



Kushiro River Multi-day Canoeing

釧路川 River Touring Map 1:25000



0 250 500 750 1000m

1cm on the map equals approx. 250m on the ground
Magnetic declination: 9° 00' W

Map by hokkadowilds.org/Rob Thomson CC BY-SA 2019/09/24

Symbol Key (some may not be present)

4km 2mpk	Route (distance gradient)	600	Contour lines (100m, 10m)
	National Highway		Power transmission lines
	Prefectural Road		Trees/shrubs
	Municipal Road		Rocks/cliff
	Minor Municipal Road		Onsen (hot spring)
	Walkway		Fumerole
	Bus route (bus stop)		Highway number
	Put in/out location		Designated campsite
	Waterfall/dam		Hut
	Rapids		Portage required

この地図の作成に当たっては、国土地理院長の承認を得て、同院発行の基礎地図情報及び電子地形図（タイル）を使用した。（承認番号 平 30 情使、第 867 号）。また、1/25,000 縮尺図 GIS データ（環境省生物多様性センター）も使用し、hokkadowilds.org が作成・加工したものである。
This map uses the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan digital basemap (tiles) and basemap data, with the permission of the Authority's director (permission no. 平 30 情使、第 867 号). It also uses modified 1:25,000 scale vegetation map GIS data created by the Biodiversity Center of Japan, Ministry of the Environment (<http://gis.biodic.go.jp>).

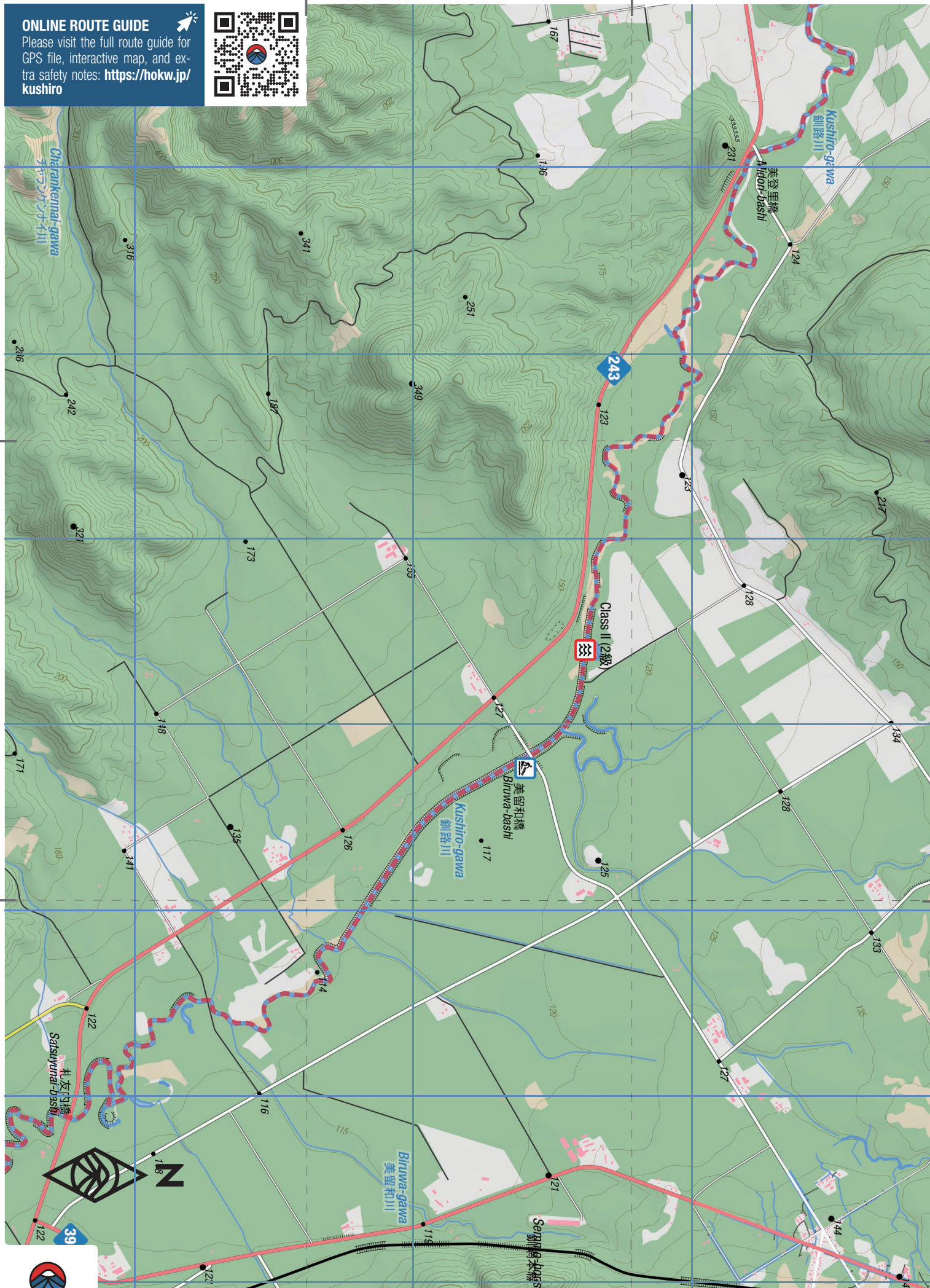
Japanese Map Glossary

Romaji	Kanji	English
bashi/hashi	橋	bridge
bunki	分岐	junction
cho	町	town
dake/mine	岳/峯	peak
eki	駅	station
goya/koya	小屋	hut
hinangoya	避難小屋	shelter
ike	池	pond
kawa/gawa	川	river
kako	火口	crater
ko/mizumi	湖	lake
kyo	峡	gorge
numa	沼	pond
onsen	温泉	hot spring
sawa	沢	stream
taira/daira	平	plateau
tani/dani	谷	valley
taki	滝	waterfall
toge	峠	pass
yama/san/zan	山	mountain



ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

Please visit the full route guide for GPS file, interactive map, and extra safety notes: <https://hokw.jp/kushiro>



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Kushiro River Map (1:25000) | HokkaidoWilds.org | 2019/09/24 | MN 9° 00' W

0 250 500 750 1000m



Class I (1級)

243

241

30km →
(Shibecha)
3.0mpk

Small drop (must scout)
落込み (下見必須)

Teshikaga-cho
弟子屈町

Mashu-eki
摩周駅

下鐘別橋

Shimotobetsu-bashi

Class II (2級)

