

WORLD HERITAGE IN JAPAN

Our Cultural and Natural Legacy

英語で巡る日本の世界遺産

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NAN'UN-DO

1. Shiretoko (知床)



The Shiretoko Peninsula, which faces the Sea of Okhotsk, is located on the eastern tip of Hokkaido. It has spectacular views and rich natural gifts. The word “shiretoko” comes from the Ainu word “Shir-etoku,” which means “world’s end.” The Ainu are the native people of Hokkaido.



知床八景 オシンコシンの滝

The Chishima Volcanic Region is in the central area of the peninsula. Its coastline

is pounded by the rough seas, creating an unspoiled wilderness. The Shiretoko Peninsula is the third area in Japan to be designated as a World Heritage Site for nature. The site includes the peninsula itself and the surrounding seas to a distance of about three kilometers off the coast.

In winter, drift ice comes to the coast and covers the Sea of Okhotsk. This is the southern limit of Japan’s drift ice: there is no drift ice south of this point. The drift ice also brings with it abundant plankton, which enables many fish and shellfish species to inhabit the area off the coast. In the fall, salmon swim up the rivers from the sea; some of them are caught by bears and eagles. The soil is also very fertile and many kinds of plants grow in the region. In recognition of its valuable natural environment and the important food chain connecting the sea and the land, the Shiretoko Peninsula was designated as a World Heritage Site for nature by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) in 2005.

Some famous tourist spots on the peninsula include the five lakes called Shiretoko Go-ko and the Kamui-wakka Falls hot springs. Although nearby Oshinko Falls is not part of the heritage site, it is an attractive and popular tourist spot. Boat cruising tours are popular because they are the only way to see many of the remotest places of interest.

Vocabulary

tip 尖端 spectacular 壮観な pound 打ち砕く unspoiled 〈自然〉が損なわれていない designate 認定する heritage 遺産 include 含む drift ice 流氷 limit 限界 abundant 豊富な enable 可能にする inhabit 生息する soil 土壌 fertile 〈土地が〉肥えた recognition 承認 *recognize 承認する valuable 貴重な the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources 国際自然保護連合 attractive 魅力的な remote 人里離れた

Exercises



Choose the word or phrase that is similar in meaning to the underlined part of the sentence.

1. It has spectacular views and rich natural gifts.
a) interesting b) fighting c) impressive d) understandable
2. The site includes the peninsula itself and the surrounding seas.
a) covers b) keeps c) creates d) builds
3. The drift ice also brings with it abundant plankton, which enables many fish and shellfish species to inhabit the area off the coast.
a) some b) plentiful c) a few d) a little
4. The soil is also very fertile and many kinds of plants grow in the region.
a) broad b) narrow c) expensive d) rich
5. The Shiretoko Peninsula was designated as a World Heritage Site for nature.
a) registered b) discovered c) appeared d) rejected



Write T for the true statements and F for the false statements.

1. The Shiretoko Peninsula, which is on the western tip of Hokkaido, has wonderful views and many natural gifts. _____
2. The natural heritage of the site includes both land and sea. _____
3. The drift ice brings abundant plankton so that many fish and shellfish species can live there. _____
4. The soil of the area is not fertile enough for plants to grow there. _____
5. The Shiretoko Peninsula was designated as a World Heritage Site for nature because of its natural environment and food chain. _____