

### **Mt. Fujisato-Komagatake Summit**

This is the highest point of Mt. Fujisato-Komagatake (1,158 m). On clear days, Mt. Iwaki (1,625 m) is visible to the northeast. To the west is the primary-growth forest of the Shirakami Sanchi core zone.

Shirakami Sanchi became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993. Encompassing parts of Akita and Aomori prefectures, the site consists of two zones: the buffer zone and the protected core zone. Hiking in the core zone is prohibited without prior authorization.

Much of Shirakami Sanchi is covered by old-growth beech trees, and the core zone has been largely untouched by humans for over 8,000 years. It is one of the largest old-growth forests left in Japan. The remote location and steep slopes discouraged habitation, and the surrounding area was one of the last places on Japan's central island of Honshū to be settled—not until the Edo period (1603–1867). Communities that developed along the coast relied on fishing and some forestry, but a lack of immediate exploitable resources protected the deep forest area from extensive intrusion.

Only a few people ventured deep into the mountains, mostly woodcutters and the *matagi*, winter hunters who went in search of deer and bear. Although their numbers are significantly diminished, some *matagi* continue their traditional hunting practices to this day.