

Formation of Lake Miike

Approximately 4,600 years ago, the largest volcanic eruption in the history of the Kirishima Mountain Range occurred, leaving a gaping volcanic crater called a caldera. Water then filled the caldera to create Lake Miike.

With a depth of about 94 meters, and a circumference of roughly 3.9 kilometers, Lake Miike is both the largest and deepest of the Kirishima Mountain Range's caldera lakes. The lake is 305 meters above sea level and is surrounded by steep caldera walls that reach heights of 30 meters.

A Word of Caution About Land Leeches

The area around Lake Miike is home to land leeches. Visitors should make a conscious effort to avoid coming into contact with them. The leeches are active during the warmer months, generally June to September. While they don't pose a serious health risk if you are bitten, visitors should take the following precautions.

Be sure to wear high boots or long pants, and tuck pant-legs firmly into long socks. Spray feet liberally with repellent (see below), and wrap necks, shoulders and other exposed skin in repellent-soaked towels. A favorite habitat of the leeches is fallen leaves in the shade, so take care when walking the forest trails.

Suitable repellents include salt water (20% salt concentration), as well as commercial repellents.

Enjoying Your Visit to Lake Miike

Rising high behind Lake Miike, Mount Takachiho-no-mine overlooks the caldera lake and its shores, at times reflected in the lake's clear surface. Surrounded by thick forests of hardwood, the Lake Miike area is truly a nature-lover's paradise.

The lake's clean waters boast a bounty of fish, and its shores are a popular spot for anglers all year round.

Paddle boats, kayaks, and other watercraft are available for rent, and offer a relaxing way to enjoy the mountainous scenery while drifting lazily across the lake.

Out of the water and into the woods, well-maintained trails take hikers through the dense broadleaf evergreen forest and connect them with nearby Lake Koike, a small caldera lake to the west of Lake Miike. These woods, home to mushrooms, insects, and many other creatures, are nicknamed “*Yacho-no-Mori*”, or Wild Bird Forest for the many birds, a number of which are rare, that call the forest home. Not surprisingly, the Lake Miike area is a popular destination for birdwatchers.