




Shiribetsu River Rafting Section

尻別川ラフトコース Canoeing Map 1:25000







3 hrs
Time




3.55
Gradient (mpk)




Class II+
Difficulty



13km
Distance



4/5
Water clarity



May-Jul
Best season

This is known as the most challenging section of the Shiribetsu River (尻別川). Known locally as the Rafting Course (ラフトコース), the rapids can be bony, pushy, and require quick, decisive maneuvering. Depending on conditions the crux of the route, Futamata Rapids (二股の瀬) can top out at Class III. This is a classic drop-and-pool section though. As the route winds its way around the dramatic Yotei-zan (羊蹄山, 1898m), dramatic views of its conical peak await. At the end of the route, tall clay cliffs with spring-water waterfalls give paddlers a send-off.

LOCATION
Shiribetsu River wends its way east to west through one of Hokkaido's most popular adventure resort areas in southern Hokkaido. It wraps around Yotei-zan, the prominent conical volcano next to Niseko, a bustling in tourist town in winter as well as summer.

Put-in: The put-in for this route is at the well-maintained rafting entry above the Kanbetsu Hydro Dam outlet, about 4km downstream from Kyogoku Springs. At least three well-established rafting companies use the large carpark – where possible, yield to rafting shuttles in the carpark, and take care entering and exiting the carpark. At the riverside, recreational river users should put in just upstream of the larger put-in area, so as



to allow rafting groups plenty of room to do their briefings.

Take-out: On the map, we've indicated the lower-most take-out used by paddlers on this section. It's just south of Kutchan Town proper. Note that while this take-out allows for more time on the river, it's certainly a case of diminishing returns as far as rapids go – there's about 3km of relatively flat paddling at the end which can be a chore if there's a head-wind blowing. The approach to the riverside is via a steep set of stairs. The rafting take-out, about 5km upstream may be a better bang-for-your-



buck option for most paddlers. Paddlers can park cars on the gravel bar.

GENERAL NOTES
This section of the Shiribetsu River is called the rafting course, because, rafts. At between 9-10am and 1-2pm each day, the put-in will be bustling with tourists and their guides, all wrapped up in their drysuits. Generally you'll want to avoid these busy times at the put in. Once on the river, however, the twists and turns will mean you'll feel like you have the river to yourself.

Difficulty: At normal river levels, the rapids on this section top out at Class II+. With more water, the Futamata Rapids easily top out at Class III. All rapids are relatively forgiving. At normal water levels the rapids are followed by relatively calm sections that will aid in retrieving any capsized boats.

Water Level: We've run this section in civilized water levels as well as very rowdy conditions. Civilized would be 167.25m or so at the Kutchan Measurement Station. We ran this section at 167.25m in a group of three open-deck tandem canoes. Rowdy was about an extra 70cm or so, with no riverside eddies to be seen. We ran that in a two-person packraft, and thoroughly enjoyed it. The benefit of having the extra water is that there's very minimal rock-dodging required. At normal water levels (around 167.25m), open-deck canoeists will be busy. Particularly at the start of the route, there's a hefty boulder garden to navigate.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES
An experienced paddler who knows this section of the river well would knock this route out in around an hour. We ended up spending almost five hours on the river though. This included plenty of ferrying practice at the



hydro outlet above the boulder field, a leisurely lunch at Futamata Rapids, and some more eddying-in/out practice along the way. You can really make a day of this otherwise short route.

This route jolts paddlers to attention right from the start, with a 1km boulder garden to navigate, finishing with a decent Class II+ drop at the end of it. Open-deck canoes will likely need their balers after the final drop. The boulders in this first section are not massive, but plenty large enough to happily pin and wrap a canoe around. That said, in raised water levels, this section was a no-brainer in our MRS packraft (a two-person Barracuda R2 Pro).

At around the 3km point, there's a great Yotei-zan viewpoint – the iconic volcano. There are multiple Class II drop-and-pool rapids along the way, which experienced paddlers will not need to scout, until the crux of the route – the Futamata Rapid just before the 5km point. This Class III rapid is best scouted from the left side of the river. Most paddlers will find it's best to take a hard river right line soon after entering the upper section of the rapid. There's plenty of time to get boats in position before the final funnel.

