

## Overview



Shirakami-Sanchi is a collective term for the extensive mountainous region at the border between Aomori and Akita Prefectures, covering the area from the southwestern part of Aomori Prefecture to the northwestern part of Akita Prefecture. The total area of Shirakami-Sanchi is about 130,000 ha, encompassing areas in both prefectures. Within the above area, a virgin *buna* (*Fagus crenata*, Japanese beech) forest covering an area of 16,971 ha, which is relatively unaffected by humankind, was included on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1993, together with Yakushima.

## Geography and Geology



The geological formations of Shirakami-Sanchi are based on granite rocks formed 90 million years ago (during Cretaceous period of the Mesozoic era). It consists of sedimentary rock (tuff, mudstone and sandstone) formed 12 to 20 million years ago (Third Miocene, Cenozoic era) and intrusive rocks (rocks formed by rising magma, such as rhyolite and quartz diorite).

Numerous deep valleys run intricately through Shirakami-Sanchi. Major rivers within the area include the Kasage River of the Yoneshiro River Water System in Akita Prefecture and the Iwaki River, Akaishi, Oirase and Sazanai Rivers in Aomori Prefecture. There are mountains with heights of more than 1000m above sea level along the ridges that separate the rivers. These mountains include Mt. Kodake and Futatsumori, which are located near the prefectural border, and Mt. Shirakami-dake and Mt. Mukai Shirakami-dake, which are located within Aomori Prefecture. Also characteristic of the region is the steepness of many of its mountains.



## Animals

Shirakami-Sanchi includes a primeval *buna* natural forest that is almost completely free from human influence. Within the entire area of Shirakami-Sanchi, some 14 species of large and medium-sized mammals including the Japanese black bear, the Japanese serow and the Japanese monkey, 13 species of amphibian animals, seven species of reptiles and about 90 species of birds are to be found. Some very rare species of birds, including species of raptors such as the golden eagle and Hodgson's hawk eagle as well as the black woodpecker, Japan's largest woodpecker, inhabit in the area.



Japanese monkey



Black woodpecker



Black salamander



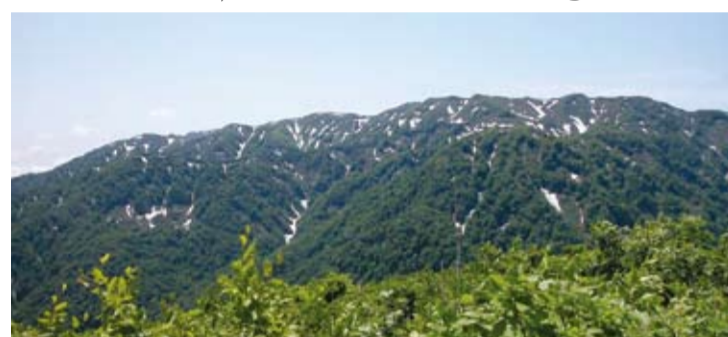
Japanese black bear

## Welcome to Shirakami-Sanchi

This brochure includes such information as rules and etiquette to keep in mind when visiting the World Heritage Site of Shirakami-Sanchi and its neighboring regions, for the benefit of people visiting the area.

Together with Yakushima, Shirakami-Sanchi is Japan's first inclusion in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, as of its registration in December 1993.

The inclusion of Shirakami in this list clearly shows that the forestry ecosystem of the region, which consists mainly of *buna* forest, is highly regarded internationally, as is its rich natural environment. At the same time, this also brings with it the responsibility to preserve Shirakami-Sanchi, which is a common asset of humankind, and to hand it down to future generations.



