

The Kuroaze Coast

This rugged coastline on the northeastern shore of the island is highly recommended for those with an interest in geological formations. It was formed over millions of years by erosion and the rising and falling of coral reefs. The massive outcrop rising out of the ocean is made of hard granite, limestone and mélange deposits—fragments of rocks of all varieties, shapes, and sizes. It is riddled with potholes, which are vertical cylindrical holes created when a circular current of water carrying small rocks cuts a depression in the rock surface over a long period of time. The largest potholes reach a width of some 50 centimeters, and there are many sections of pothole-riddled rocks that have collapsed, and now lie on their sides. The outcrop is a town-designated cultural property and a designated natural monument.

From Sea Life to Bats

The layers of rock and coral on the cliff sides clearly show the effects of the land rising and falling over the years. There are numerous tidal pools that teem with sea life such as hermit crabs and brightly colored tropical fish. A series of caves with potholes and still-forming stalagmites can be found along the coastline. In some places, the walls have been colored by minerals in the water, and bats roost in some of the crevices.

Turtle Spawning Grounds

Not far to the south is Kedoku Beach, a long, broad stretch of white sand that is one of the island's best surf spots. It is also a favorite spawning ground for green sea turtles and loggerhead turtles. Although the turtles lay up to 100 eggs at a time, only a small number of hatchlings survive. The loggerheads migrate as far as the west coast of the United States, whereas the green sea turtles do not stray far from nearby waters.

Tips for Explorers

Visitors should be careful when exploring the area. The rock and coral surface can be uneven and very sharp in places. Be aware of the tidal schedule, as certain areas can become inaccessible during high tides. Take a light when exploring any of the caves, and be sure to take all of your trash with you when you leave.

A Variety of Plant Life

Some species of plants that can be found here and in many other places on Tokunoshima

Island.

Fragrant screw pine, *Pandanus odorifer*, is called *adan* in Japanese. This is a palm-like dioecious tree with long sword-shaped leaves and a large inedible fruit that resembles a pineapple.

Cycad is also known as Sago palm (*sotetsu*; *Cycas revoluta*). It has a thick trunk, a crown of green leaves, and a toxic fruit. Cycads are thought to have been brought to Tokunoshima about 350 years ago. They can live for several hundred years. Cycads are considered “living fossils,” as they have remained relatively unchanged from prehistoric times.

Beach naupaka (*kusatobera*; *Scaevola taccada*) is also known as beach cabbage. It grows rapidly in sandy soil and is impervious to sea salt. It is called *kusatobera* in Japanese and “half flower” in Hawaii, as its petals extend in a semi-circle, halfway around the flower.

Chinese wormwood (*mokubyakko*; *Crossostephium chinense*) is an endangered bushy plant with delicate silver-tinted leaves and yellow flowers. In some parts of Asia, it is thought to have medicinal properties.