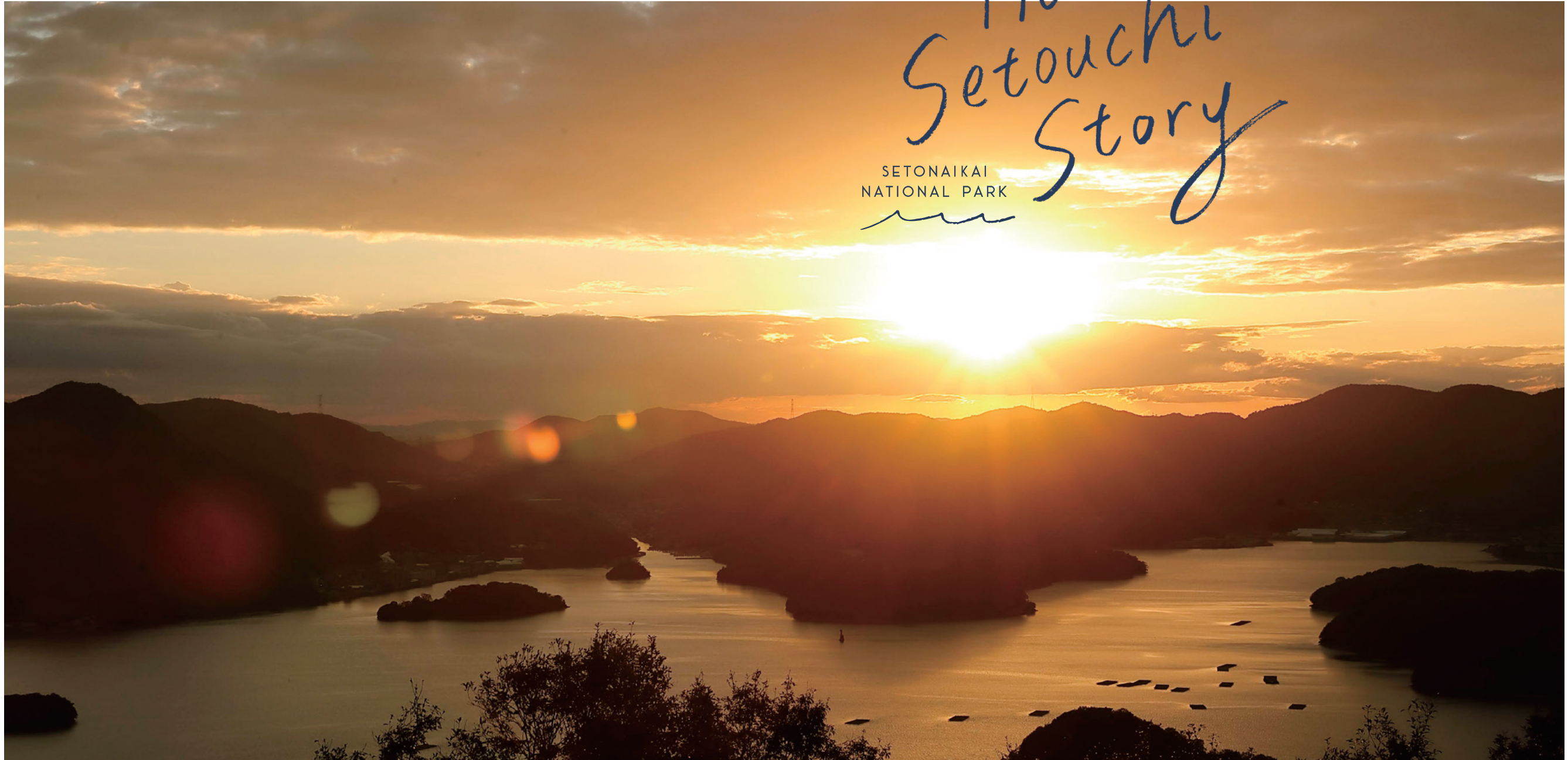


<https://www.env.go.jp/park/setonaikai/>

The Setouchi Story

SETONAIKAI
NATIONAL PARK



Ministry of the Environment
2023.3

Tied to the Setonaikai National Park



The Hinase Islands
Ushimado

Introduction

What do you think of when you hear the word “national park”?

You may have an image of an expanse of virgin forest, inhabited by wild animals.

National parks, which are designated by the Japanese government as one of Japan’s representative natural landscapes, are characterized by the diversity of their environments, including forests, farmlands, and villages.