Issued by: Tohoku Regional Environment Office  
Supported by: Activities Committee, Shirakami-sanchi World Heritage Conservation Center (Fujisato)

<For further information on Shirakami-Sanchi>

Ministry of the Environment, Shirakami-sanchi World Heritage Conservation Center (Nishimeya)  
61-1 Aza Kanda, O-aza Tashiro, Nishimeya Village, Nakatsugaru-gun, Aomori Prefecture  
Tel: 0172-85-2822 Fax: 0172-85-2835  
Ministry of the Environment, Shirakami-sanchi World Heritage Conservation Center (Fujisato)  
63 Aza Satoguri, Fukuoto, Fujisato Town, Yamamoto-gun, Akita Prefecture  
Tel: 0185-79-3001 Fax: 0185-79-3008  
<http://www.sizenken.biodic.go.jp/isan/s002.htm>  
<http://tohoku.env.go.jp/nature/shirakami/>

## World Heritage Site



Most of the areas registered as a World Heritage Site are designated as a Nature Conservation Area under the Nature Conservation Law, and include some natural park areas based on the Natural Parks Law. The site as a whole is designated as a Forest Biosphere Reserve under the regulations of the Forestry Agency. Also, the site as a whole has been designated as a National Wildlife Protection Area for the purpose of preserving wildlife. Fishing has been prohibited in all rivers within the area registered as a World Heritage Site in order to preserve aquatic resources.

(Unit: ha)

Shirakami-Sanchi World Natural Heritage Site	Total area	Aomori Prefecture	Akita Prefecture
Forest Biosphere Reserve	16,971	12,627	4,344
Nature Conservation Area	14,043	9,707	4,336
Natural Park	2,928	2,920	8

## Protection and Preservation Activities

### Activities of the Ministry of the Environment

**◆Patrol◆**

The ministry oversees patrolling of World Heritage Sites with a view to checking for unauthorized acts such as illegal fishing or picking of plants in these areas, as well as unauthorized entry.

**◆Learning about nature◆**

The ministry holds events such as nature observation tours in order to encourage public understanding of and interest in nature and conservation in Shirakami-Sanchi.

**◆Signage◆**

The ministry is responsible for producing signs indicating the location of the World Heritage Site areas and indications of one's current location, as well as signs explaining the meaning and purposes of World Heritage Site areas. Such signs also serve the purpose of promoting proper etiquette for these areas.

## Investigation and Research Activities

### Activities of the Ministry of the Environment

**◆Monitoring◆**

The ministry conducts annual monitoring campaigns with a view to ascertaining the condition of the *buna* forests in the area on an ongoing basis.

**◆Weather observation◆**

The ministry monitors weather conditions through the continuous observation of temperature, wind direction/velocity, rainfall and snowfall in three locations in the area of the World Heritage Site and neighboring areas.

**◆Monitoring of the number of people entering the area◆**

Since 1999, the ministry has been keeping track of the number of people entering the area in thirteen locations in the World Heritage Site and neighboring areas using automatic measuring instruments. The results are used as basic data for the preservation of the site.

## Facilities for Nature Learning and Information

### ◆Aomori Prefecture◆

Please refer to the map on the back page for location in detail.

**Shirakami-Sanchi Visitor Center**  
Hours of operation: 8:30-17:00 from April to October (no admission fee)  
9:00-16:30 from November to March (no admission fee)  
Closed: Every second Monday from April to December (the following day when the second Monday is a holiday)  
Every Monday and Thursday from January to March (the following day when Monday or Thursday is a holiday)  
Year-end and New Year (from December 29 to January 3)  
61-1 Aza Kanda, O-aza Tashiro, Nishimeya Village Tel: 0172-85-3080

**Nature Observation Hall "Hello Shirakami"**  
Hours of operation: 9:00-17:00 (no admission fee)  
Closed: Every Monday and Tuesday  
Open season: From May to October  
30 Aza Yoshikawa, O-aza Hfotsumori, Aijigasawa Town Tel: 0173-79-2727

**Mini-Shirakami "Kuromori Hall"**  
Hours of operation: 9:00-16:30 from April 20th to September (admission fee necessary)  
9:00-15:30 in October (admission fee necessary)  
Open season: From April 20th to October (no closing day during the opening period)  
1-26 Aza Yakuzauma, O-aza Fukayama, Aijigasawa Town Tel: 0173-79-2009

**Juniko Eco-Museum Center "Kokyokan"**  
Hours of operation: 9:00-17:00 (no admission fee)  
Closed: Every Monday (the following day when Monday is a holiday)  
Open season: From late-April to mid-December  
1-3 Aza Matsukiyama, O-aza Matsukami, Fukaura Town Tel: 0173-72-3113

These learning and information facilities provide information on nature and tourism in the Shirakami-Sanchi World Heritage Site and neighboring areas and explanations for schools, assorted organizations and individuals, both within and outside the facilities in question. They are also used for holding events such as nature observation tours and tours in which visitors can experience life in alpine agricultural villages.

