



Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve



UNESCO Biosphere Reserve system

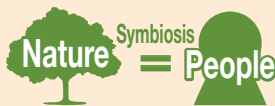
What are UNESCO Biosphere Reserves?

Official name: Biosphere Reserves

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are a business launched by UNESCO in 1976 for the purpose of balancing the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems.

While the World Heritage system in principle protects unspoiled nature, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves aim for symbiosis between nature and human society.

A total of 669 regions from 120 countries are registered (as of June 2017).



Registered in Japan: 9 regions (as of June 2017)

Mount Haku (Ishikawa Prefecture, Gifu Prefecture, Toyama Prefecture, Fukui Prefecture), Odaigahara, Mount Omine and Osugidani (Mie Prefecture, Nara Prefecture), Shiga Highlands (Nagano Prefecture, Gunma Prefecture), Yakushima and Kuchinoerabu-jima (Kagoshima Prefecture), Aya (Miyazaki Prefecture), Minami-Alps (Yamanashi Prefecture, Nagano Prefecture, Shizuoka Prefecture), Tadami (Fukushima Prefecture), Sobu, Katamuki and Okue (Oita Prefecture, Miyazaki Prefecture), Minakami (Gunma Prefecture, Niigata Prefecture)

Three functions and regions

Preservation function

(Conservation of biodiversity)

Being an important region for preserving biodiversity, including ecosystems representative of biological geographical zones where there is some human intervention

Academic research support

Providing places for surveys, research, education and training for the sake of sustainable development

Economic and social development

Taking measures that can be a model in Japan and overseas for sustainable development in harmony with natural environment conservation

These are not independent functions but have a relationship in which UNESCO Biosphere Reserves reinforce one another.

To fulfill these three functions, we have established three regions.

Core regions

Regions in which the natural environment must be strictly protected

Buffer regions

Regions that act as a cushion between core and transition regions to protect core regions from human activity

Transition regions

Regions that aim for sustainable development such as human habitation, environmentally friendly industrial activity, etc.



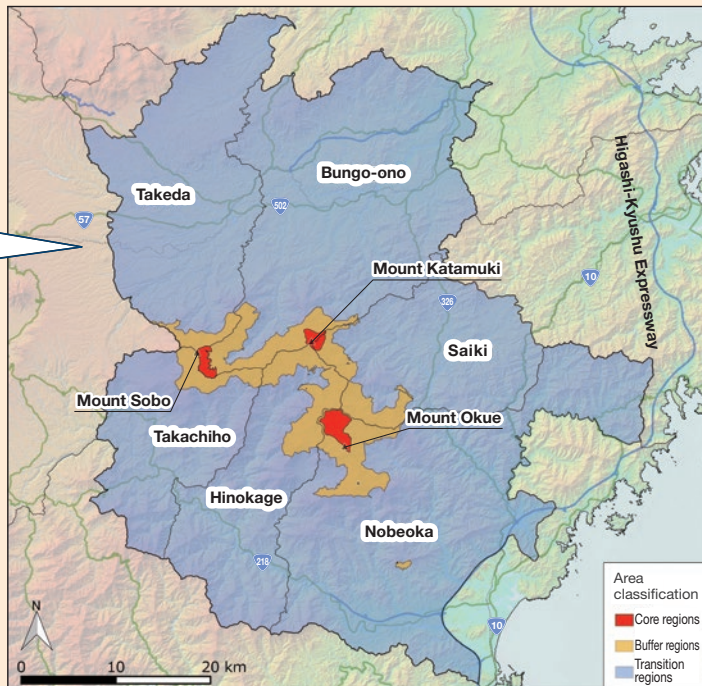
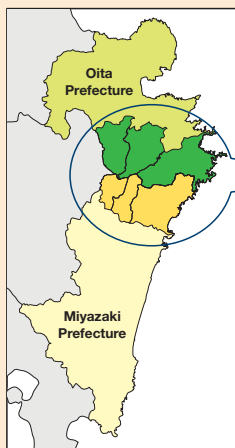


Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve

Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve

The Sobo-Katamuki-Okue mountain range and surrounding area straddling Oita and Miyazaki Prefectures has developed a diverse and precious ecosystem with its unique natural beauty and distinctive topography and geology. The people living in the region have long respected and protected this rich nature while making good use of the bounty it offers.

Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve Zoning map ▶



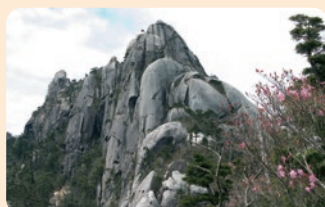
Classification	Area (ha)
Core regions	1,580
Buffer regions	17,748
Transition regions	224,344
Total Biosphere Reserve	243,672

Area classification
■ Core regions
■ Buffer regions
■ Transition regions

The prefectural and municipal map was created by the Sobo Katamuki Biosphere Reserve Oita and Miyazaki Promotion Council based on MLIT's "National Land Numerical Information (Administrative Area Data)" (2013). (<http://nlftp.mlit.go.jp/ikf/>) The background map was created using a Geographical Survey Institute file (color elevation map) from the Geographical Survey Institute. (The ocean areas were created using materials of the Japan Coast Guard's Ocean Information Bureau.) (<http://www.gsi.go.jp/>)

Features of Sobo Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve

Steep mountainous terrain and beautiful valleys



The region offers unique scenic beauty, including rocky ridges from volcanic activity in every direction, and magnificent cliffs and beautiful low hill valleys that capture the attention of visitors.

Wide range of vegetation and rare species



Home to a wide range of vegetation as well as rare animal species such as the Japanese serow and the Sobo salamander, the region is a biological treasure trove.

Conservation and use of abundant nature



Local residents carry out nature conservation activities and sustainable use of natural resources (agriculture, forestry and tourism) while preserving nature.

Natural Features of Sobo-Katamuki-Okue Mountain Range 1

~Steep mountains and deep valleys~

Famous for its steep mountainous terrain and magnificent ridgelines, the Sobo-Katamuki-Okue mountain range has a complex topography and geology, including undulating rocky peaks, precipitous cliffs, and a network of gorges running through valleys, creating a unique and seasonally changing landscape that delights all who visit.



Mount Sobo seen from Tengu Iwa
(Takeda, Bungo-ono, Takachiho)

With its sharp ridgeline and sheer rock face, the ruggedly shaped Mount Sobo evokes awe among the people of the region.



Kawakami Valley
(Bungo-ono)

Covered in lush green during the summer, Kawakami Valley has been selected as one of the hundred best places for forest bathing.



Mount Katamuki
(Saiki, Bungo-ono, Hinokage)

The name "Katamuki" means "tilting", and was given to this mountain because it tilts toward Mount Sobo. Its special feature is its magnificent rocky peak.



Mitate Valley
(Hinokage)

Famous for its strangely shaped rocks and clear streams, Mitate Valley becomes brilliantly colored in autumn as its trees change color.



Mount Okue (Wakuzuka)
(Nobeoka)

With its stunning granite cliffs, Mount Okue becomes adorned with Akebono azaleas every spring.



Snowcapped Mount Katamuki
(Saiki, Bungo-ono, Hinokage)

In winter, the Sobo-Katamuki-Okue mountain range turns into a silent, silver world covered in glistening frost and snow.

Natural Features of Sobo-Katamuki-Okue Mountain Range 2

~Wide range of vegetation and rare species~

There are still many natural forests at high altitude in the Sobo-Katamuki-Okue mountain range, where a wide range of vegetation from warm temperate to cool temperature can be found depending on the mountain height. It is a precious area, home to many rare plants and animals with limited areas to live such as the Japanese serow, a special natural monument, and the so-called Sohayaki group of plants, said to reveal the origins of the Japanese archipelago. These rare species are endangered so we need to protect their habitat environment.

*Sohayaki plants: Endemic species distributed evenly over the mountainous regions of Kii Province, Shikoku and Kyushu, the areas of the Japanese archipelago that have been dry land the longest.



Japanese serow

A government designated special natural monument, the Japanese serow is an endemic Japanese species. There are fears that it will become extinct in the Kyushu region.



Kirengeshoma

Photo: Shusei Hirano

The sohayaki-group plant has a characteristic yellow trumpet-shaped flower. It is an endangered species.



Sobo salamander

Photo: Bungo-ono Natural History Society

An endemic salamander living only in the streams of the Sobo-Katamuki-Okue mountain range, it was described as a new species in 2014.