While there are places where nature remains almost untouched, you can also experience the history and culture of the region, which are interwoven with nature, people, and life.

The Seto Inland Sea (Setonaikai) is a scenic area, with a blue sea for as far as the eye can see. This beautiful scenery of countless islands of various sizes has been praised by many geographers as “the most fascinating place in the world.” No wonder it was designated as the first “National Park” of Japan.

The islands and port towns of the Seto Inland Sea, which have prospered since ancient times as a domestic and international shipping route, are a place where nature and human life coexist. The scenery gives a sense of nostalgia. Even though the landscape has changed over time, it is still loved today.

In *the Setouchi Story* you will discover new charms of the Setonaikai National Park that you may not have noticed yet, by getting in touch with the thoughts of the people who live and work there. The magnificent landscapes in which “nature and people coexist” are the starting point of this national park. The words of people who are fascinated by this region will give you a chance to think anew about your hometown. The sights that should be familiar to you may strike a chord with you.

Each person’s story is filled with love for the Setouchi area.

Through *the Setouchi Story*, may your life be enriched!

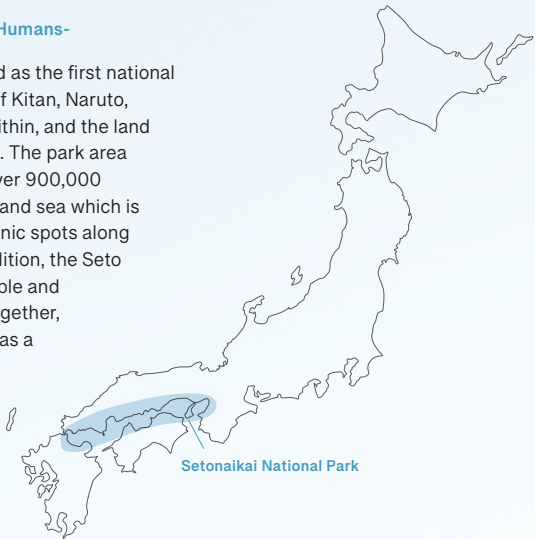
Setonaikai National Park

Islands and the Sea That Keep Shining

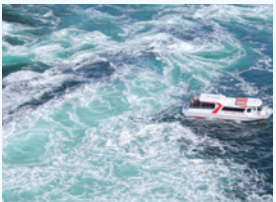
- An Inland Sea Archipelago Landscape with a Harmony between Nature and Humans-

Setonaikai National Park together with Unzen and Kirishima were designated as the first national parks of Japan in 1934. The vast area of the sea surrounded by five straits of Kitan, Naruto, Kanmon, Akashi, and Hoyo, with Bisanseto Strait at the center, the islands within, and the land area overlooking such sea and islands have been assigned as the park areas. The park area extends over 11 prefectures and is the largest national park in Japan with over 900,000 hectares including the sea area. It features archipelago landscapes of the inland sea which is comprised of a large number of islands of various sizes. There are many scenic spots along the coastline where these extraordinary landscapes can be observed. In addition, the Seto Inland Sea is a region where cultures have prospered from early on, and people and nature have coexisted. An amiable scenery of nature and people dwelling together, such as terraced fields on the islands and port towns which were developed as a place for people engaged in the fishery to wait for the tide to turn, is one of the biggest charms of this place.

[Date of Designation]	March 16,1934
[Area]	67,308 ha (Land area) 837,541 ha (Sea area)
[Relative Prefectures]	Osaka Pref., Hyogo Pref., Wakayama Pref., Okayama Pref., Hiroshima Pref., Yamaguchi Pref., Tokushima Pref., Kagawa Pref., Ehime Pref., Fukuoka Pref., Oita Pref.



Mt. Washu (Kurashiki City, Okayama Prefecture)



Naruto Whirlpools (Tokushima Prefecture)



Mt. Shiude (Kagawa Prefecture)



Hoogahara (Ehime Prefecture)

Mt. Yudachi Ukeyama with a view as far as Shodoshima Island, the Hinase Islands, and Ushimado, which developed as a port for waiting for the wind and tide

This time we will visit Mt. Yudachi Ukeyama and the Hinase Islands in the Seto Inland Sea area. Mt. Yudachi Ukeyama is a scenic spot in Bizen City, Okayama Prefecture, which offers a panoramic view of the Seto Inland Sea, its bays, and oyster rafts below. The Hinase Islands consist of 13 islands of various sizes in the Seto Inland Sea. From the mainland, we will cross the “Bizen ♥ Hinase Ohashi Bridge” and travel through the prefecture's largest island, Kakuijima Island, which is home to many wild animals such as deer and pheasants, to Kashirajima Island. We will also visit Ushimado, a port town in Setouchi City called “Japan's Aegean Sea,” which was a stopover for the Chosen Tsushinshi (the Korean Emissary). In this area, we will visit Maejima Island, Kuroshima Island, and other islands off the coast of the Seto Inland Sea, meet people involved in the national park and listen to their hearts. With the scenic beauty of each area, let your mind wander to Setonaikai National Park.





