

Fumishima Island

Tiny Fumishima Island, a rocky prominence just off the Hinomisaki coast, hardly seems large enough for either a storied history or ongoing ecological significance, and yet it has both. The island likely received its name for its interesting geological composition: its jutting, columnar joints of rhyolite resemble oversized stacks of sacred scrolls called *fumi*.

Fumishima Island was also the ancient location of Izumo's shrine to the sun goddess Amaterasu. Even today, only priests of Hinomisaki Shrine may visit there for an annual Shinto ceremony held at sunset on August 7.

Today, the island is the nation's largest breeding ground for black-tailed gulls. Thousands of birds visit between the months of November and July to raise their chicks before migrating north.