

Hokuto no Mizukumi Seaside Park

Hokuto no Mizukumi Seaside Park is an ideal place for stargazing. The park, which faces the Genkai Sea on the western coast of Kyushu, has very little light pollution. It is one of the few places in the world where visitors can see the Big Dipper (part of the constellation Ursa Major), appear to dip into the sea. The phenomenon appears in the sky around the 33rd parallel north, on the northern horizon. Visitors can see it on evenings between late September (around 10 p.m.) and late October (around 8:30 p.m.), when the cup of the Big Dipper touches the horizon.

There is an observatory at Hokuto no Mizukumi Seaside Park above the lifeguard station where visitors can ring a “bell of happiness,” decorated with the seven stars of the Big Dipper.

The beach in the park is next to the mouth of the Tsuru River. It is a popular surfing destination in Fukuoka, and annual surfing competitions are held here. Visitors can also try stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) at the beach. Shower and toilet facilities are located below the observatory, near the parking lot. The beach is a 10-minute walk from the Michi no Eki Munakata Roadside Station, a facility with restaurants, tourist information, and rental bicycles.