43Sen
四十三線

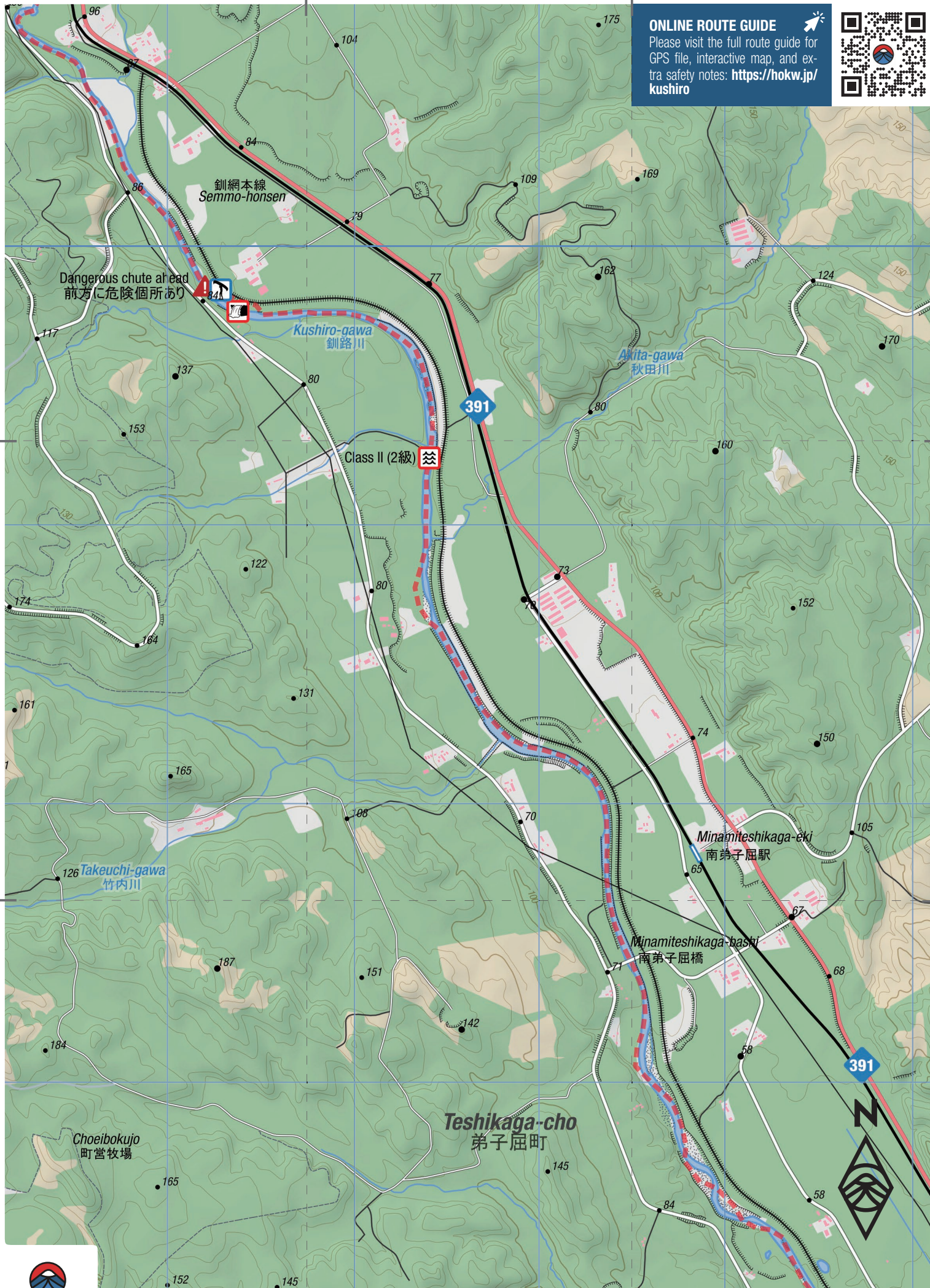
Mishi6Go
西六号

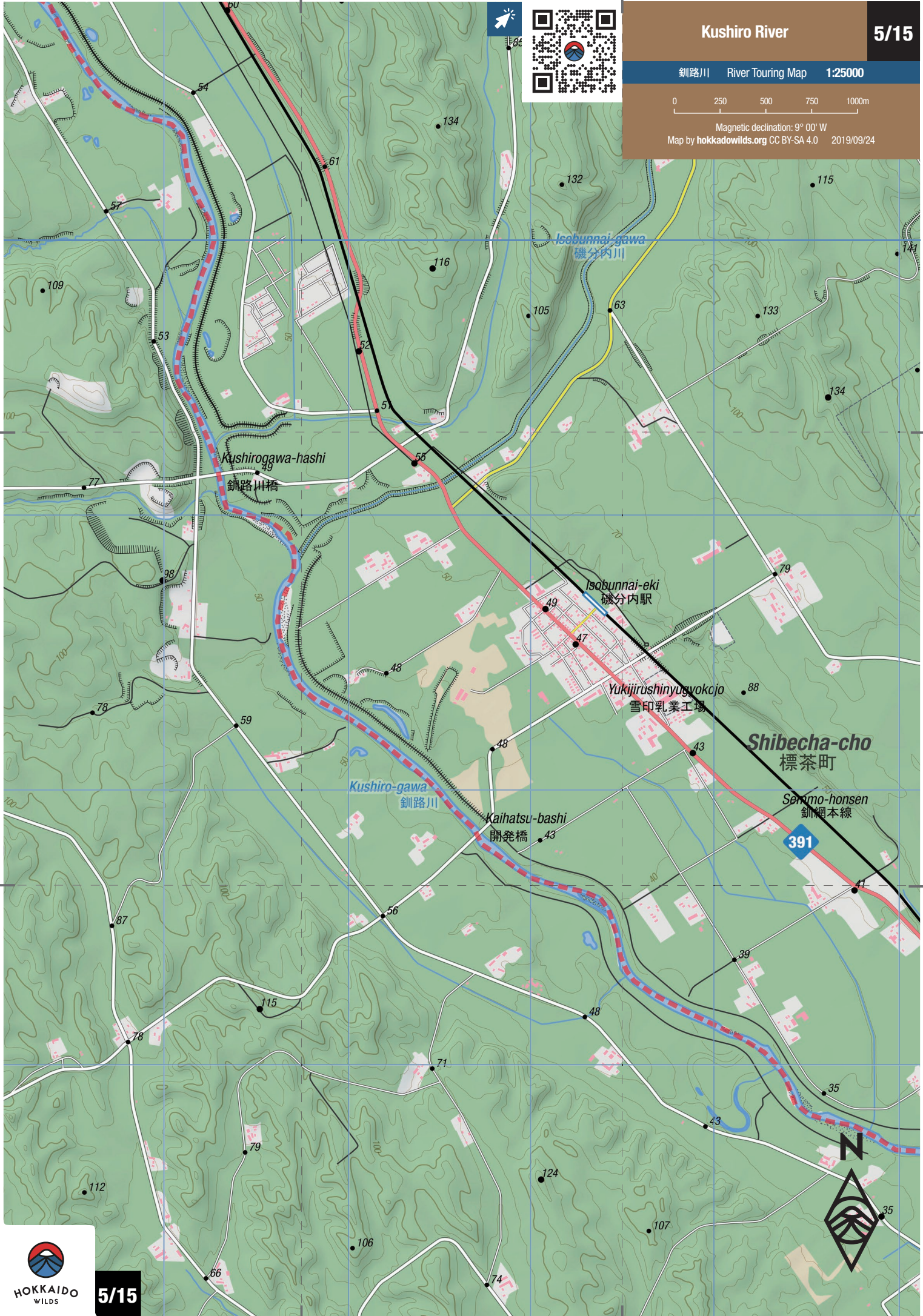
鐘別川
Tobetsu-gawa

Sogenno-mori
草原の森

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