

## **Yodo no Matsubara**

Yodo no Matsubara, or Yodo Pine Grove, was once pastureland for horses. This small forest of Japanese black pines (*Pinus thunbergii*) was planted by a youth group in the Fukakubo area during the Taisho era (1912–1926), so many of the trees are over 100 years old. About 10,000 trees were planted at the time.

The trees act as a natural barrier against the strong coastal winds. The warm and cold currents that collide here create an ideal environment for a diversity of seasonal seaside and alpine flora, as well as other endemic plants. While the pine grove is a vivid green during the spring and summer, in winter it is sometimes blanketed with snow, creating a landscape reminiscent of ukiyo-e woodblock prints.

There are a number of noteworthy caves in the grove. One formerly housed a colony of bats, and an ascetic monk is said to have lived in another. According to local legend, the deep cavern known as Jigoku Ana (literally “Hell Hole”) extends all the way to the city of Miyako in Iwate Prefecture, nearly 150 kilometers to the south.

Continue south past Yodo no Matsubara to reach Tanesashi Natural Lawn.