

Hyotan Swamp

Overview

Hyotan Swamp is situated in the southeastern foothills of Mt. Oakan. Its name is said to be derived from the original shape of the swamp: in Japanese, hyotan means “gourd,” and the swamp’s shape used to be rounded with a narrow neck. These days, some imagination is needed to see the similarity.

Said to be the first place in Japan to freeze each winter, ice skaters used Hyotan Swamp’s surface for many years as a natural ice skating rink. A dense forest surrounds the swamp and it is situated away from any main roads. The calls of birds can often be heard, and wild animal tracks abound. In fact, brown bears inhabit the area around the swamp, so visitors should be cautious.

Activities

Access to Hyotan Swamp from the Akankohan Eco-museum Center is via National Highway Route 241 heading towards Teshikaga, before turning right on Road 1093 which leads to Tsurumidai. The swamp is approximately one kilometer from the highway. In winter, although Road 1093 is closed, it is possible to snowshoe from Route 241. For safety reasons, it is recommended that visitors who would like to experience walking on the frozen surface of the swamp be accompanied by a guide.