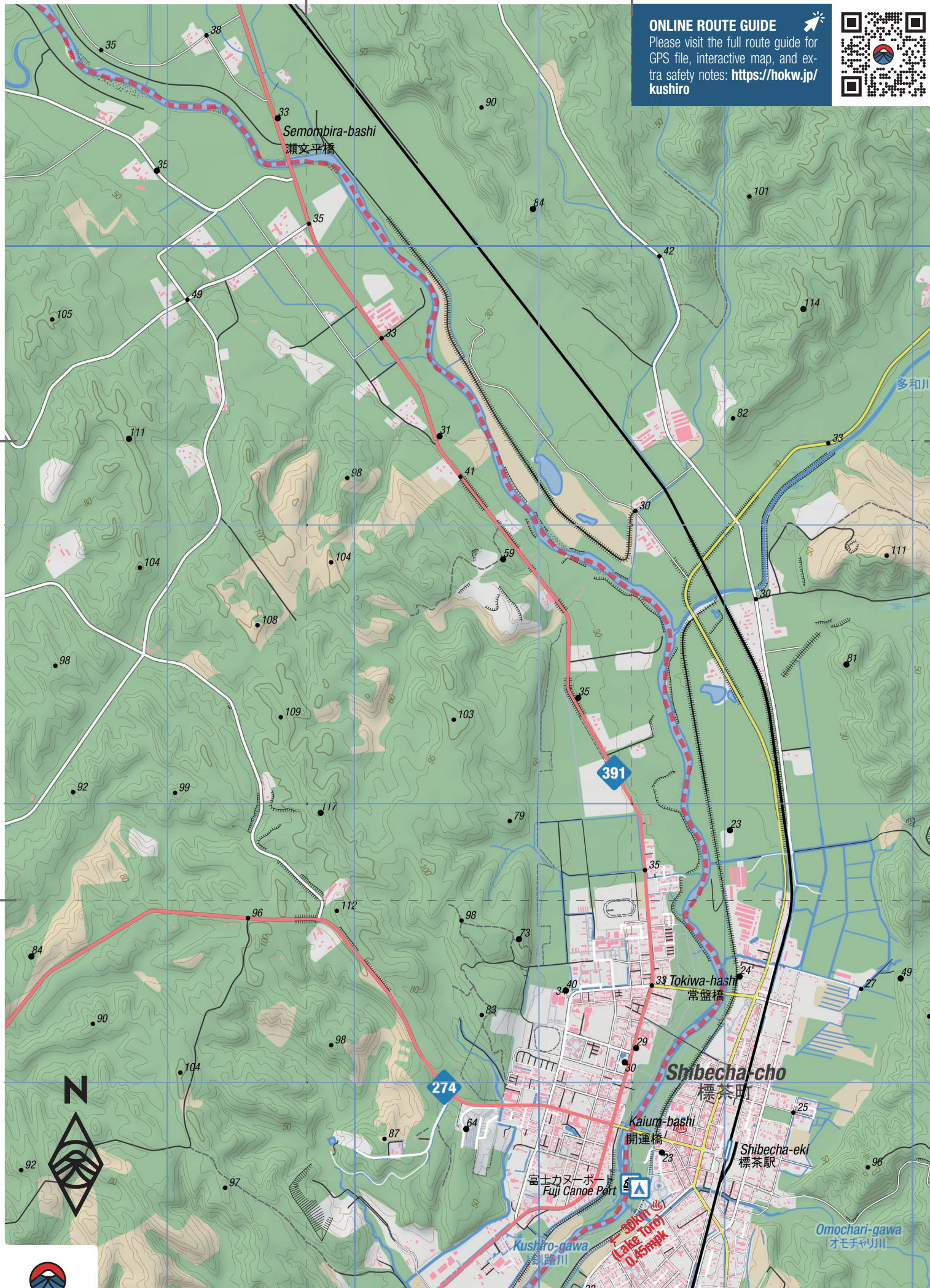
Please visit the full route guide for GPS file, interactive map, and extra safety notes: <https://hokw.jp/kushiro>