Beyond the Futamata Rapid the rest of the route consists of a few Class I to II spots, and look out for the high clay cliffs at the 7km point. Either take out at the main rafting take-out at the 8km point or carry on for another 5km of mostly flat downstream to the lower Kutchan take out at the 13km point.

TRANSPORT
By car | There is plenty of parking in the large carpark at the put-in. Park well to the north-western corner of the carpark to keep the way clear for raft shuttles. There's plenty of parking at the main rafting take-out on a gravel bar at

the 8km point too. At the 13km-point take-out, there's also plenty of parking.
Public transport | This route is not accessible by public transport. For taxis, we've been recommended Niseko International Transport Taxis (ニセコ国際交通, TEL: 0136-22-1171). When explaining to the taxi company where you are (or where you want to go), the main rafting put-in location is known as “the place where rafters start” (ラフティングのスタートするところ). The main rafting take-out location is known as “the place near Yahata-no-bashi bridge where they do rafting” (八幡の橋のラフティングのあがるところ). A taxi from between the take-out and put-in will cost around 3,000yen.

SAFETY NOTES
This is a canoe route you'll want a helmet for, as the rapids are bouldery and unforgiving. Despite the river being quite shallow, beware

RIVER DETAILS

This route is on Shiribetsu River (尻別川), or Shir-pet in the Ainu indigenous language. The river is a Class A (一級河川) river, 126km in total length. This section of the river is between 15m and 40m wide, with a normal flow rate of around 0.5m/s to 3m/s. The gradient for this section of river is 3.55 mpk (18.74 FPM).

of trying to stand up in the river if you find yourself swimming – there are sections of the riverbed that are full of foot-sized holes waiting to snag you. Swim to the shore before attempting to stand up. Also beware of a strong whirlpool in higher water levels on river right on the best just before the Futamata Rapids.

ONSEN NEARBY
If you're headed back to the put-in for the shuttle, then we'd recommend the Kyogoku Onsen (京極温泉, 600yen), next to the Kyogoku Springs and Yuyu Campground. They have an attached restaurant, and a Lawson Convenience store over the road.

CAMPGROUND
Kyogoku Campground is a large, open campground in easy access to Kyogoku Onsen, the Kyogoku Michi-no-eki and the Kyogoku natural water spring. It is located just west of Kyogoku Town, on the eastern flanks of Yotei-zan, near Niseko. Location: 42.86207 N / 140.87155 E | 500 yen per tent | Open: May-Oct | Staff hours: 7:00am till 8:00pm. ■

Japanese Map Glossary		
Romaji	Kanji	English
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 guides for GPS files, interactive maps, and extra safety notes: <https://hokw.jp/shirraft>




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MAP, TEXT, PHOTOS | Rob Thomson

hokkaidowilds.org 2020/06/23

MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan

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Shiribetsu River Rafting Course

尻別川ラフティングコース Canoe Map 1:25000

0 250 500 750 1,000 m

1cm on the map equals 250m on the ground
Magnetic declination: 9°45' W | Map by hokkaidowilds.org CC BY SA 2020/06/18

Symbol Key (some may not be present)