## Facilities for Nature Learning and Information

### ◆Akita Prefecture◆

Please refer to the map on the back page for location in detail.

**Ministry of the Environment, Shirakami-sanchi World Heritage Conservation Center (Fujisato)**  
Hours of operation: 9:00-17:00 from April to December (no admission fee)  
10:00-16:00 from January to March (no admission fee)  
Closed: Every Tuesday from April to December (the following day when Tuesday is a holiday)  
Every Monday and Tuesday from January to March (the following day when Monday or Tuesday is a holiday)  
63 Aza Satoguri, Fukuoto, Fujisato Town Tel: 0185-79-3001

**Furusato Natural Park Center**  
Hours of operation: 9:00-17:00 (no admission fee)  
Closed: Every Monday  
Open season: From late-April to early-November  
Aza Minami-shikanai, Kasuga, Fujisato Town (on the premises of Subei Park) Tel: 0185-79-2518

**Hachimori Bunakko Land**  
Hours of operation: 9:00-17:00 (no admission fee)  
Closed: Every Wednesday (the following day when Wednesday is a holiday), Year-end and New Year  
144-1 Aza Sanjuga, Hachimori, Happo Town Tel: 0185-77-3086

**Akita Shirakami Taiken Center**  
Hours of operation: 9:00-17:00 (no admission fee)  
Facilities fee is required separately  
Closed: Year-end and New Year (from December 29 to January 3)  
53-1 Gosyondai, Aza hachimori, Happo Town Tel: 0185-77-4455

## Nature Guides

Organizations exist for the purpose of providing guidance services aimed at explaining the natural makeup of Shirakami-Sanchi in municipalities adjacent to the area. Here are some of the guidance organizations operated under the initiative of local governments. There are many other individuals and organizations that serve as nature guides in and around the Shirakami-Sanchi area.

**Aomori Prefecture**

**Nishimeya Village Tourism and Guidance Organization**  
Guide to Shirakami-Sanchi walking trails located within the village  
Inquiry: Aaza Green Village Annon  
Tel: 0172-85-3021

**Aijigasawa Shirakami-Sanchi Guide Club**  
Guide to Mini-Shirakami course, Kurukuma Falls course, etc.  
Inquiry: Aijigasawa Town Tourist Association  
Tel: 0173-72-5004

**Iwasaki Nature Guide Club**  
Guide to Lake Juniko walking trail and Mt. Shirakamidake climbing route  
Inquiry: Awone Shirakami Juniko  
Tel: 0173-77-3311

**Akita Prefecture**

**Association of Akita Shirakami Guides**  
Guide to walking Shirakami-Sanchi trails and climbing routes in and around Fujisato Town  
Inquiry: Tourism Promotion Department, Fujisato Town Chamber of Commerce  
Tel: 0185-79-2518

**Happo Town Shirakami Guides Organization**  
Guide to Shirakami-Sanchi walking trails and climbing routes in and around Happo Town  
Inquiry: Shirakami Fureaikan  
Tel: 0185-70-4211

**Kimimachi Sightseeing Guides Organization**  
Guide to Shirakami-Sanchi areas within Futatsui Town  
Inquiry: Tourist Association of Noshiro City  
Tel: 0185-73-5075

## Entering the Core Zone

Entry into the core zone in Aomori Prefecture is only permitted for designated routes and by way of submitting a notification in advance in accordance with the prescribed format. As a general rule, entry into the core zone in Akita Prefecture is prohibited. However, entrance is admitted for specific purposes such as academic research or news broadcasting, by way of obtaining permission in advance. The designated routes in Aomori Prefecture constitute routes for advanced climbers, which require the skills necessary for climbing streams and traversing bush terrain. Please keep this in mind before entering. Also, please follow the basic rules and etiquette when entering core zones and neighboring areas.