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Kushiro River

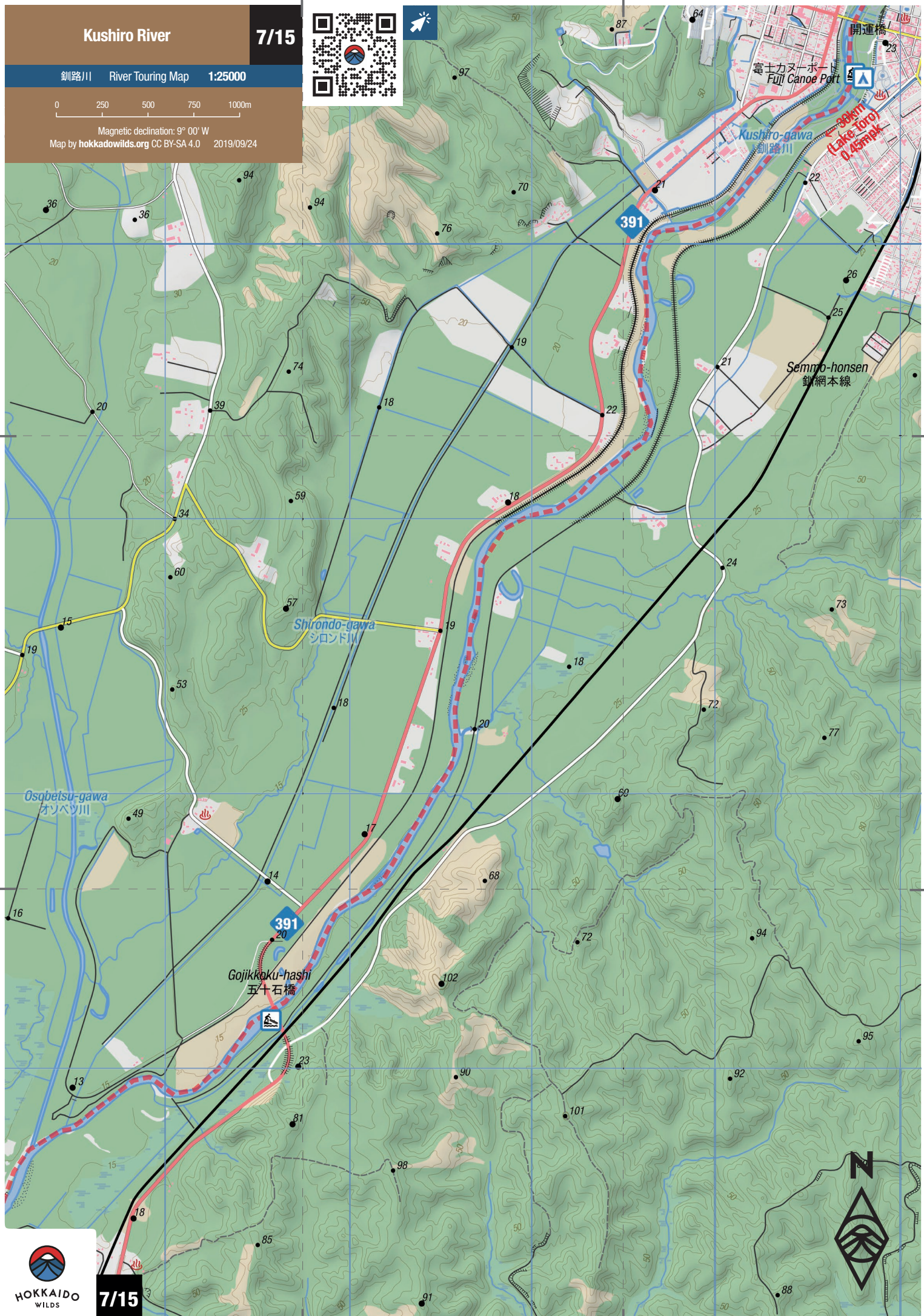
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釧路川 River Touring Map 1:25000

0 250 500 750 1000m

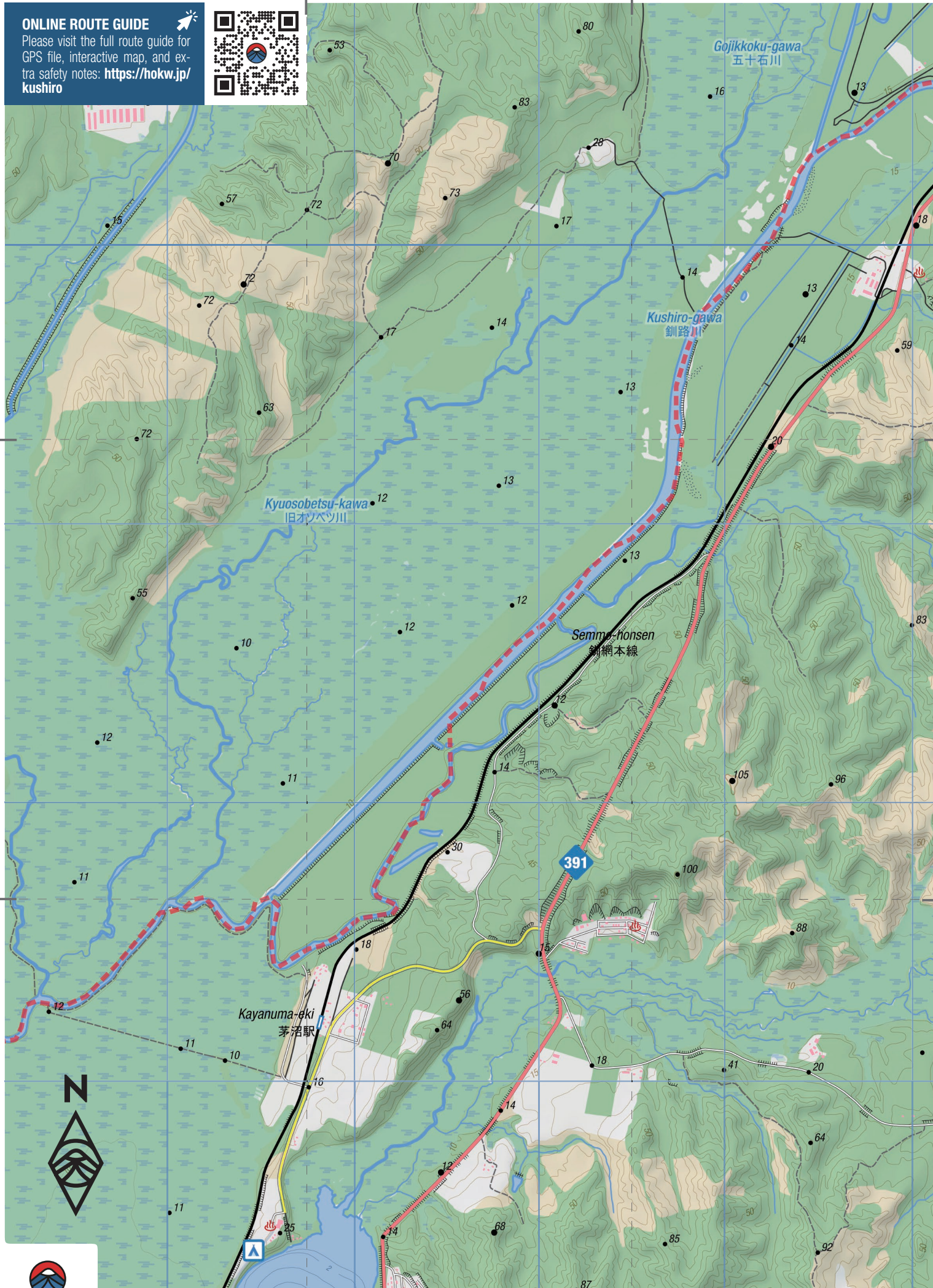
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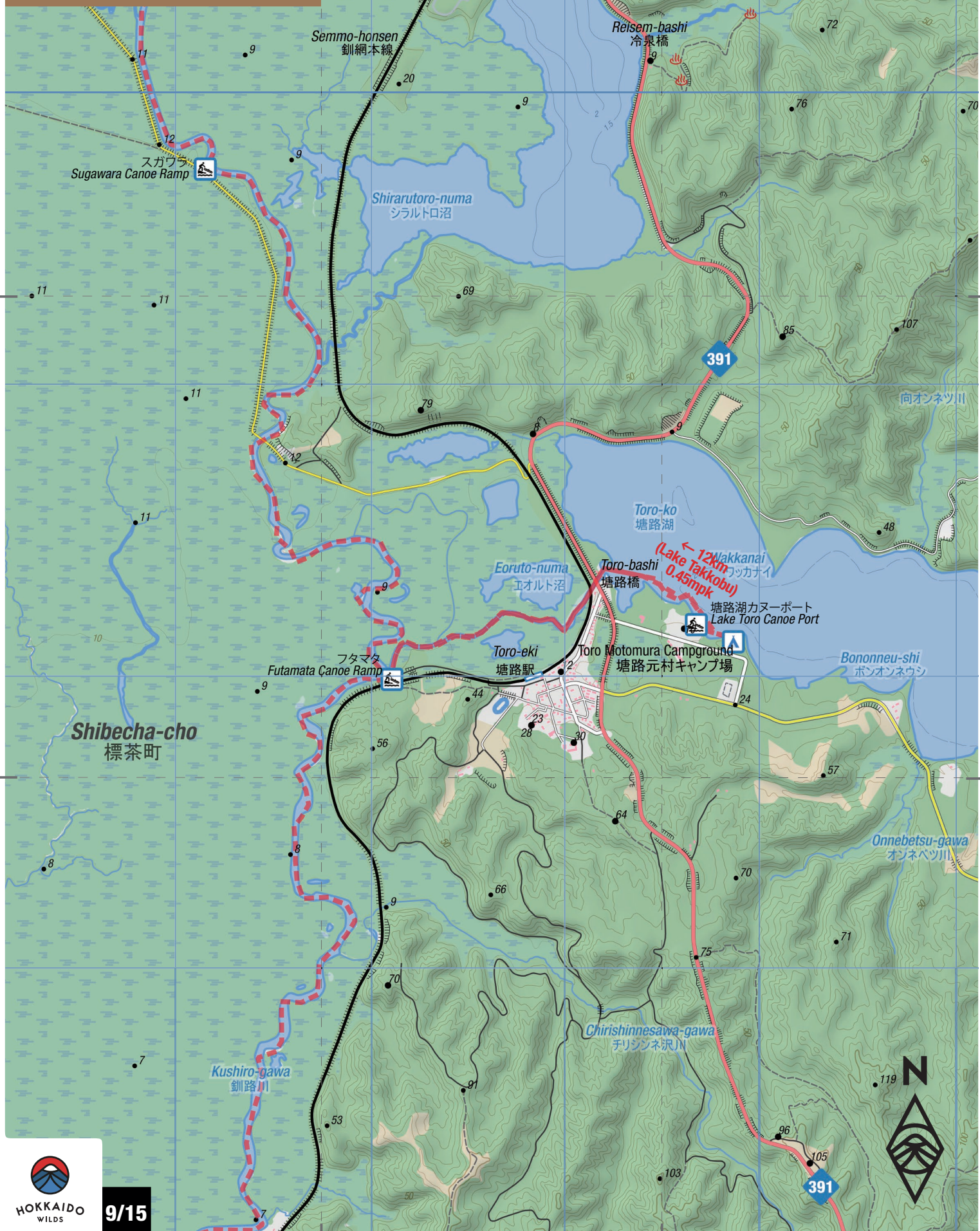
Map by hokkadowilds.org CC BY-SA 4.0 2019/09/24



ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

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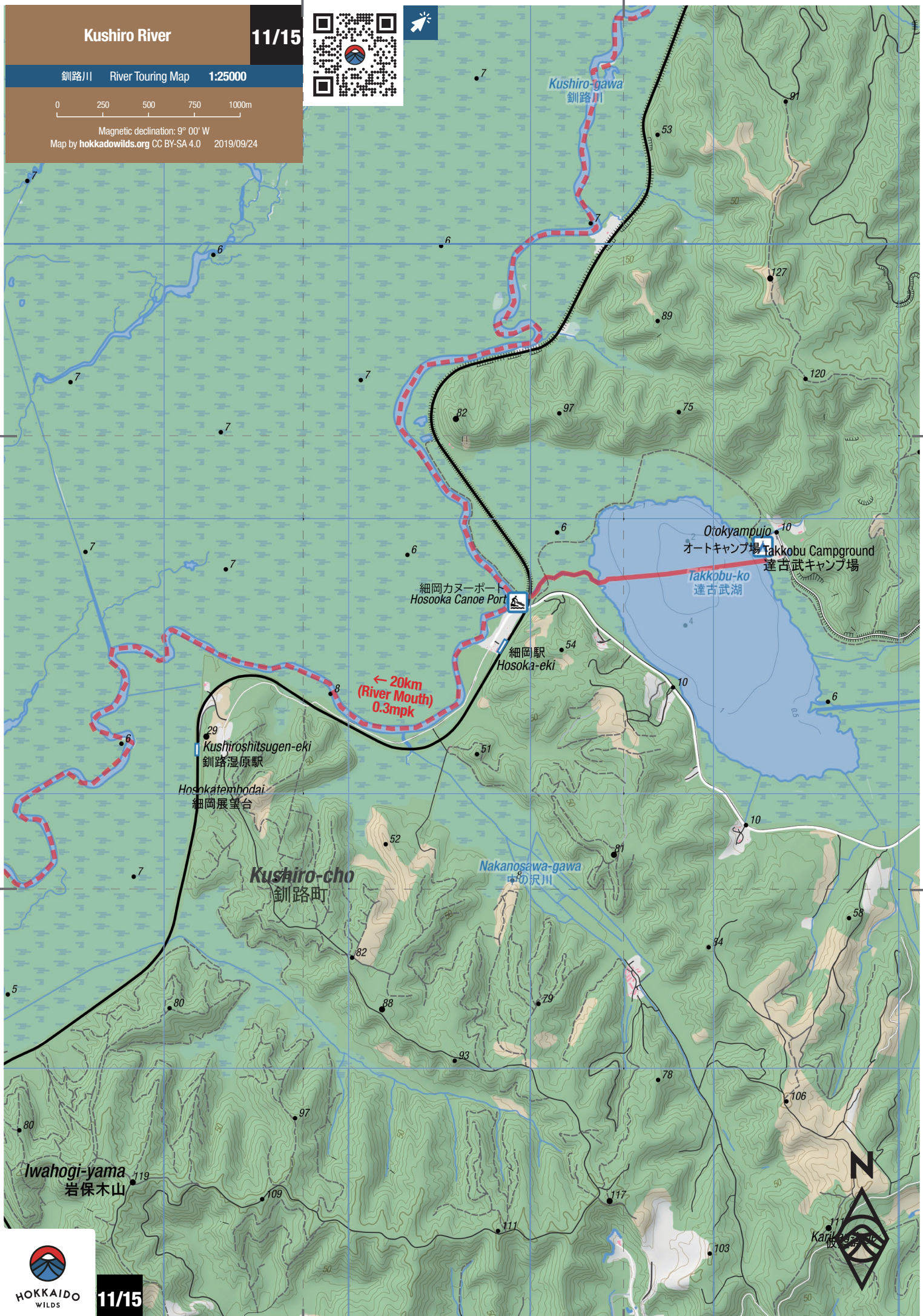






