

## Inoseto Wetlands

### The Wetland Area Today

The Inoseto Wetlands are today a most attractive place for visitors and hikers. In 2014, a hiking trail, allowing visitors to enjoy the natural landscape of the Kijima Plateau and wetland area, was opened. The start point of the trail is the Kijima Kogen Hotel, with different sections of the route taking between twenty and sixty minutes to walk.

The routes take in the natural ecosystem of the area and a range of plants in their wetland habitats, as well as the ruins of the Kyu Hita Kaido road (dating from the Edo period (1603–1868). This old road used to connect Beppu, Oita, and Kijima, with Hita. Hita, located in the west of Oita Prefecture, was an important province during the Edo period. The fief was protected by the ruling shogunate government, which meant the road could be used regularly by local daimyo (feudal lords) to travel to Hita to discharge their feudal duties, including the payment of taxes and contributions to the shogun. The road is thought to have been used until at least 80 years ago. Older folk remember it from their childhood.

On the roadside, there are remnants of small shrines and Jizo statues. It is thought that Jizo protects travelers. There are also the ruins of an old ice-house structure where they made and sold ice in years gone by.