

A History of Humans in the Kamikawa Basin

Humans have inhabited the Kamikawa Basin in central Hokkaido for over 20,000 years. This vast alluvial plain is ringed by mountains and divided by converging rivers, which were some of the largest salmon spawning grounds in Hokkaido. The present-day city of Asahikawa is located in the center of the Kamikawa Basin.

Evidence of former weirs, metal fishing tools, and large quantities of salmon bones have been discovered around the sites of ancient settlements in the Kamikawa Basin. Settlements were concentrated near salmon spawning grounds, indicating that there was large-scale salmon fishing in the area during the Satsumon period (600–1200 CE). Nineteenth-century Ainu settlements were also concentrated along the Ishikari and Chubetsu rivers, where salmon migrated upstream.