The documents necessary for applying to enter the World Heritage Site area in Aomori Prefecture are available through organizations under the auspices of the Forestry Agency. Entry notifications are also accepted by the organizations listed below. The following organizations also accept inquiries for information on Shirakami-Sanchi.

◆ Within the jurisdiction of Nishimeya Village ◆

◆ Forestry Agency, Tsugaru Forest Administration Department, Fukaura Forest Office Tel: 0173-74-2011 ◆  
◆ Fukaura Town Office Tel: 0173-74-2111 ◆

◆ Forestry Agency, Tsugaru Forest Administration Department, Tel: 0172-27-2800 ◆

◆ Shirakami-Sanchi Visitor Center Tel: 0172-85-3080 ◆

◆ Nishimeya Village Office Tel: 0172-85-2111 ◆

◆ Within the jurisdiction of Fukaura Town ◆

◆ Forestry Agency, Tsugaru Forest Administration Department, Aijigasawa Forest Office Tel: 0173-72-2511 ◆  
◆ Tsugaru-shirakami Forest Environment Conservation Center Tel: 0173-72-2931 ◆

◆ Aijigasawa Town Office Tel: 0173-72-2111 ◆

Please drop off the notification form in the exclusive post boxes placed near the entrances of these organizations when submitting notifications on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

## Etiquette

Many precious species of animals and plants inhabit the Shirakami-Sanchi region. We would like to ask for your cooperation in maintaining proper etiquette when entering the area in order to maintain the natural ecosystem and to preserve the natural setting.

Please do not pick plants.

Please do not bring pets with you.

Please do not walk outside the walking paths.

Please do not leave litter behind.

Please use the toilet facilities prior to entry.

Bonfires are prohibited.

Fishing is not permitted within the World Heritage Site area.

## Activities of Active Rangers

Since FY2005, active rangers have been appointed all over Japan to serve as reinforcements for the local administration system. Two active rangers have been appointed to the Shirakami-Sanchi World Heritage Site.