Eelgrass bed revitalization activities
fostered a sense of community unity.

What we can do to pass on a bountiful sea to the future generations

Mr. FUNAHASHI, Miyoshi

Representative Director, MINNA-DE-BIZEN

— Mr. FUNAHASHI, Miyoshi of Minna-de-Bizen manages “Hinase Umi Lab,” a facility for marine education located on Kashirajima Island in the Hinase Islands. He is promoting the importance of the ocean to the children who will be responsible for the next generation by extending the circle of Sato-umi creation that has permeated the region since the eelgrass bed revitalization activities began.

Thinking about the worsening marine debris problem as “our own business”

I like the view from the Kashirajima Ohashi Bridge at the entrance to Kashirajima Island. The evening view is beautiful, especially in November, when the sun sets directly in front of you, so you can take beautiful pictures. Although Kashirajima Island is not within the designated area of Setonaikai National Park, you can enjoy a 360-degree panoramic view of the national park from the Mt. Tanukiyama Observatory. When attracting inbound

tourists (foreign visitors to Japan), the natural environment of this national park and the scenery of the port town are most appreciated. There are also beaches and nature trails on the island. As you stroll around the island, you will learn about the island’s landscape and the lifestyles of the people who live here. I would like visitors to experience this part of the island. Hinase is my wife’s hometown, and we built a house there when I

profile Born in Okayama City, Okayama prefecture in 1954. After working for a major department store for 32 years, he established a merchandising business dealing in souvenirs in Hinase. Since 2011, as a member of the Hinase Town Tourism Association (at the time), he has been involved in comprehensive coastal management and the marine ranch concept. In 2015, he became the Secretary General of the Bizen Tourism Association, and in 2017, he participated in the establishment of the Bizen City Sato-umi Sato-yama Brand Promotion Council. In 2019, he established General Incorporated Association Minna-de-Bizen and became its Representative Director. In 2021, he became Secretary General of the Okayama Prefecture Bizen-yaki Pottery Society Co-operative. He coordinates the three organizations that support tourism in Bizen City.

was 30 years old, partly because of my love of fishing. When I was working for a department store, I lived alone in Osaka for a long time. After I retired and came back here, I learned about the local area through “drinking communication” with the locals, which helped me to become more and more familiar with this place. It is a luxury to eat the freshest fish of the day. On the other hand, microplastics such as finely milled Styrofoam washed ashore. I witnessed the worsening problem of marine debris in the Seto Inland Sea, designated as a national park.

Marine debris entering the Seto Inland Sea is estimated to be 4,500 tons per year. In December 2020, the Nippon Foundation and the four Seto Inland Sea coastal prefectures of Okayama, Hiroshima, Kagawa, and Ehime launched “Setouchi Oceans X,” a project to combat this problem. The project aims to reduce the inflow of litter by 70% and increase the amount of litter collected by 10% or more. We have been selected as one of four companies and organizations in Okayama Prefecture to receive grants for the first phase of activities such as beach cleanup. What should we do to protect the sea in the future? It is important to look at reality as “our own business” and to think seriously and practically, not



in idealistic terms. I hope that the Seto Inland Sea will not become worse than it is now. To achieve this, we must first take action. I am trying to take the initiative and broaden our scope of activities as much as possible.



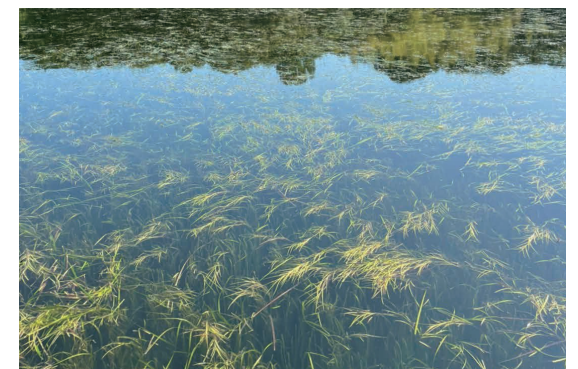
Much marine debris, such as Styrofoam and pieces of fishery equipment, wash up on the seashore. If fish mistake them for food and eat them, they can have a negative impact on other animals in the food chain.