Giant Japanese beech

Photo: Takeshi Oda

There is a vertical distribution of various kinds of vegetation in the remote areas of the Sobo-Katamuki-Okue mountain range, where this Giant Japanese beech tree can also be found.



Great purple emperor

The great purple emperor, an endangered species, is characterized by its vivid coloring and has been designated the national butterfly of Japan.



Tsukushi lakebono azalea

Found on mountainsides at altitudes above 1,000m, this species is peculiar to Kyushu and enjoyed by many hill climbers in spring.

Symbiosis between Nature and People in Sobo-Katamuki-Okue Mountain Range 1

~Protecting and nurturing precious nature for future generations~

To conserve the rich nature of the Sobo-Katamuki-Okue mountain range and leave it for future generations, we try to protect our precious native forests and also conduct tree-planting and other proper forest functionality improvement measures, ecosystem surveys, wildlife damage prevention measures, river environmental improvement measures, and so on.

Surveying vegetation, etc. in remote mountain areas



Photo: Bungo-ono City

Fireflies along the restored Hakusan River

Tree thinning to maintain the functionality of forests



Photo: Nobeoka City

~Feeling and learning about nature and conveying its importance to future generations~

In order to present the rich nature of the Sobo-Katamuki-Okue mountain range to the next generation and convey the importance of their conservation, we carry out education and training on symbiosis. The Sobo, Katamuki and Okue region is also a famous mountain climbing spot, and in order to communicate its appeal to people outside the area we are vigorously promoting eco-tourism, canyoning and bouldering, nature experiences that utilize the natural environment.

Start of the mountain-climbing season at Mount Sobo (Mountaintop Festival)



Photo: Takachiho Town



Photo: Bungo-ono City

Environment education and nature watching event with children

Canyoning at Fujikawachi Valley



Photo: Saiki City

Symbiosis between Nature and People in Sobo-Katamuki-Okue Mountain Range 2

~Respecting nature and handing down received tradition to the next generation~

Since ancient times, people in this region have been grateful for the produce of the Sobo-Katamuki-Okue mountain range with which they closely interact in the course of their daily lives, and have performed kagura dances and lion dances at festivals to pray for their harvest and their safety. To this day, they retain this respect for nature and are taking steps to pass their traditions on to future generations.



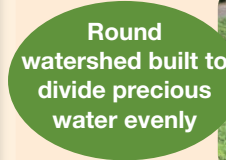
Handing down
folk customs to
children

Ohito Kabuki,
the only village
kabuki in
Kyushu



~Utilizing what nature provides and handing down a traditional way of life to future generations~

In the challenging natural environment of this steep terrain, residents have accumulated the knowledge and skills to make the most of what nature provides. Previously, the region prospered as a leading mining area of Japan, and various industries such as agriculture, forestry and bamboo work have continuously been handed down. Nowadays, it is one of the country's main producing areas of items such as timber, shiitake mushrooms, and Japanese star anise used in Buddhist services.



Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve's Measures

Principles behind activities of Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve

Handing down the **forests**, **waters** and **way of life** nurtured
by the peaks and valleys to future generations
~Holding nature in awe~

Having received UNESCO registration, the Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve aims to hand down to the next generation the rich natural environment of the region as well as the way of life of the people who have accomplished its development while revering nature.

Basic action policies

Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve

Basic policy 1

Continuous conservation of precious ecosystem

- (1) Enhance conservation functions by promoting research surveys
- (2) Promote conservation activities to be done by local residents

Basic policy 2

Support for academic research, surveys and training

- (1) Promote research surveys by constructing an academic research system
- (2) Promote ESD in coordination with communities
- (3) Contribute as a model for solving issues in Japan and overseas

Basic policy 3

Sustainable development through symbiosis with nature

- (1) Develop the region through continuous use in keeping with the times
- (2) Secure and develop the bearers of the next generation

In order to fully carry out its three functions, the Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve works closely with related organizations to implement measures in line with the above basic policies.

History of the Promotion Council

February 2015

Sobo Katamuki UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Oita and Miyazaki Promotion Council established

August 2016

National recommendations determined
(Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, MAB planning subcommittee)

June 2017

Registration decided
(UNESCO MAB planning international coordination board of directors)

September 2017

Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve Promotion Council established

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More detailed information is available on our website!
Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve Promotion Council website
<http://sobokatamuki-br-council.org/>

