

Kushiro Shitsugen National Park

On July 31st, 1987 Kushiro Shitsugen became Japan's 28th national park with the aim of preserving this irreplaceable natural environment. Kushiro Shitsugen National Park covers a total of 28,788 hectares in the municipalities of Kushiro City, Shibecha Town, Kushiro Town, and Tsurui Village. It includes Kushiro Marsh, Japan's largest wetland, as well as the surrounding hills and lakes. The park's landscape is highly unique within Japan: rivers and streams meander through vast fields of reeds, sedges, and Japanese alder, and it provides an ideal habitat for many species of plants and animals, including rare creatures such as red-crowned cranes, Blakiston's fish owls, red foxes, and Sakhalin taimen. The wetland contains Japan's largest area of peat, a layer of partially decayed vegetation formed in bogs and fens. The park's ecosystems support countless wildlife, plants, and also humans, so it is a major priority to protect the area's natural environment. In 1980, a 5,012-ha section of Kushiro Marsh was designated as a Ramsar Site, recognizing it as an internationally important wetland that serves as a waterfowl habitat. This designated area was expanded to 7,863 ha in 1999.