

## **Tokachi Shikaoi Geopark**

Clusters of lava domes, areas of permafrost, and vast plains are among the defining features of Tokachi Shikaoi Geopark, which makes up part of Daisetsuzan National Park and covers the town of Shikaoi in central Hokkaido. The geopark also supports rare species of plants and animals, such as a subspecies of the northern pika. Volcanic activity and a cold climate have influenced all aspects of Tokachi Shikaoi Geopark, from the topography and biodiversity to the area's cultural heritage.

The park offers insights into the geological evolution of Hokkaido with a focus on the Shikaribetsu volcanic group in northern Shikaoi and the Tokachi Plain to the south. Visitors can see evidence of geological processes and observe periglacial phenomena such as freeze-thaw-weathered slopes and windholes that vent cold air in summer and warm, moist air in winter. The park also offers a range of activities including guided walks, canoe excursions, and hot-air balloon rides.

The park covers a total area of approximately 405 square kilometers. It is one of several geoparks in Hokkaido, which also include the UNESCO Global Geoparks of Toya-Usu and Mt. Apoi.