

Futatsumori Site

Several settlements existed between 3500 and 2000 BCE at the Futatsumori Site, a few kilometers west of Lake Ogawara in Aomori. Evidence of nearly 150 pit dwellings and several shell mounds have been discovered throughout the site. Models of two pit dwellings have been constructed at the site, and artifacts including adornments made from deer antler are displayed nearby, at the Futatsumori Site Museum [\[link\]](#).

Size and layout of the settlements

An observation deck near the parking lot gives an elevated view across the site, and an illustrated map depicts the layout of one of the settlements. The settlements at the Futatsumori Site were large and included graveyards, pits for storing foraged foods, and shell mounds, as well as areas for discarding pottery, stone tools, and other items.

Evidence of environmental changes

Circa 3900 BCE, the Futatsumori Site would have overlooked a large bay. Over the centuries, sea levels dropped, the shoreline receded, and the bay became Lake Ogawara, a brackish body of water. These environmental changes can be observed in the type and distribution of shells within the shell mounds. Lower layers contain the shells of oysters, common Orient clams, and other ocean-dwelling shellfish, whereas upper layers contain the shells of brackish-water species, such as Japanese basket clams.

Subsistence activities

The shell mounds also contain the bones of fish, swans, ducks, deer, and boars, indicating the inhabitants of the settlements here hunted and fished as well as gathered shellfish. The presence of storage pits, typically used for storing chestnuts, suggests they also foraged in the forests.

Related archaeological sites

Other settlement sites discovered in northern Japan include the Sannai Maruyama Site [\[link\]](#) (Aomori), Goshono Site [\[link\]](#) (Iwate), and the Ofune Site [\[link\]](#) (Hokkaido).