

Kenashi Paradise Trail through the Kenashitai Marshlands

The Kenashi Paradise Trail is a roughly three-hour hike on a 5.5-kilometer trail. It offers spectacular views of both the southern and northern Hakkoda mountains and stunning seasonal scenery. The trail begins at the far end of the Hakkoda Gourd Trail. Hikers will leave that trail at the point indicated and walk for approximately 150 meters before turning right at the junction and beginning their descent toward the marshlands.

The Kenashitai area comprises the Kami-Kenashitai upper marshland and the Shimo-Kenashitai lower marshland; the upper wetlands may be reached from the lower wetland by a steep set of steps. The bird's-eye view of Shimo-Kenashitai and its many ponds is worth the climb, particularly from late September through early October when the fall colors are at their best. A boardwalk trail and observation decks also provide views of several of the major peaks in the Hakkoda range. On clear days, Mt. Iwaki may be seen rising in the distance.

Flowering plants to look for include *mizubasho* (Asian skunk cabbage) and *mitsugashiwa* (bogbean) in spring, and *chinguruma* (Aleutian avens) and *kinkoka* (Asian asphodel) in summer. Toward the end of the hiking course, forked viburnum and willow-leaved magnolia can be seen blooming in the forest during the spring.