

Flora and Fauna of Ise-Shima

Ise-Shima National Park is a showcase of inland and coastal biodiversity. The regional climate, seasonal cycles of nature, and eco-friendly initiatives by the local people have created a habitat that supports a wide variety of plants and wildlife.

The Kuroshio Current is a warm ocean current that flows from the Philippines up through the East China Sea to Japan. It greatly influences Ise-Shima's mild climate, which is relatively warm, with little frost and snow in winter. The forests that cover the mountains and islands along the shore thrive in this climate. They consist of broadleaf trees such as oak, coniferous trees such as cedar and hinoki cypress, and seasonal flowering plants. Under their canopy is a wide array of wildlife, including wild boars, deer, and Japanese macaques, as well as smaller mammals like hares, foxes, and badgers.

Ground and river water flows from these forested mountains, carrying nutrients that are deposited into the waters of Ise-Shima's many inlets and bays. The water along the shores of the Shima Peninsula is relatively shallow—between 20 and 30 meters deep—allowing sunlight to penetrate to the ocean floor. This condition is ideal for the growth of seaweed forests, which are cradles of sustenance for both marine and human life. The rocky seabed is home to abalone and Japanese spiny lobster, prized regional delicacies. Intertidal zones and tide pools are filled with many small fish species, shellfish, anemones, and other aquatic creatures. In the deeper ocean, fish like tuna, mackerel, and sea bream make seasonal migrations.

Ancient inhabitants of the area were certainly aware of its natural riches, calling it Miketsu Kuni, the “Land of Divine Offerings.”