Sustainable community development spreading from eelgrass bed revitalization activities

The roots of “Minna-de-Bizen” can be traced back to the eelgrass bed revitalization activities that the local fishery cooperative started around 1985. Eelgrass is a seagrass that provides spawning and nurturing grounds and shelter for fish and shellfish. Hinase has long developed through fishery such as Tsubo-ami-ryo fishing, but during the period of rapid economic growth, the Seto Inland Sea was polluted by the factory and household wastewater. As a result, the catch of fish declined sharply. When they looked into the situation, they found that the seafloor had turned into sludge and was in bad condition, making it difficult for oxygen to enter the water. Fishery workers believed that the massive decline of the eelgrass beds from nearly 600 hectares (ha) at their peak to only 12 ha caused this. So they began to collect eelgrass seeds, sow them in the sea, and grow them again.

I became involved in these activities around 2012. When I participated in the discussions, there was a lively exchange of ideas on how to develop the revitalization of coastal areas, what we should do to increase eelgrass beds, and other ways to utilize and clean the sea. The discussions were inspiring and a lot of fun. After the aging of the fishery workers and other labor shortages, Hinase Junior High School students began to participate in the project. The students boarded fishing boats to collect drift

seagrass as part of their integrated learning class and listened to the fishery workers talk about their experiences. Then the local people joined in, asking, “What are you doing?” Before, the fishery workers regarded eelgrass entangled in the screws of their boats as a nuisance. Now they understand the necessity of eelgrass, and they have more opportunities to learn from scholars. The circles of activity grew throughout the community, with people saying, “This is very important,” and “Let’s all do it together.”



In Okayama Prefecture, there is an ordinance that penalizes people for picking rooted eelgrass.

In terms of biodiversity, the blessings from the mountains flow through the rivers to the sea, leading to oyster cultivation and fish habitat. The National Eelgrass Summit was held in Bizen City in 2016, which led to the establishment of the “Bizen City Sato-umi Sato-yama Brand Promotion Council” in 2017. It aims to promote community development based on the creation of a sato-umi through the revitalization of eelgrass beds and also based on utilizing the rich natural environment, cultural heritage, and valuable resources in Bizen, including Hattoji Furusato Village, which retains the original landscape of our hometown, the Former Shizutani School, selected as a Japan

“Bringing Children to the Sea” is the keywords. A new base for tourism

We want children to feel the ocean is “their own business.” To pass on the richness of the oceans to the next generation, in the fall of 2021, we established the “Hinase Umi Lab” under the “Nagisa-no-Koban (seaside-patrol-stations) Project” of the Nippon Foundation, which is designed to provide a base for marine education, safety management, and marine activities. To reduce the number of uninterested children in the sea, we have been conducting a variety of activities under the concept of “Bringing Children to the Sea,” including a tour of eelgrass beds, harvesting and sowing eelgrass seeds, oyster cultivation and other fishery experiences, art crafts using marine debris, sea kayaking, and more as well as various experience programs in cooperation with local fisheries cooperative and companies to learn about environmental issues related to the sea. Some children have gone on to major in fisheries science at university as a result of their learning here. We built this lab next to the ground golf course because we thought it would be a good place for the children and local senior people to interact with each other. Just as “Developing new ideas based on learning from the past” was the most important thing when developing hit products for a department store, it is an advantage to listen to the stories of the senior citizens in order to learn about the local lifestyle and culture and their backgrounds. We should revitalize what has existed for a long time and pass on the good qualities of the past to the children. It doesn't matter if it is trivia. If the information is understood and conveyed correctly, it will lead to hospitality and tourism. We also need to communicate the importance of the mountains as well as the sea. I hope this lab will become a base for people to understand the importance of preserving the natural environment here. In 2022, we received a special award in the “15th Industrial Tourism Town Development Awards,” which honor organizations

Heritage site, and Bizen-yaki pottery, which has a 1,000-year tradition. And in 2019, we launched “Minna-de-Bizen” which consists of about 20 organizations including fisheries cooperatives, agricultural cooperatives, commercial and industrial organizations, tourism organizations, companies, community development organizations, local governments, NPOs, and schools. In my opinion, aiming for a sustainable town that coexists with nature by utilizing the sato-umi, sato-yama, and everything else we have here leads us to create new charms and tourist attractions. It took about two years for everyone to be able to think of it as “their own business”.



