

## **Choshichiyachi Site**

The Choshichiyachi Site has yielded one of the earliest-known shell mounds (c. 6000 BCE) in northern Japan. The discovery provides insight into the diet and livelihood of early coastal communities and the environmental factors that shaped life in prehistoric Japan.

### *Sea levels and the shoreline*

The archaeological site is on a plateau overlooking the floodplains of the Gonohe River, several kilometers from the coast. Eight thousand years ago, the Choshichiyachi Site would have overlooked a bay. After the last ice age ended more than 10,000 years ago, temperatures rose gradually, sea levels rose, and the shoreline advanced inland. This created shallow bays and vast tidal flats, ideal for fishing and gathering clams.

### *Diet and livelihood*

A diverse range of fishing implements has been discovered at the site, providing evidence of a rich fishing culture. The artifacts include combination fish hooks made from bone and antler, harpoon heads, and stone net sinkers. Surveys of the shell mound have yielded the shells of approximately 30 shellfish species and the bones of almost 20 fish species. Bird and mammal bones have also been identified.

### *Hachinohe City Museum*

Artifacts from the Choshichiyachi Site are displayed at Hachinohe City Museum [\[link\]](#). Exhibits introduce the history of Hachinohe from prehistoric to modern times. A small admission fee is charged. Some information is provided in English.

### *Related archaeological sites*

Other sites in northern Japan where shell mounds have been discovered include the Kitakogane Site [\[link\]](#) (Hokkaido), Irie Site [\[link\]](#) (Hokkaido), Takasago Burial Site [\[link\]](#) (Hokkaido), Tagoyano Site [\[link\]](#) (Aomori), and the Futatsumori Site [\[link\]](#) (Aomori).