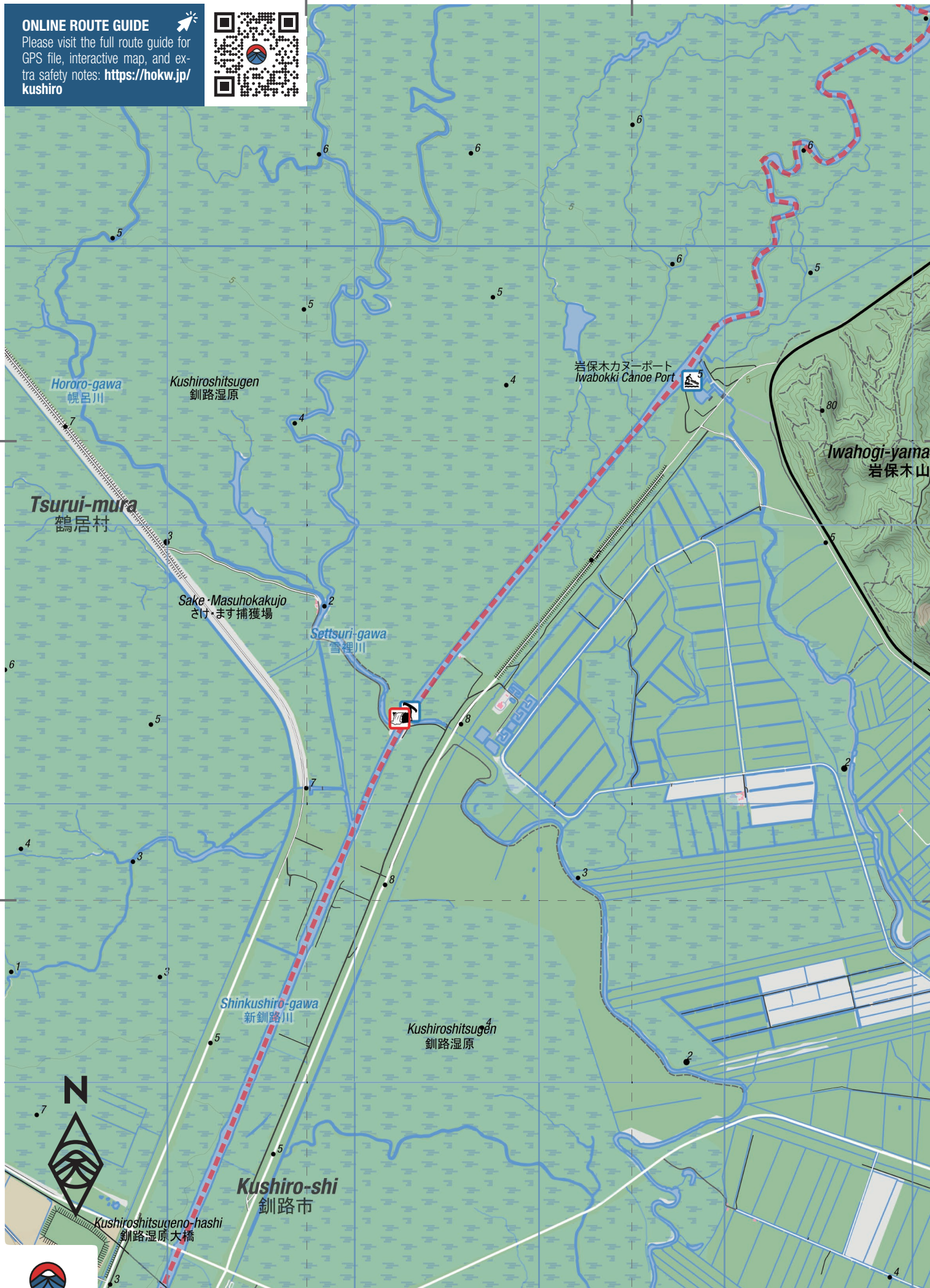
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0 250 500 750 1000m



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kushiro](https://hokw.jp/kushiro)



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Kushiroshitsugeno-hashii
釧路湿原大橋

 鶴護岸カヌーポート
Tsurugogan Canoe Port

Tottori-bashi
鳥取橋

Tetsuhokuo-hashir
鉄北大橋

新富士駅
Shin Fuji-eki 3

~~Nemuro-hansen~~
~~根室本線~~

Bofukoia
防腐工場

Kusuri-bashi
久壽里橋

釧路港



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Kushiro River 4-day Canoe Trip



4 days

Time



1.2

Gradient (mpk)



Class II

Difficulty



111km

Distance



4/5

Water clarity



Jun-Oct

Best season

The Kushiro River (釧路川, 154km) is one of Hokkaido's most iconic rivers. This is the four-day journey down its full length from Lake Kussharo to the sea at Kushiro City. Paddlers can expect crystal clear headwaters, deep forests, challenging rapids, enchanting wetlands, lakes, and a plethora of wildlife. Each of the four days on the river have their own unique flavour, keeping things interesting and engaging. The journey begins on Lake Kussharo (屈斜路湖), Japan's largest caldera lake.

LOCATION AND ACCESS

The Kushiro River flows out of Lake Kussharo in far eastern Hokkaido, about six hours drive east of Sapporo City. For this full four-day journey down the river's entire length, the put-in is on Lake Kussharo. Put-in options on the lake shore abound. We chose to camp the night before the first day at the Wakoto Campground (和琴野営場) about 5km northwest of the head of the river around the lake – there's a canoe port in the campground. Regardless of where on the lake you put in, if you've only got one car, the shuttle will involve both taxi and Japan Rail train. For us, this meant the following steps:

1. Drive to Wakoto Campground on Lake Kussharo, drop gear and canoe.
2. Drive to the take-out point at the coast.
3. Walk or take a taxi 2.5km from take-out point to Kushiro JR Train station.
4. Catch the train from Kushiro JR Station to either Mashu JR Station or Biruwa JR Station.
5. Get a taxi to Wakoto Campground from either Mashu JR Station (5,500yen – taxis waiting at station) or Biruwa JR Station (4,500yen – need to call for a taxi in Japanese in advance).

