

Ashigezaki Observatory

Ashigezaki Observatory, a fort-like structure on Cape Ashigezaki, overlooks the Tanesashi Coast from atop a rugged cliff rising 22 meters above sea level. The rolling grasslands surrounding the observatory were once used as horse pasture, and the area was named after the dapple-gray horses, known as *ashige* in Japanese, who once roamed here.

Ashigezaki offers panoramas of the Pacific Ocean and the Hachinohe section of the Michinoku Coastal Trail. During the Edo period (1603–1867) the observatory served as a lookout to track the movement of foreign ships, and during World War II it housed a naval radio station equipped with air defense radar. It is not unusual for the area to be wreathed in fog from the ocean, but on clear days the view extends as far as the Shimokita Peninsula to the north and the Hakkoda Mountains to the west. Visitors can also see the peak of Mt. Hashikami rising to the southeast. Nearby is the chalk-white Samekado Lighthouse, built in 1938 and still in operation.

During the warmer months, the grass is dotted with yellow day lilies (*Hemerocallis middendorffii*) and purple Japanese irises (*Iris ensata* Thunb. var. *spontanea*). In summer, visitors can purchase ice cream at the Holonbuir Café next to the parking lot.

Follow the trail from the observatory to reach Nakasuka.