

Sagiura's Natural Landscape

Over the centuries, little has changed in the area around Sagiura. Forested hills encircle the town on three sides. The Sagiura Nature Trail, which begins at the western waterfront, travels 2.5 kilometers through wilderness that is home to sika deer and wild boar. The path is bordered with Japanese bayberry, Japanese chestnut, tung-oil tree, and *yabutsubaki* camellia. From the trail, hikers can take a side path down to a secluded swimming cove. At the end of the Nature Trail, which emerges on the summit of the western cape, a panoramic vista of the open sea appears. The coastline's sheer cliffs, sea caves, and jagged islets of volcanic rock form an impressive landscape that has been designated part of the Daisen-Oki National Park.

Black-tailed gulls, which migrate to the Shimane Peninsula for the breeding season, can be found perched upon the jetties and breakwaters around Sagiura Harbor. Their distinctive cries, resembling a cat's meow, are the reason they are called *umineko*, or "sea cats." Another creature with an unusual call lives nearby in the Yachiyo River, which flows into the harbor. This is the Kajika frog, whose trilling song fills the summer nights and is said to resemble the mating calls of bucks in autumn.

Much of the area's dramatic beauty can only be appreciated from the sea. Some enterprising locals offer guided explorations of the many sea caves and jagged cliffsides north of the harbor.