

Yambaru Manabi-no-Mori (Yambaru Discovery Forest)

Centuries ago, the terrain and trees that make up Yambaru Manabi-no-Mori (Yambaru Discovery Forest) were treasured as a communally owned woodland providing timber and other resources. In more recent years, this facility was opened to accommodate visitors on day trips and overnight. Experienced guides are on hand to teach about the forest and its heritage.

The forest is divided into several areas. The “Active Zone” south of the visitor center, which was used as a military training area after World War II, is undeveloped woodland. Today the area is used for guided canoe tours, walks, and environmental education programs. There is also an athletics ground and a car-camping site.

The northwest part of the forest is the “Discovery Zone.” This includes the visitor center beyond this sign to the left, as well as the café-restaurant and accommodation facilities on the right. The restaurant and all the rooms offer excellent views of Kunigami’s mountains. In the evening, you can relax in a rustic cast-iron bath and enjoy the sounds of the forest below.

Yambaru Manabi-no-Mori also includes several nature trails, some of them used by groups offering walking therapies. The 650-meter Accessibility Trail can be enjoyed by those with limited mobility. The 700-meter River Song Trail, which follows a babbling brook to a waterfall, must be walked with a guide. Depending on the season, unique local fauna may be seen, including the ruddy kingfisher, the Yambaru long-armed scarab beetle, and Ishikawa’s frog. Visitors can join a night tour to encounter another side to the forest, when the nocturnal wildlife comes out of hiding.