

Lake Panketo

Overview

Located in the northeastern foothills of Mt. Oakan, Lake Panketo, whose name means “lower swamp” in the Ainu language, has only one exit: the Ibeshibetsu River, which flows into the northern part of Lake Akan. Together with Lake Penketo, which means “upper swamp” in the Ainu language, Panketo is one of the water sources that feeds Lake Akan.

In ancient times, Lake Panketo, Lake Penketo, and Lake Akan were all one large lake, a water body now referred to as Old Lake Akan. Mt. Oakan erupted between 10,000 and 6,000 years ago, dividing the large lake into the three smaller ones visible today. Panketo is the deepest of the three lakes, with a depth of 54 meters; Akan is 45 meters deep while Penketo is 39 meters deep.

Water Quality

Lake Panketo is one of the most transparent lakes in Japan, and perhaps due to this clarity, a community of submerged plants flourishes on the lakebed. Regrettably, in 2010, signal crayfish, an Invasive Alien Species, were confirmed to have entered the lake.

Activities

The surrounding forest, as well as the road leading to the lake, is carefully protected by the government and the Maeda Ippoen Foundation. To preserve the area’s natural state, the general public is usually prohibited from going near the lake, so visitors wishing to experience the stunning, serene atmosphere are encouraged to participate in special tours and nature observation activities offered by the Eco-museum Center.