

A Highly Natural Coastline

The coastline of the Kujukushima area totals some 353 kilometers, 81.5 percent of which remain wild and untouched by development, much higher than the national average. Due to this careful preservation, the coastline's flora and fauna flourish.

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Kujukushima boasts some of the most scenic coastal areas in the country. The natural coastlines of the islands and Kyushu mainland are also important ecosystems that support a wide range of plants and wildlife, including a number of rare and endangered species. The sandy beaches and lagoons of Kujukushima are home to creatures like the horseshoe crab (*Tachypleus tridentatus*), often referred to as a living fossil. While horseshoe crab populations have decreased significantly in many areas of Asia, a large number come to spawn along the Kujukushima coastline.

In muddier areas, visitors may come across the air-breathing sea slug (*Onchidium hongkongensis*), which is nearly extinct on the four main islands of Japan, as is the tiny white clam *Anomalocardia squamosa*. Rare crustaceans, like the milky fiddler crab (*Uca lactea*) and dotillid crab (*Ilyoplax pusilla*), also scurry along the shoreline.

Kujukushima is an important environment for rare and endangered plants as well, including Japanese sedge (*Carex kobomugi*) and dwarf sedge (*Carex pumila*), which grow in sandy areas and are instrumental in stabilizing dunes.

Besides these examples, hundreds of species of fish, birds, mammals, mollusks, flowers, and plants live along these pristine shores. Because of their presence, Kujukushima's coastlines offer exciting spots for nature lovers.

<PHOTOS>

Most of the beaches in the Kujukushima group are natural and free of man-made features.

The pristine coastline is an important ecosystem that supports a large number of animal and plant species.

The natural beaches are dotted with plants, including herbaceous seepweed (*Suaeda maritima*) and autumn statice (*Limonium tetragonum*), both salt marsh dwellers.

Landfill and seawall construction endanger salt marshes around Japan.

The Kujukushima area has a large variety of natural beaches, including sand beaches, rocky shorelines, and mudflats.