



Come to Shiretoko,



What is a World Natural Heritage Site?

The World Heritage treaty adopted by UNESCO is aimed at constructing systems to protect cultural and natural heritage sites with "outstanding universal values" internationally. To be designated a World Natural Heritage Site, the site has to meet more than one of the following four criteria:

1. Natural landscapes

An area that contains superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance

3. Ecosystem

An area that is an outstanding example representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems, and communities of plants and animals

2. Geography and Geology

An area that is an outstanding example representing major stages of Earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features

4. Biodiversity

An area that contains the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation

Shiretoko was designated because both criteria 3 and 4 above apply to it, and it is appreciated for providing an adequate warranty of protection and preservation of nature. Other World Natural Heritage Sites include Grand Canyon (U.S.A), Kilimanjaro National Park (Tanzania), Galapagos Islands (Ecuador), and Great Barrier Reef (Australia).



Stroll along Shiretoko Goko Lakes (Five Lakes) Raised Boardwalk

Walk slowly
and enjoy
the panoramic view!

the pride of the world

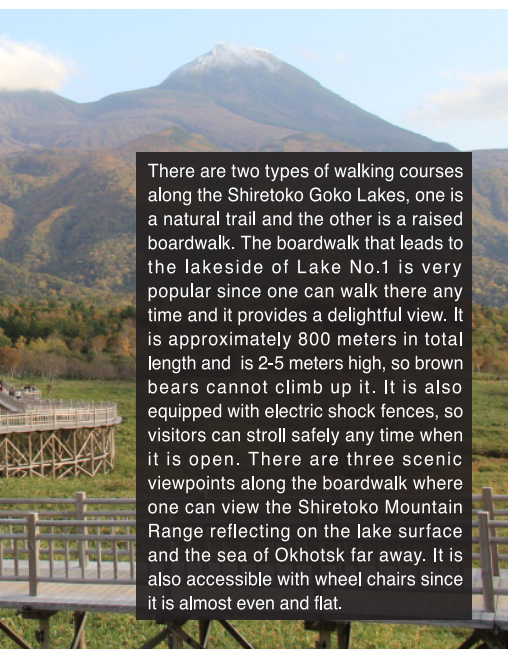
Shiretoko



The third Japanese World Natural Heritage Site

Shiretoko, derived from "Sir-etok," which means, a "projection of the land" in the Ainu language. The peninsula, edged by steep cliffs, juts into the Sea of Okhotsk. The natural blessings, like rugged mountains, deep forests, grassland, many rivers and lakes and drift ice there, protect the primary lives of the wildlife.

Shiretoko was evaluated as a site where the ecosystem linking the ocean to the land is clearly observable, some rare flora and fauna can be found, and an environmental protection management system is also in place. It was then designated as the Japan's third UNESCO World Natural Heritage site in 2005.



There are two types of walking courses along the Shiretoko Goko Lakes, one is a natural trail and the other is a raised boardwalk. The boardwalk that leads to the lakeside of Lake No.1 is very popular since one can walk there any time and it provides a delightful view. It is approximately 800 meters in total length and is 2-5 meters high, so brown bears cannot climb up it. It is also equipped with electric shock fences, so visitors can stroll safely any time when it is open. There are three scenic viewpoints along the boardwalk where one can view the Shiretoko Mountain Range reflecting on the lake surface and the sea of Okhotsk far away. It is also accessible with wheel chairs since it is almost even and flat.

Shiretoko Goko Lakes Routes Map

It is enjoyable to walk on the two roads of Shiretoko Goko Lakes. One can experience the mystery of primeval forests and feel nature breathing. See the highlights and adhere to the rules. During certain periods it may be required to apply to take a walk on the natural trail, and paid lecture may also be available. When brown bears are in the vicinity, tour visitors must be accompanied by a registered guide. Only walking along the raised boardwalks is free of charge and it is not necessary to apply during any seasons.

Raised boardwalk	Raised boardwalk round route (Round trip: 1.6 km; travel time: approx. 40 min.)
Natural trail	Short Loop (Round trip: 1.6 km; travel time: approx. 40 min.)
	During the period when plants have to be protected, Long Loop (no guide, round trip: approx. 3 km; travel time: approx. 90 min.)
Raised boardwalk	During the season when brown bears are active, Long Loop (Tour with a guide, round trip: approx. 3 km; travel time: approx. 3 hr.)

Please refer to the following website for more information including the periods when each route can be taken and the lecture fee.

▶ <http://www.goko.go.jp> **EKIST**

