

Intertidal Zone—Tsubaki Island Seaweed Forest

Tsubaki Island, sometimes called Aoshima by local residents, is an uninhabited island visible from the Minamisanriku Marine Visitor Center. The island itself is eye-catching, but the real natural wonder lies around it, below the surface of Shizugawa Bay: a veritable forest of seaweed. A diverse array of life forms inhabit this underwater forest, from fish, crabs, and shrimp to seahorses, pygmy squid, and jellyfish.

The seaweed itself comes in many varieties, each with its own unique characteristics. Wakame and *makonbu* are both brown seaweeds often used in Japanese cuisine. There are also numerous seagrasses, such as eelgrass, that grow to several meters in length and provide sustenance and shelter for other marine life.

For visitors interested in getting a hands-on experience with specimens from the underwater forest, the Minamisanriku Marine Visitor Center conducts workshops on creating postcards using different types of seaweed.