Naturally, if you're traveling with a packraft or folding canoe, then you can just do steps four and five, and then step three at the



end of the trip.

GENERAL NOTES

Ask a few hardcore canoeists in Japan what river they most want to make a multi-trip on, and the Kushiro River will no doubt feature high in the responses. "It's got everything," our friend Greg explained to me. "Beautiful headwaters, rapids, good camping, and National Geographic level wetlands with so much wildlife it's almost unbelievable." After spending our own four days on the river, we can really attest to the appeal of this iconic waterway way out east in Hokkaido.

Water levels: When we did the trip in August 2019, we had water levels of 100.05m as measured at the Teshikaga Measurement Station. It appears that this is a pretty standard water level, and since it is fed by a natural lake, the Kushiro River itself doesn't tend to rise and lower very fast. Water levels tend to stay stable even in the height of summer. Prolonged heavy rain can raise water levels, however.

Buying supplies: Once on the river, access to shops is limited. Teshikaga has a large supermarket.

Onsen: There are a number of wild, free, mixed-gender onsen hotspots on the shores of Lake Kussharo. The pick of the bunch is the Kotan Open Air Bath (コタン露天風呂), about 1km north of the head of the Kushiro River in Kotan Settlement. Others include the forested Wakoto Kyodo Baths, the very public Wakoto Hot Spring, and the Ike-no-yu (basically a hot pond).

River Length: Officially, the Kushiro River is 154km long, but in reality these days, due to straightening work, it is just a shade over 100km from lake to sea.

ROUTE NOTES

BrGenerally speaking, a full four day trip down the Kushiro River will consist of four very unique days.

DAY 1 – The Headwaters (Lake Kussharo to Teshikaga) | 17km, 1.2mpk | There's a deceptively large volume of water flowing out of Lake Kussharo into the Kushiro River, which wends its way mostly unobstructed by human intervention all the way to Teshikaga Town. This headwaters section is known for being crystal clear, teeming with birdlife, and flanked by deep wetland-like

forest. Testament to its wild roots, this section is also known for frequent downed trees that must be dodged – paddlers will be busy. There's not much in the way of rapids beyond some straight forward Class II swifts, but river-wide strainers require constant attention and confident ability to maneuver canoes quickly. This section is not beginner-friendly, but lower-level intermediate paddlers and up will enjoy the challenge.

DAY 2 – The Rapids (Teshikaga to Shibecha) | 30km 3.0mpk | This varied and exciting section of river is far from what most people think of when they think of the Kushiro River – Class II+ rapids, a few must-scout crux points, a portage, and plenty of thrilling times, especially when in a loaded canoe. This section is also the most human-impacted section of the river, with a few sections of concrete-walled stopbanks.

NOTE: As of August 2019, it is, officially, prohibited to canoe much of this section due to "fast flowing water, construction, and a dangerous spot". Please see the Day 2 blog post for details about this. In reality, all construction as of August 2019 was complete, and as for the other normal river hazards present, we're confident that any experienced canoeist making conservative decisions will be fine. That said, make conservative decisions and pay attention to current conditions – there's likely to be more construction to be done in the future.

Hell's Ladder (地獄のハシゴ): This spot, about 3.5km beyond the largewave train downstream of Teshikawa Town, is arguably the crux of the entire 100km of the Kushiro River. For 99% of paddlers 95% of the time, this nasty man-made chute will not be runnable, and will require a scramble portage of up to 200m. At this point, the entire Kushiro River is being forced into a narrow chute, hardly three meters wide, flanked on both sides by jagged concrete blocks. As of August 2019, some driftwood had lodged itself on one side of the entrance to the chute, making the entry even more sketchy, and forcing the main flow to power into the right hand side blocks. See the

dedicated notes and photos on the Day 2 blog post.

DAY 3 – The Wetlands (Shibecha to the lakes) | 30-40km, 0.45mpk | From Shibecha the river flattens out dramatically, and thrusts paddlers deep into the Kushiro Shitsugen National Park (釧路湿原国立公園) – Japan's largest wetlands. Expect a broad, powerful flow winding its way past red crested cranes, deer, eagles, and king-fishers. This is the Kushiro River which makes this body of water so iconic. There are a couple of options for camping on this section – Lake Toro or Lake Takobu. Why not extend the trip to five days, and stay at both?

DAY 4 – To the Sea (the lakes to Kushiro City) | 20-30km, 0.3mpk | After three or four days of gloriously wild paddling, this last day is a jarring and garish return to the reality of industry that keeps Hokkaido's economy ticking over. Technically, to follow the water downstream, you'll end up on the Shin-Kushiro River (新釧路川), which is a new, dead-straight monstrosity headed straight for the coast – the actual old Kushiro River is dry and un-navigable for at least 5km past the Iwabokki Suimon (岩保木水門) gates. At the terminus at the sea, make sure to spend some melancholic time sitting on the beach, watching that tortured Kushiro River flow to freedom, and contemplating humans' pitiful and fleeting existence.

River-wide fishing facility (ウライ): This river-wide fishing facility requires a less-than-ideal portage on either the left or right. See the Day 4 blog post for details.

TRANSPORT

By car | See the Location section above for details regarding the full 80km+ shuttle. Wakoto Campground has plenty of parking

nearby. There's also some parking at the canoe port right at the head of the Kushiro River at Lake Kussharo – this parking area can, however, get quite busy with tour vans at certain times of the day. As for taking out, if you're doing the full route to the sea, then there's a convenient raised gravel parking area near the train tracks in Kushiro City. If you'd rather avoid paddling the dead-straight Shin-Kushiro River, then the more rational take-out points would be either Hosooka Canoe Port (カヌーポート細岡), or the Iwabokki Suimon Canoe Port (カヌーポート岩保木水門) – both have plenty of parking nearby. Arguably Hosooka Canoe Port would be the better choice, as there's the Hosooka JR train station only 250m walk away, which would better facilitate a single-car shuttle.

Public transport | There are five trains per day running between Kushiro City (釧路駅) and Biruwa Station (美留和駅). The trip will take about 1.5hrs, and cost 1,640yen (see the timetable on Google Maps). From Biruwa Station, it is 14km on the main roads to Wakoto Campground – expect to pay around 4,500yen for a taxi. To get to Kushiro City, there are a few trains per day from Sapporo City, as well as buses and planes. Kushiro Airport is accessible direct from Tokyo.

