

## **Kaihin Koen Seaside Park – Yonama Beach**

With its beach of white sand sloping gradually into a tranquil lagoon protected by a coral reef, Kaihin Koen Seaside Park is one of Tokunoshima's key spots for marine sports and recreation.

### **Marine Sports Paradise**

Yonama Beach serves as the starting point for the swim leg of one of the biggest events on the island, the Tokunoshima Triathlon. Every year in late June, athletes from around the world compete in a 2-kilometer swim, followed by a 75-kilometer bike ride, and a 21-kilometer run. The race is open to the public, with the slogan, "Fast or slow, it's your show," and serious athletes participate as well. There is a day of boat races held annually on a Sunday in late July or early August as part of the Amagi Matsuri festival. The events are hotly contested, with dozens of teams competing in various categories, and championship pennants awarded to the winners.

### **Marathon Memories**

The stretch of Route 629 behind the beach has been named "Naoko Road" in honor of Sydney 2000 Olympic marathon gold medalist Takahashi Naoko. The monuments marking the achievements of Takahashi, who trained here in the lead up to the Games, are located near the turnoff to the seaside park.

### **Paddling and Camping**

Canoes, paddle boards, boats, and other leisure equipment are available for hire from the Amagi-cho B&G Kaiyo Center, while an outdoor pool with a waterslide is open from July 20 to the end of August. There are bungalows for rent year-round that each sleep up to five. The site features camping facilities, with toilets and showers.

### **Natural Wonders**

The reef, rock pools and ocean are full of sea life. Sea turtles, which often migrate over long distances, return to this beach where they were born to propagate, and their breeding areas are sometimes fenced off for protection. Along the back of the beach, the

roots of the spiny *adan*, or fragrant screw pine, grip the shoreline and protect it from erosion when storms send big waves crashing over the reef.

### **Access**

Kaihin Koen Seaside Park is a 10-minute drive from Tokunoshima Airport. The green line bus service from the town of Tokunoshima stops there.