After enjoying the sea kayak, they created original accessories using marine plastic debris. Children think about the marine environment through a variety of experiences.

and companies that promote regional development through industrial tourism, in recognition of its longstanding marine conservation activities that have spread throughout the region, as well as its community-wide contribution to the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). To know the ocean is to understand the mountains and vice versa. Hinase Umi Lab also cooperates with the “Sato-yama Sato-umi Koryukan Shinpio,” the first Nagisa-no-Koban in the mountainous area located in the Hokubo-area, Maniwa City, and actively interacts with it. The restaurant in our facility also serves dishes made with local ingredients from the sea and mountains. If there is good food, people will come. We continue learning with the children, valuing their genuine feelings and thinking about the importance of the natural environment. We want to continue to expand the excitement and possibilities of what fun things can be done here. There are financial and other challenges, but if we all work together, this area will improve and become a more attractive tourist destination.



The person who works at Hinase Umi Lab

“Hinase Umi Lab” is a facility where you can learn about the ocean while feeling close to it.

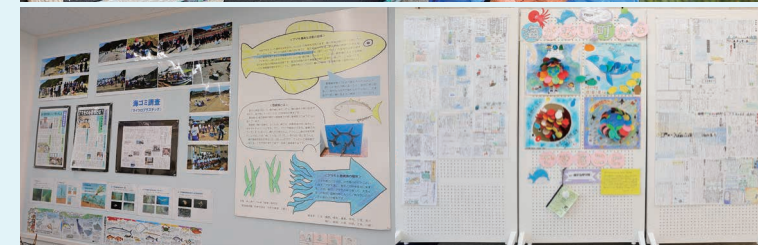
Hinase Umi Lab offers practical programs for learning about the importance of the ocean, playing in the ocean, and protecting the ocean under the themes of marine education, marine experience, and marine research. Schools in and outside of Okayama Prefecture often visit on school excursions or as part of experience-based learning. Children enjoy lectures by local fishery workers and marine experts, tours of eelgrass beds, bottom trawl fishing, oyster peeling, collecting marine debris, making herbarium and pendants using marine debris, and other activities. Participants can also enjoy walking around Kashirajima Island, touring the Hinase Islands on a sightseeing boat, and sometimes tasting Hinase's specialty “Kakioko” (oyster okonomiyaki) and kaki-jiru (oyster miso soup) served by fishery workers. In addition to raising awareness of the natural environment, we also focus on communicating the charms of the islands. At the hands-on events for parents and children, we see some parents become interested in the facility as a result of their children's learning, which makes me realize the significance of the facility's existence. I myself was born and raised in Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture, and worked for a company. Since moving here, the ocean has become more “my own business,” and I feel more strongly that we must protect it ourselves. I would like to make this



place where children can continue to come and experience the importance of the ocean as well as a place where people of all ages can become familiar with the ocean.



Secretary General of Minna-de-Bizen
Mr. SUGIMOTO, Soichi



The Hinase Umi Lab displays a variety of information on marine education, activity records, and many comments from children who have used the facility.



Children create various artworks using marine debris they pick up on the beach. The unique artworks on display at the facility provide an opportunity to learn about the current state of the Seto Inland Sea and think about environmental issues.



ひなせうみラボ
Hinase Umi Lab

A marine education center that opened in September 2021 on Kashirajima Island, in the Hinase Islands. It is a multi-purpose facility with a café overlooking the Seto Inland Sea, a BBQ area, and a ground golf course, where visitors can relax after daily stressful activities. As a “Nagisa-no-Koban,” (seaside-patrol-station) the facility plays a role in projects to build connections between the sea and people in the local community.



The beauty of the Seto Inland Sea led me to where I am now
Creating a town that inherits the old and adds the new

Mr. EGUCHI, Naoki

Setouchi City Culture and Tourism Section

Ms. GUERIN, Victoria

Member of the Bizen City Regional Revitalization Volunteers

— The two people I visited this time are promoting the Setonaikai National Park from the positions of local administration in Setouchi City and from the support staff in Bizen City, Okayama Prefecture. What to do to make the most of the charms of the park? Through this dialogue, we will consider the future of the region while touching on their thoughts and feelings.

