

<PAMPHLET—TRIFOLD, SIX PANELS>

<SIDE ONE>

<PANEL 1: COVER>

Saikai National Park
Kujukushima Visitor Center

<CATCH COPY IDEAS>

Discover the Wonders of Kujukushima

The hundreds of tree-covered islands, vast stretches of natural coastline, and amazing variety of animals and plants make Kujukushima a paradise for nature lovers. Discover more about the natural environment and wildlife of this beautiful ecosystem at the Kujukushima Visitor Center.

<PANEL 2: ACCESS>

Access

Kujukushima Visitor Center Location

<MAP>

The Kujukushima Visitor Center is located within the Kujukushima Pearl Sea Resort complex. It is easily accessible by car or by a Sasebo city bus from JR Sasebo Station. For those coming by car, there is a paid parking lot with space for 700 vehicles.

Saikai National Park
Kujukushima Visitor Center
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<PANEL 3: INTRODUCTION TO VISITOR CENTER>

Welcome to the Kujukushima Visitor Center

This is a great place to start your exploration of the natural riches of Kujukushima. You'll notice an unusual stuffed animal figure near the information counter. This is an *umiamenbo* or oceanic water strider, an insect that can be found in the islands. The staff have made it their unofficial mascot, a hint of their passion for the living creatures and plants of the islands, something they are happy to share with visitors.

The Visitor Center has become an important place not only for sharing information about the islands, but also for research, discussions, and educational activities. The many displays within the center highlight the unique natural features of the Kujukushima islands, as well as Saikai National Park as a whole.

Please feel free to examine the displays and ask the staff any questions you may have. This will give you a much greater sense of the size, diversity, and beauty of the islands that lie just offshore from the Visitor Center.

<FLOOR MAP>

2F

Lecture room

Solar panels

1F

1

Sea kayak—one of the best ways to explore the islands

2

Information racks

3

Introduction to Saikai National Park and the Kujukushima Islands

4

The four seasons in the Kujukushima Islands

5

The ecology of Kujukushima

6

The complex structure of Kujukushima—how did the islands form?

7

Characteristics of the islands

8

Unusual discoveries

9

Information research counter

<PANEL 4: INTRO TO KUJUKUSHIMA>

The Diverse Islands of Kujukushima

While Kujukushima literally translates as “99 islands,” there are actually 208 individual islands dotting the bay just beyond the Kujukushima Visitor Center. This dense and diverse array is said to be the largest number of islands in such a compact area in all of Japan. Here the tides can rise and fall some 3 to 4 meters, and the 288 kilometers of natural shoreline include a mixture of sandy beaches, rocky shores and mudflats.

Exploring the Islands

The 208 islands are covered with an abundance of plant and animal life. As 81.5 percent of the coastline is still untouched by human development, many creatures live and breed here, while beautiful and often rare plants grow and flower both on and offshore.

While most of the islands are left natural and uninhabited, a few host small communities. Kuroshima Island, the largest in the region, is home to a population of 400, and three other islands have settlements ranging from 60 to 170 people.

Exploring the islands is easy, and visitors have several options to choose from. Near the Visitor Center is the dock for excursion boats that take a 50-minute cruise through the islands; smaller boats are available for private cruises as well. Outdoor enthusiasts can rent kayaks nearby.

Learn about the natural treasures of the islands at the Kujukushima Visitor Center and gain a deeper appreciation for this place of wild beauty before heading out to explore!

<PANEL 5: PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE>

Kujukushima has around 353 kilometers of coastline, 81.5 percent of which has been left natural. This makes it some of the most untouched shoreline in Japan. Hundreds of species of fish, birds, mammals, mollusks, flowers, and plants dwell along these carefully protected shores.

The seashore and the islands are the habitat of a wide range of creatures. In the sand, mud and rock beaches of Kujukushima, visitors can come across a number of rare and even endangered creatures, such as the Japanese horseshoe crab (*Tachypleus tridentatus*) which is often referred to as a living fossil. Also known as the “samurai helmet crab” in Japanese, the population of this ancient creature has dropped significantly elsewhere in Asia, but many come to spawn along the pristine Kujukushima shoreline.

The muddier shores are the domain of 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 scurry along the shoreline, including the milky fiddler crab (*Uca lactea*) and dotillid crab (*Ilyoplax pusilla*).

Rare and endangered plants like the Japanese sedge (*Carex kobomugi*) are found here. Sedge grows in sandy areas and helps stabilize dunes. A 2000 survey of uninhabited Tokoi Island discovered the presence of a flowering vine, *tobikazura* (*Mucuna sempervirens*), a protected purple-bloomed plant that was considered extinct in Japan.

<PANEL 6: SAIKAI NATIONAL PARK/RULES FOR USE>

Saikai National Park

The islands of Kujukushima are part of Saikai National Park, a vast area of northwestern Kyushu that includes more than 400 islands. The park stretches from the Sasebo area all the way to the distant Goto Islands.

This vast area has a huge diversity of geological and biological wonders, from the islets of Kujukushima, to the sea cliffs created from volcanic columnar jointing in the Goto

Islands and Hirado Island. The relatively untouched shorelines provide important habitats for many plants and animals, including rare and endangered species such as horseshoe crabs and the tiny, mud-dwelling sea slug *Onchidium hongkongensis*, which has virtually disappeared elsewhere in Japan. Thousands of migratory birds either make their winter home here, or, like the Chinese sparrowhawk and the crested honey buzzard, pass through on their way to winter in Southeast Asia.

There is also a rich cultural heritage to explore in Saikai National Park. Visitors can explore the island churches of Japan's "hidden Christians" (who moved here to escape persecution), learn about whaling traditions, and discover the history of naval installations in Sasebo.

Island Etiquette

We ask that visitors help us preserve the unique and fragile nature of Kujukushima during their visit.

- When accessing islands by kayak or private boat, landing is only permitted in the intertidal zone (the land areas that emerge during low tide), or with the permission of the owner of the island (most are privately owned). Be careful not to step on or disturb plants and animals found in this zone.
- Take all trash back with you.
- Leave plants and shells where you found them.
- Pets are not allowed on the islands.
- Fishing is allowed only in the intertidal zone.
- Keep an eye on the incoming tide: the sea may appear calm, but the tide can rise up to 4 meters, and it comes in fast!