

Oguninuma Wetland Stroll

An 800-meter-long boardwalk trail leads around the wetland of Oguninuma Pond. The pond formed some 400,000 years ago when Mt. Nekomadake (1,404 m) erupted and partially collapsed, and water filled a crater left near the base of the mountain.

Red blooms of Japanese azaleas (*Rhododendron japonicum*) in the rich green landscape signal the arrival of early summer. Next, come hellebore (*Veratrum stamineum*) and Nikko day lilies (*Hemerocallis dumortieri* var. *esculenta*), which decorate the wetlands with bursts of white and yellow.

The bright colors fade away as summer shifts into autumn, and the land is covered in swaths of reddish brown. Winter brings steady snowfall to the Aizu region, blanketing the landscape in white. Some mornings in spring, clouds appear to settle on the 1,090-meter-high wetland.

Three separate trailheads leading to the Oguninuma Wetland can be reached by car or bus from Urabandai. It takes approximately 30 minutes to walk the full length of the boardwalk around the wetland. There are also hiking trails of 5 to 6 kilometers that connect Oguninuma to other areas of Urabandai.