Cities that make you feel positive. The Seto Inland Sea relaxes your soul.

— What are your impressions of the Hinase area in Bizen City and the Ushimado area in Setouchi City, located in the Setonaikai National Park?

VICTORIA : Three years ago, I visited Japan for the first time on a working holiday. I lived in Hiroshima, but I often visited Hinase because I had friends and their families in Hinase. My first impression of Hinase was that it was a wonderful place. When I returned to Hiroshima after my first visit to Hinase, tears naturally came to my eyes. It is very peaceful here, and everyone is very kind to teach me about history, culture, and things I didn't know. I can't do anything about the city's insecurity, but coming here made me feel that I might be able to do something with my life if I tried my best. Especially in Kashirajima Island, the sea is so beautiful that I went fishing for the first time and tasted cooked oysters. I scarcely liked the countryside when I was in France, but through my

experience here, I realized the fun and pleasure of the rural areas.

EGUCHI : My grandmother's house is in Ushimado, and I have been coming here often since I was a child, so I have a strong sense of locality. I was not aware of the fact that it was the Setonaikai National Park at the time. I had the impression from childhood that it was a calm and warm place. As it is called "Japan's Aegean Sea," I feel very relaxed when I look at the Seto Inland Sea from here. I personally like the view from the Otorii gate by the sea at Ushimado Jinja Shrine, which I always visit on my New Year's visit to the shrine. It is beautiful, and it makes me feel refreshed. I enjoyed watching the islands and the boats coming and going, swimming, and

I also looked forward to the fireworks display and the autumn festival every year. In winter, my grandmother would send me an 18-liter-square can of oysters from Ushimado. When I decided to become a curator, the first thing that came to mind was the Seto Inland Sea. So I looked for a job where I could see the Seto Inland Sea.

profile EGUCHI, Naoki

Born in 1996 in Soja City, Okayama Prefecture. After graduating from university, worked at the Education Division of the Mimasaka City Board of Education and Miki City Municipal Historical Museum before joining the Setouchi City Government in 2022, assigned to the Culture and Tourism Section. As a curator (specialist in cultural properties), he is in charge of cultural property administration, including research and exhibitions related to buried cultural properties, subsidies, and management.

Send out charms overseas through SNS. Introduce history and culture through stories.

— What kind of efforts are you focusing on to enhance each area, including scenic spots designated as the national park?

VICTORIA : As a member of the Regional Revitalization Volunteers, I upload photos and videos of beautiful scenery and popular spots in Bizen City, such as Otajima Island in the Hinase Islands and the former Shizutani School, a national special historic site, on SNS to appeal to people overseas. People overseas know about Osaka and Kyoto but do not know much about Bizen. It is not because they are indifferent but because they simply do not know about it. It is difficult for people from overseas to find such places in Japan. When they see pictures and videos, they say, "What a wonderful place!" "I want to go there!" In addition, to promote the appeal of Bizen ware, we produced a documentary on a Bizen ware artisan who is a living national treasure. The documentary is available on the official YouTube channel of Hinavision, a local cable TV station.



Interview with Living National Treasure Mr. ISEZAKI, Jun. The report touches on the artisan's thoughts and sends out the charm of Bizen Ware.



The view from Ushimado Port. You can leisurely enjoy the view of Maejima Island, designated as a national park.

GUERIN, Victoria

Born in 1996 in Rennes, Ille-et-Vilaine. Came to Japan for the first time on a working holiday in November 2019 while still a university student, staying in Hiroshima. After graduating from university, joined the Bizen City Regional Revitalization Volunteers in July 2022. She supports tourism promotion projects such as sending out information. In October of the same year, she accompanied Bizen City officials and served as an interpreter at the Bizen Ware PR event at the Japan Cultural Institute in Paris.

EGUCHI : As a strategic point for maritime traffic, Ushimado became an important place for shipping in the Middle Ages and was a port of call for the diplomatic mission, “Chosen Tsushinshi(the Korean Emissary)” in the Edo period (1603-1868). It is partly because of the Seto Inland Sea that the area prospered in distribution, and it was also a place where various regions and foreign countries interacted with each other and introduced a wide variety of cultures. The Honrenji Temple, which was used as a lodging house by Chosen Tsushinshi and whose precinct is designated as a National Historic Site, and the main hall, inner gate, and Banjindo are designated as National Important Cultural Properties, as well as the exotic Karako dance (Okayama Prefecture Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property), Ushimado Danjiri,

