

3 A vision of scenic islands

The unprecedented charm of the Amakusa area lies in the natural beauty of its features brought about by geologic processes. Large and small green-capped islands interwoven by sapphire-blue sea channels present unparalleled views.



! Geography from the waterline

Sea taxis and cruise boats are recommended for sight-seeing in the Amakusa islands. What better way to view the abundance of beauty the islands have to offer than from the waterline.

1 Senganzan veiw place



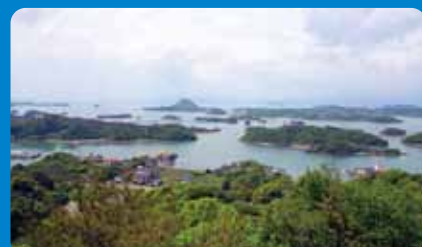
From this veiw place, the view opens toward Oyano island. Many beautiful green-capped islands bordered by white, 50 million year old sandstone beaches from the Shiratake Formation, lay before you as a vision floating on the blue sea and all 5 bridges connecting the Amakusa islands can be seen.

2 Senganmori-dake



Senganmori-dake is located in the southern part of Matsushima town in the Amakusa-kamishima islands. In the upper part of the mountain, white rocks are often exposed in a belt shape. You can observe the inclination of strata composing the Shiratake Formation toward the west.

3 Mt. Takabuto veiw place and an outcrop of unconformity



A global view of many islands strung together by the Amakusa Five Bridges from Matsushima town through the Oyano islands can be had from the Mt. Takabuto view place. The strata of both the Cretaceous and the Paleogene are observed with unconformity at the road side near the parking lot.

4 The summit of Shiratake



An area popular for mountain trekking called 'The Kankai Alps' connects ridgelines from Matsushima town to Ryugatake town on the eastern side of Amakusa-kamishima. The Shiratake summit is one of the many attraction points for hikers for the panoramic views of the Amakusa islands and their surrounding seascape from the hiking trails.

5 Observatory on Karasu-tohge



The summit of the 442m high Karasu-tohge; the highest mountain in Goshoura island provides a panoramic view of the Amakusa archipelago, Yatsushiro sea (Shiranui sea), the Kyushu mountains, and the Aso and Unzen-Fugen ranges. A Graysonites which is an ammonite fossil, was found at the summit and is displayed there.

6 Tomioka tomboro and spit



Although the Tomioka peninsula was originally separated as an islet from the Shiki plain, pebbles and sand carried by the littoral current were deposited connecting them into a tomboro. The Tomioka spit; a narrow beach in the form of the beak of a bird was made by similarly carrying sand and pebbles to the east side of the peninsula.

7 Myokengaura



Myokengaura's sea cliffs, reaching a height of 100m of the Himenoura Group make up the brilliant natural scenery representative of Amakusa's west coast. This area is a National Site of Scenic Beauty. A point of interest gives the impression of an elephant walking when viewed from the Jusanbutsu park.

8 Tomioka marine park

The southwest part of the Tomioka peninsula is specified as a marine park, with a beautiful coral reef, black rocks (alternation strata of black shale and sandstone of the Sakasegawa Group) and white rocks (rhyolite: volcanic rock) which expand at the shoreline and the cliff jutting out into the sea from the peninsula.

9 Ushibuka marine park

Visitors to the area enjoy the sight of many colourful fish swimming and the bountiful coral from the vantage point of glass-bottom boats. The Shishiboe-misaki looks like the shape of the head of a lion and consists of eroded volcanic sediments (tuff breccia) which build along the seashore.

4 A rich ecosystem

A precious and rich ecosytem not only gives Amakusa its island charm, but unique sea bottom topography also provides a home to a pod of dolphins that can be seen year round.



! The Year-round dolphins of Amakusa

Dolphin watching has become a special point for sightseeing in Amakusa. Though the breed of dolphin found in Amakusa typically migrate the oceans world-wide, the dolphins of Amakusa take up residence throughout the year due to the undulating nature of the sea bottom and its ability to supply just the right living environment for many sea creatures that sustain the dolphin's existence.



1 Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin



There is a high probability of observing Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin of which about 200 live in the Hayasaki strait between Amakusa-shimoshima and the Shimabara peninsula. Dolphin watching adventures allow participants to catch a glimpse of the strait and its ecosystem.

2 Hakusen-shiomaneki crab colony in the Nagaura island



The tidal flats on the circumference of Nagaura island are known as a leading habitat of the fiddler crab in Japan, which bears the Japanese name 'hakusen shiomaneki'. This crab is about 2 cm in length, and the male sports a single large, white scissor-claw on one of its front appendages.

3 The Marsh of Shiratake Mountain



The Shiratake marshes with an altitude of 280m are formed between Shiratake and Nokogiridake. On the circumference of the marshes, we can observe about 50 varieties of dragonfly such as the smallest Japanese speeis known as Hachy-otombo, and the biggest known as Oniyanma, as well as rare subtropical plants such as Himozuru.

4 Calcareous algae on the coast



You can see many balls of calcareous algae (Lithophyllum sp.) at about 4cm in diameter strewn on the beaches on the circumference of Tsujijima. Rare calcareous balls colored light purple red may also be found.

5 Tomioka marine park



The southwest part of the Tomioka peninsula is specified as a marine park, with a beautiful coral reef, black rocks (alternation strata of black shale and sandstone of the Sakasegawa Group) and white rocks (rhyolite: volcanic rock) which expand at the shoreline and the cliff jutting out into the sea from the peninsula.

6 Ushibuka marine park



Visitors to the area enjoy the sight of many colourful fish swimming and the bountiful coral from the vantage point of glass-bottom boats. The Shishiboe-misaki looks like the shape of the head of a lion and consists of eroded volcanic sediments (tuff breccia) which build along the seashore.