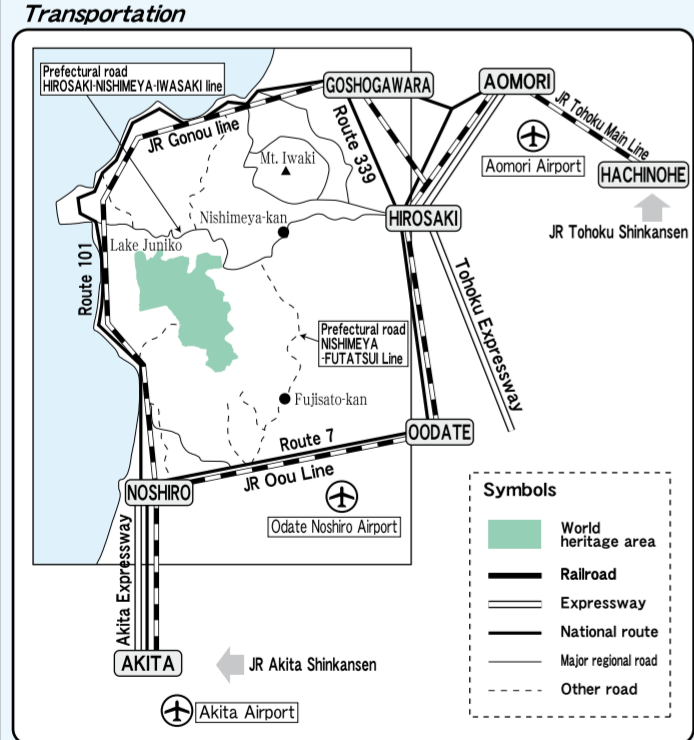
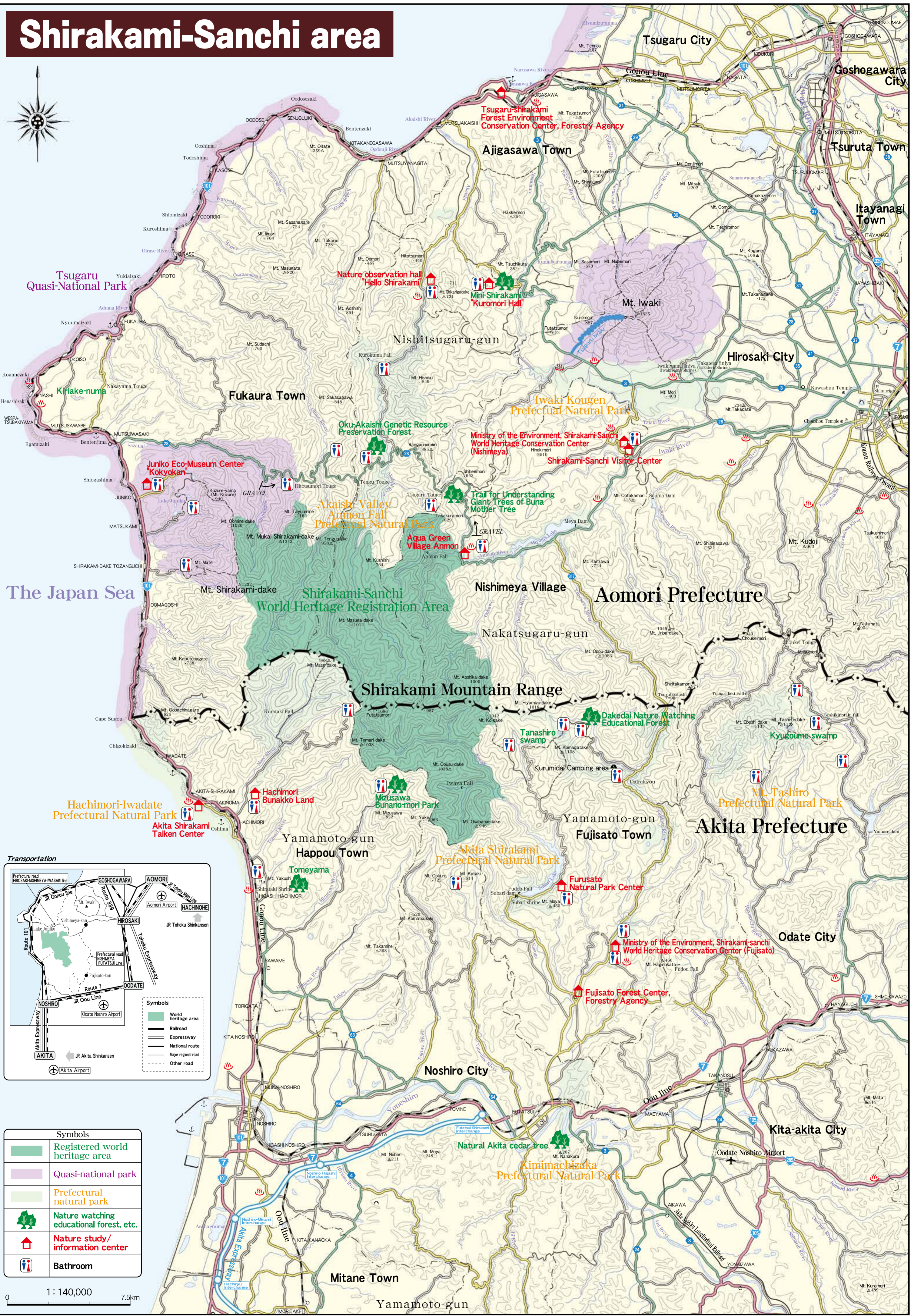
**Patrolling**

**Investigation (monitoring of numbers of people entering the area)**

**Nature observation tours**

**Investigation (monitoring of *buna* forest)**

# Shirakami-Sanchi area



Symbols	
	Registered world heritage area
	Quasi-national park
	Prefectural natural park
	Nature watching educational forest, etc.
	Nature study/information center
	Bathroom

1 : 140,000 7.5km