which uses the skills of temple carpenters and boat builders (Okayama Prefecture Important Tangible Folk Cultural Property), and the “Shiomachi Karakoto Street,” which retains traces of the Edo to Showa Periods, are just a few examples of the many valuable historical and cultural resources that remain here. Setouchi City has formulated a “Regional Plan for the Preservation and Utilization of Cultural Properties” to promote the preservation and utilization of cultural properties in a planned manner in 2022. The Agency for Cultural Affairs approved the plan. As part of the plan, this area, which has developed as a port town since ancient times, is positioned as a group of related cultural properties, which will be preserved and utilized in a story entitled “Cultural Gateway through the Sea.” One of the core cultural properties is Honrenji Temple,



“Shiomachi Karakoto Street,” which flourished as a port for waiting for the wind and tide

Bizen Osafune Japanese Sword Museum

Ms. Victoria attending a seminar on Bizen Ware in France.

which is interesting because such a large temple is in a port town.

VICTORIA : I think it is very important to follow the story, and that makes Japan so attractive. In the fall of 2022, I visited France with a group of Bizen Ware artisans to serve as an interpreter for a presentation promoting Bizen Ware at a forum. People in France were interested in us, and they actively asked questions of the artists, such as “What do you feel when you make them?” “What is the purpose of your work?” Everyone was moved to hear about the artist’s thoughts and feelings. People from overseas like art very much and are very interested in not only the objects but also the stories behind them. Especially since they have an image of Japanese people as being reserved in their emotional expressions, they all quite like to hear about feelings, balance, nuance, and the yin and yang.

EGUCHI : Overseas visitors are very interested in sword culture, and

the Bizen Osafune Japanese Sword Museum in Osafune is very popular. Multilingual explanations of the exhibits are ongoing at the museum. The Culture and Tourism Section is also working on various ways to promote the attractiveness of the museum to inbound visitors, such as the development of virtual reality (VR) content that allows visitors to hold the sword “Long Sword (Tachi), Unsigned Ichimonji (a.k.a. Sancho-mo)” a national treasure owned by Setouchi City, as if they were actually holding it in their hands. Although Nagashima Island in the Seto Inland Sea is not included as a national park area, I visited Nagashima-Aiseien, a national sanatorium for Hansen’s disease, as a junior high school class and learned a lot. So I would like to promote this island more as a learning place about the history of the sanatorium and human rights.

Aiming to increase the number of people interacting with each other by utilizing cultural properties and multilingualizing information

— How would you like to be involved in the development of towns that are attractive to both residents and visitors from abroad?

EGUCHI : As I became more deeply involved with local people in the course of my work related to cultural properties, I realized what kind of feelings everyone has about festivals and the importance they place on cultural assets. I could feel their love for their hometown and their local community, and also realized that historical and cultural resources passed down in the community have become the origins and identity of the local community. That is why I felt a strong desire to help preserve them for future generations. There are many things that are forgotten when the older generation of people who know the area well is gone. I would like to dig up more and more of these things, record them, and transmit them to the public. We hope to increase the number of people interacting with each other through our efforts, even as depopulation worsens. As a curator, I continue to think about ways to effectively preserve and utilize historical and cultural resources to contribute to the promotion of the community.

VICTORIA : There are many things that only the locals know, things that you don’t understand until you talk to them. For example, the origin of the place name Kubikirijima Island in the Hinase Islands is a bit chilling but interesting. The forum in France made me want to promote Bizen Ware more to people overseas. However, it is difficult to find information in English or French. There is not enough information not only about Bizen Ware but also about Bizen City. So, I am trying my best to translate the Japanese information into English and French, as well as write my SNS account in English and French. I am also proposing to establish a partnership with a French town. One of the candidates is Cancale, one of the best port towns in France and famous for its oysters. Many people like paintings, and there are various galleries. Since it is similar to Bizen City, I think it would be great if we could enhance exchanges in areas such as tourism and culture.

EGUCHI : When I came back to Okayama after graduating from



View of the Seto Inland Sea and oyster rafts from Mt. Yudachi Ukeyama



From the left, the Sotowa Beach of Kashirajima Island and the evening view from near Shiomachi Karakoto Street. Hinase and Ushimado offer beautiful views of the Seto Inland Sea, islands, and sky.

