

## **The Wakoto Peninsula**

The Wakoto Peninsula was once a volcanic islet within Lake Kussharo. Sediment gradually accumulated between the islet and the shore, connecting them to create the peninsula.

### *Walk the peninsula*

Walk the 3.2-kilometer-long Wakoto Nature Trail to discover the wildlife and geography of this scenic lakeshore location. The trail, which skirts the peninsula, takes about an hour to complete. Follow the narrow path that winds through a forest of Sakhalin spruce and Katsura trees to Oyakotsu Jigoku, an area of intense geothermal activity where sulfurous plumes of steam rise from cracks in the ground. The path leads down the cliffside to an observation deck where you can view the plumes from a safe distance. As you walk the trail, listen for the chirping of the band-legged cricket. These insects are dormant in winter elsewhere, but in this microclimate, because of the warm ground temperatures caused by the geothermal energy of the peninsula, they are active year-round.

### *Camping in the area*

There are two large campgrounds close to the base of the peninsula: the Wakoto Campsite (open from mid-June to mid-September) and the Wakoto-hanto Kohan Campsite (accessible from the end of April to mid-October).

### *Bathe in an outdoor hot spring*

The area's geothermal energy makes it a hot-springs haven. There are numerous baths, each fed with mineral-rich warm water. The Wakoto Onsen outdoor bath, which is located right on the edge of the peninsula, is open to visitors free of charge.

### *Learn about the environment*

The nearby Wakoto Field House serves as a visitor center and registration desk for both campsites. Inside, you will find displays and English-language pamphlets explaining the flora and fauna of and around the peninsula. It is a good place to begin exploring the area.