

## **Canoeing in Teshikaga: Exploring the Landscape by Water**

The Kushiro River is a beautiful stretch of water that flows from Lake Kussharo to the Pacific Ocean. The upper reaches of the river are shallow and gentle, making them ideal for canoeing. There are no fast rapids or whitewater stretches; traversing these waters in a canoe is like taking a relaxing woodland walk.

### *Start out on the lake*

Begin at the shore of Lake Kussharo and paddle out into the lake before heading under the bridge and through the narrow wooded corridor that marks the head of the river. The water is unusually clear, so it is possible to track the changes in the riverbed as it goes from rocky to silty. Fresh spring water bubbles up in one section of the river, and Japanese deer frequently come to the riverbank to drink the water. Even if you do not catch a glimpse of the animals themselves, you may see their hoofprints in the silt.

### *Canoe year-round*

Canoe tours along the Kushiro River are not limited to the warmer months. The weather is generally clear during the winter, and as the flowing waters do not freeze, you can enjoy the rare experience of canoeing against a backdrop of snow-covered trees under a bright blue sky.

### *Canoeing considerations*

The river is flanked by tall reeds and trees on both sides. Obstacles for canoeists include fallen trees and low-hanging branches. Be aware that personal canoe rental is not an option, so you must bring your own equipment or reserve a tour with a local guide (English-speaking guides are available). Families may consider booking a twin canoe—two canoes connected side-by-side—which allow them to enjoy the river experience together. Visitors traveling with young children may opt to ride safely in a large inflatable raft instead of a canoe.