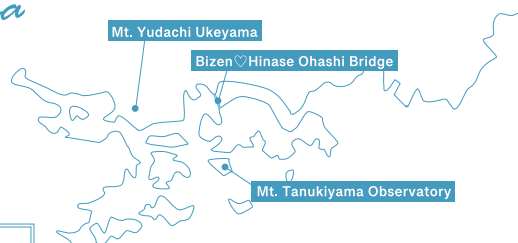
university in another prefecture, I realized again that there are many attractive things in my hometown, but I knew nothing about them. In particular, oyster rafts in the Seto Inland Sea are representative of Okayama’s scenery, and I hope many people will see them. If we can attract tourists with the charm of the Seto Inland Sea, a need for accommodations and restaurants will occur, and more people will come back to their hometowns or move to the area to operate such facilities. So we can create a virtuous cycle that will thrive the entire region. One idea to do this is to utilize vacant houses, which are becoming more and more noticeable as the population declines. There are cafes, bakeries, and guesthouses on Shiomachi Karakoto Street, and I would be happy if the town could preserve its existing culture while adding something new to attract a variety of people, and if it could continue to evolve and further increase its appeal. I would like to support it from the government as well. The cooperation of local people is indispensable, but another point of view is also necessary, so I feel that the power of people like Ms. Victoria who come from outside the city is also valuable.

VICTORIA : I didn’t realize the charm of the countryside in France until I came to Japan, and when I went back to my parents’ house for the first time in three years, I thought, “Wow, it’s so beautiful!” It is very important to look at things from the outside. Young people tend to go to big, well-known cities, but there are many good places in the countryside, and you can enjoy visiting cafes here as well. My friends who visit me every year tell me that it is a place where they can relax, and I want to do my best to promote such places. We are also working with travel agencies to include Bizen in their tour plans. I am also preparing to open a rental villa in Kashirajima Island in addition to my work as a member of the Bizen City Regional Revitalization Volunteers. Bizen is not a large town, but I hope many people will come to Bizen, even if it is just to make Bizen Ware, eat oysters, or see the scenery.



Bizen City is rich in history and traditional culture. The city offers beautiful scenery such as Mt. Yudachi Ukeyama, where you can see oyster rafts floating on the sea, Bizen♥Hinase Ohashi Bridge, and Mt. Tanukiyama Observatory on Kashirajima Island, which offers a panoramic view of the Seto Inland Sea.

Mt. Yudachi Ukeyama The Hinase Islands



Mt. Yudachi Ukeyama



Sneakers or other shoes that are easy to trail up are best!

The mountain is about 210 meters above sea level and can be reached by car to the halfway point. It is a 10-minute walk from the trailhead in front of the parking lot to the summit. The summit is an open space with a rest area.



Mt. Tanukiyama Observatory



The circular observation deck allows visitors to see the various faces of the island from different angles.



I recommend the south-facing view as it is spectacular.

If the weather is good, you can even see Shodoshima Island.

Kashirajima Island, a small island with a circumference of 4 km, is located in the Hinase Islands. The observatory is situated on the highest mountain on the island and offers a panoramic view of the Seto Inland Sea. There are also cafes and beaches nearby, where you can relax and enjoy the abundant nature.



Designated as Setonaikai National Park, this is a spot for fantastic sunsets. From the viewpoint at the summit, you can see the archipelago beauty, Hinase Islands, such as Soshima Island, Kojima Island, Nagashima Island, and Shodoshima Island in Kagawa, as well as the Katakami Ohashi Bridge. The mountain was named "Yudachi Ukeyama" after a legend that a farmer suffering from continuous drought held a "sengandaki," a ritual at the summit, which ended with a heavy evening rainfall.

*Prayer for rainfall, in which 1,000 kan (3,750kg) of firewood is burned at the mountaintop to create smoke and call the clouds.

Bizen♥Hinase Ohashi Bridge

Opened in April 2015, the 765-meter-long bridge connects the mainland of Hinase to Kakuijima Island. The unique scenery of Bizen, such as oyster rafts floating in front of you, is a sight to behold.

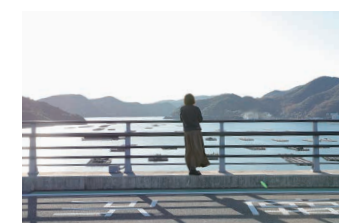


A pictograph (heart) is used in the official name.



About 800 ropes with about 30 scallop shells tucked within them are suspended from each oyster raft.

The bridge name was decided through public submissions and expresses the passionate wishes and aspirations of Bizen and Hinase.



The scenery is so soothing that we lose track of time.