking views of the vast Pacific Ocean and East China Sea. On a clear day, you can see Yoron and Okinoerabu islands, which are part of Kagoshima Prefecture.

02 | Daiseikirinzan | C1



Daiseikirinzan encompasses karst formed 250 million years ago as the Earth's crustal movements pushed up limestone. Visitors may enjoy trekking, viewing banyan trees and other subtropical plants as well as the magnificent scenery.

03 | Kunigami Village Environmental Education Center/ Yamaru Discovery Forest | C3



This is a place where one can observe wildlife surrounded by laurel forests and experience the abundance of nature in Yamaru. Various tours and programs are offered, including a guided walk on nature trails, canoe tours, bird watching tours, etc.

04 | Hiji-Otaki Falls | B3



Hiji Otaki Falls has the highest drop of any waterfall on the Okinawa main island. Trekking toward the falls, you will be able to see *Cyathea lepidifera* and other subtropical flora as well as the Okinawa woodpecker, Ryukyu Robin and other fauna.

05 | Mt. Yonahadake | B3



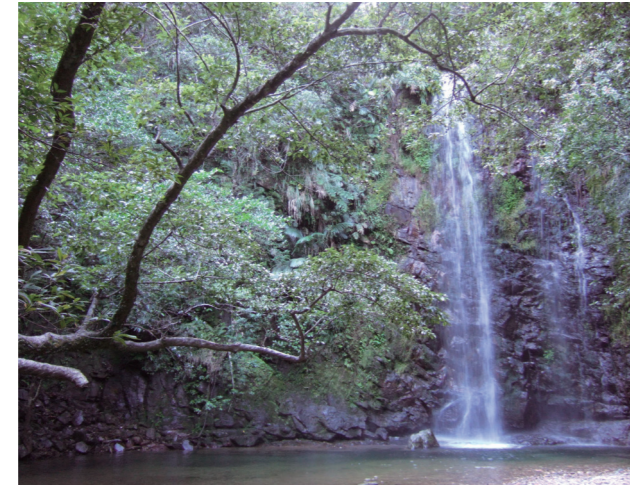
Mt. Yonaha is the highest peak (elevation: 503 m) on the Okinawa main island. The hiking trail is moderately challenging and allows hikers to get a feel for the beauty of the Yamaru forest and the diversity of forest life. A guide is recommended for all hikes.

06 | Shioya Bay | A3



Shioya Bay is one of Okinawa's eight most scenic spots. Ungami, a Shioya Bay Festival to pray for a bountiful harvest, was designated an important intangible folk cultural property of Japan in 1997.

07 | Ta-Taki Falls | A4



Located in the headwaters of the Henan River, this waterfall has a drop of about 10 meters. Visitors can see ferns and other plants peculiar to subtropical zones, and observe the *Matrona basilaris japonica* dragonfly, freshwater prawn, and other creatures.

08 | Mangrove Forests of Gesashi Bay | A4



This is the Okinawa main island's largest mangrove forest covering approximately 10 hectares at the mouth of the Gesashi river. Visitors can enjoy trekking and canoeing as they look out at the mangrove forest.

Information Facilities

Yamaru Wildlife Conservation Center/ Ufugi Nature Museum | B2
 263-1 Hiji, Kunigami-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa 905-1413
 [TEL] 0980-50-1025
 Museum visitors learn about the rich biodiversity that is one appeal of the Yamaru National Park as well as efforts being made to preserve this nature.

Okinawa Rail Ecology Center/ Forest of Rails | C2
 1477-35 Ada, Kunigami-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa 905-1503
 [TEL] 0980-41-7788
 The Okinawa Rail Ecology Center is the only center in the world that cares for and has exhibitions of the Okinawa rail, a species only found in Yamaru.

Roadside Station Ogimi Yamaru Forest Visitor Center | A3
 95 Taaha, Ogimi-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa 905-1318
 [TEL] 0980-44-2233
 The facility has a 360° dome theater and other exhibits to show visitors some of the rich biodiversity, which attracts people to Yamaru National Park, and how the people of Yamaru live.

Higashi Museum | B3
 61-1 Kawata, Higashi-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa 905-1203
 [TEL] 0980-51-2828
 Museum visitors learn about the lives of Yamaru residents and the region's nature. Along with the dioramas and stuffed specimens, there are displays showing the ecology of habu snakes and Ryukyu Ayu fish.

Yamaru Tourist Information Center | B2
 1569-1 Okuma, Kunigami-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa 905-1412
 [TEL] 0980-41-2420
 The center provides information about tourist attractions, dining, lodging and other things to do in the three villages of Yamaru.

Cape Hedo Tourist Information Center | C1
 973-5 Hedo, Kunigami-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa 905-1421
 [TEL] 0980-43-0977
 The northernmost tourist information center on Okinawa island. Visitors can enjoy a great view of Cape Hedo and the mountains of Hedo from the center.

Yamaru Pineapple hills Aha | C3
 1089-7 Aha, Kunigami-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa 905-1504
 [TEL] 0980-43-5115
 The facility where visitors can feel the nature of the Yamaru with a souvenir shop, cafe, wildlife observation area and co-working space.

Roadside Station "Sunrise Higashi" | B4
 550-23 Taira, Higashi-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa 905-1204
 [TEL] 0980-43-2270
 Nice resting area with dining and shop for specialty products, and many tourists visit here for a rest spot while driving in Yamaru.

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

Access Transportation

Haneda Airport Domestic Terminal	Airplane Approx. 150 min.
Naha Airport	Rental car Approx. 120 min.
Yamaru Wildlife Conservation Center/Ufugi Nature Museum	

* 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.