

What You Can Do to Protect Yambaru

Be Considerate of Yambaru Residents

Yambaru is not only a haven for wildlife; it is also home to people who have lived in this area for generations. Many attractions are located near their homes, workplaces, and sites of worship. Please respect the residents' privacy. Avoid driving at unsafe speeds or parking on private property. Okinawan places of worship are often simple, rustic structures or natural spots that are not obvious to visitors. It is always a good idea to ask when you are uncertain about local customs or practices.

- Be considerate around village dwellings.
- Ask permission before photographing people or activities.
- Leave historic relics, such as stones or pots, in place.
- Respect places of worship.

Show Respect for the Forest and Its Wildlife

Yambaru's environment is fragile and must be treated with care. Certain areas have been designated as a national park, and many rare or endangered species are protected by law from poaching and harvesting. As there are few well-maintained trails, consider hiring a guide who can provide insights into Yambaru flora and fauna and explain local customs. This will also reduce the risk of accidents and encounters with rash-causing plants and dangerous animals like the *habu* viper.

- Leave all plants and animals undisturbed.
- Avoid startling animals with bright lights or loud noises.
- Check your shoes and clothing to avoid introducing invasive species.
- Drive carefully to avoid causing roadkill, including that of smaller species.
- Take any trash home with you.
- Use toilet facilities before entering the forest.
- Do not build open campfires outside of permitted areas such as campsites.

Other Tips to Enhance Your Yambaru Experience

- Wear appropriate clothing: sturdy hiking shoes (no sandals), long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat.
- Stay hydrated and fueled: Carry water and snacks to prevent heatstroke and dehydration, especially in summer.
- Be prepared for bad weather: Rain is frequent, so rain gear is strongly recommended.
- Share your plans: If you are not traveling with a guide, inform someone of your intended route and destination.