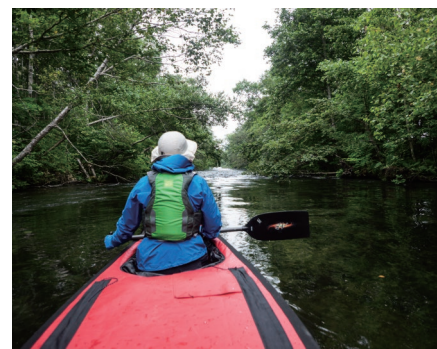
SAFETY NOTES

The Kushiro River is an extraordinarily varied route – it is not a walk in the park by any means, and certainly the more popular downstream wetlands areas belie the sporty and technical aspects further upstream. Generally speaking, escape from the river is limited throughout the length of it. Commercial canoe tours very seldom go beyond Biruwa Bridge (美留和橋), so paddlers need to be self-sufficient. Make sure to carry a handsaw for river-wide log jams. For the section between beyond Teshikaga to Shibecha, make very conservative decisions – mark Hell's Ladder on your phone's mapping app and on your paper map, and portage it to be safe. Canoeing through Teshikaga village itself is generally frowned upon, so make sure you've scouted the route in advance (a short 2km stroll). Overall, for a full four-day independent trip down Kushiro River, paddlers need to be self-sufficient, prepared for weather changes, and have the experience to read rivers.

CAMPING

There are a few spots along the way suitable for camping – both official and wild campspots. See online guide for facilities and location links.

Wakoto Campground (和琴野営場) is a gorgeous new campground facility on the eastern side of the Wakoto Peninsula (和琴半島). It doesn't offer the sandy lake-shore camping that the Wakoto Peninsula Campground (和琴半島キャンプ場) offers just across the road, but it is much more fully featured, with a new center house, showers, laundry, and just as easy access to the lake via the dedicated canoe port. Location: 43.57669 N / 144.31108 E | 1000 yen per person | Open: Jun-Sep | Staff hours: 9:00am till 4:00pm | Closest Onsen: Kohinso (湖心荘) | 450yen | 0.3km from campground.



Canoe Port Mashu-Ohashi (カヌーポート摩周大橋駅) is an unofficial wild campspot at the Mashu-ohashi Canoe Port at the western reaches of the Teshikaga township (弟子屈町) in easy reach of the Mashu Onsen Michi-no-eki (摩周温泉道の駅), with access to public toilets and water. The Birao-no-yu Onsen, with a small but nice outdoor bath, is also just across the bridge. Location: 43.49242 N / 144.44443 E

Shibecha Kawa-no-eki (標茶町川の駅), literally 'River Station' is at the Fuji Canoe Port (カヌーポート富士駅) in the middle of Shibecha Town (標茶町). It has a well-sheltered pagoda. It's not officially a campground, but there's a clean public toilet about 200m walk away, as well as access to mains water. There are convenience stores, restaurants, and onsen within easy walking distance. Location: 43.29695 N / 144.60216 E | Closest Onsen: Fuji Onsen (富士温泉) | 360yen | 0.2km from campground.

Toro Moto-mura Campground (塘路元村キャンプ場) is a basic but clean campground on the shore of Lake Toro (塘路湖) in the Kushiro Shitsugen National Park. Nearby is the Ministry of Environment information center, local museum, canoe tours, and some restaurants a moderate walk away. Location: 43.15297 N / 144.51009 E | 370 yen per person | Open: May-Oct | Staff hours: 9:00am till 6:00pm | Closest Onsen: None.

Takkobu Auto Campground (達古武オートキャンプ場) is a very reasonably priced fully-featured campground with coin showers, laundry, a small shop, and amazing access to the Kushiro Wetlands. There's a small canoe port at the campground itself. Location: 43.10906 N / 144.48907 E | 320 yen per tent | 100 yen per person | Open: May-Oct | Staff hours: 9:00am till 5:00pm | Closest Onsen: None.

ONSEN NEARBY

For a post-paddle soak, the nearest onsen to the river mouth take out in Kushiro City is the large Fumizonoyu (ふみぞの湯, 450yen) – they've got a huge number of pools, saunas, and an attached restaurant. ■

ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

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Disclaimer The information on this map was derived from digital databases provided by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan and the Biodiversity Center of Japan. Care was taken in the creation of this map. HokkaidoWilds.org cannot accept any responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional accuracy. There are no warranties, expressed or implied, including the warranty of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, accompanying this product. However, notification of any errors will be appreciated.

MAP, TEXT, PHOTOS | Rob Thomson

hokkaidowilds.org 2019/09/24

MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan

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PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Load your printer with A4 printer paper (210mm x 297mm). If you've only got Letter size (215.9mm x 279.4 mm), just follow the instructions below. You'll achieve an accurate scale, but the map will be clipped a little at the top and bottom.

STEP 2

Open the print window by clicking on File > Print (or hitting Ctrl + P on your keyboard).

STEP 3

Make sure "Actual Size" is selected.

STEP 4

For double-sided printing, select "Print on both sides of paper".

STEP 5

For best results, select the highest quality print option available on your printer (settings will vary).

STEP 6

You won't need this instructions page, so just select the pages that don't include this instruction sheet.

STEP 7

Click "Print".

PLEASE PRINT AT 'ACTUAL SIZE' (NO SCALING)

The 1:25,000 scale used in the map is accurate if the PDF is printed without scaling (i.e., ACTUAL SIZE). Follow the instructions on this page to ensure an accurate rendering of the scale.

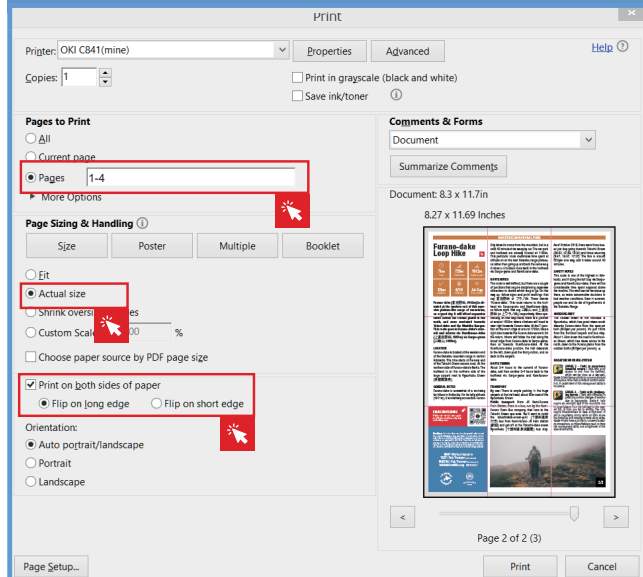


Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size", and Pages 1-4 are selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

