

## ***Marimo*: A Circle of Life**

*Marimo* are a rare form of *Aegagropila linnaei*, green algae comprising numerous filaments that clump together to form a spherical shape.

The *marimo* life cycle begins when waves are gently nudged by wind blowing across the lake's surface, causing long algae filaments to clump together into a ball. The waves rotate the ball, exposing its entire surface to sunlight that filters through the water. The ball grows larger and larger through photosynthesis, and the constant rotation ensures an even, perfectly round shape. Eventually, the *marimo* ball becomes too large to retain this shape. When this happens, it crumbles into smaller *marimo*, and the life cycle starts anew.

Churui Bay is the perfect environment for *marimo*. The water in the bay comes from two sources: cold water from rivers flowing into Lake Akan, and spring water rich with minerals and chloride ions from Mt. Oakan and the lake's southern shore. This balance of nutrients is key to the growth and development of *marimo*.

The bay's favorable environment helps the *marimo* grow up to 30 centimeters in diameter, making them far larger than *marimo* found elsewhere.