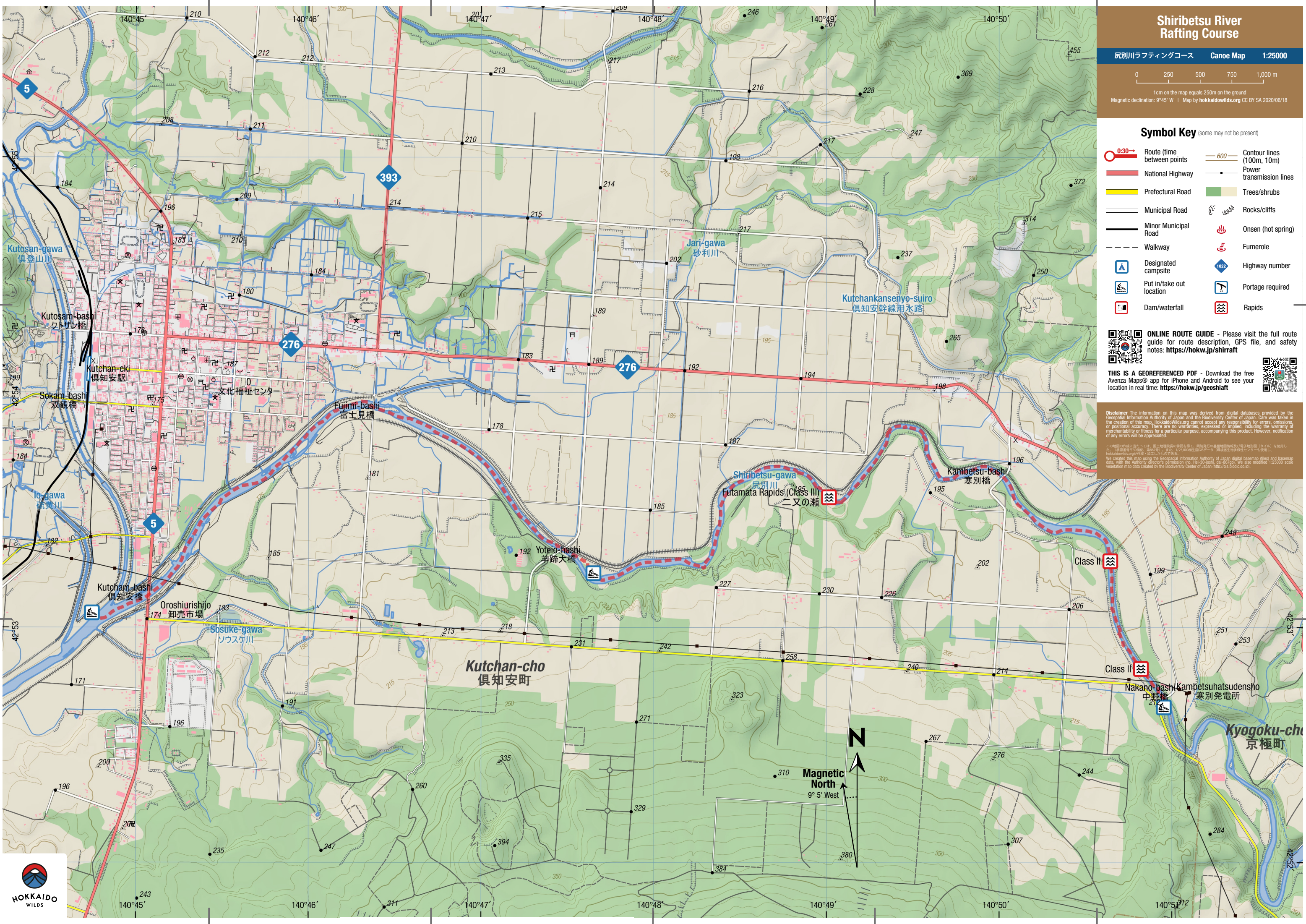
- 0:30 Route (time between points)
- National Highway
- Prefectural Road
- Municipal Road
- Minor Municipal Road
- Walkway
- Designated campsite
- Put in/take out location
- Dam/waterfall
- Contour lines (100m, 10m)
- Power transmission lines
- Trees/shrubs
- Rocks/cliffs
- Onsen (hot spring)
- Fumerole
- Highway number
- Portage required
- Rapids

ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE - Please visit the full route guide for route description, GPS file, and safety notes: <https://hokw.jp/shirraft>

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We created this map using the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan digital basemap (tiles) and base map data, with the Authority Director's permission (no fee). We also modified 1:25000 scale vegetation map data created by the Biodiversity Center of Japan (<http://gis.biodic.go.jp/>).



PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Load your printer with A3 printer paper (297mm x 420mm). If you've only got Tabloid or Ledger size (279mm x 432 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.

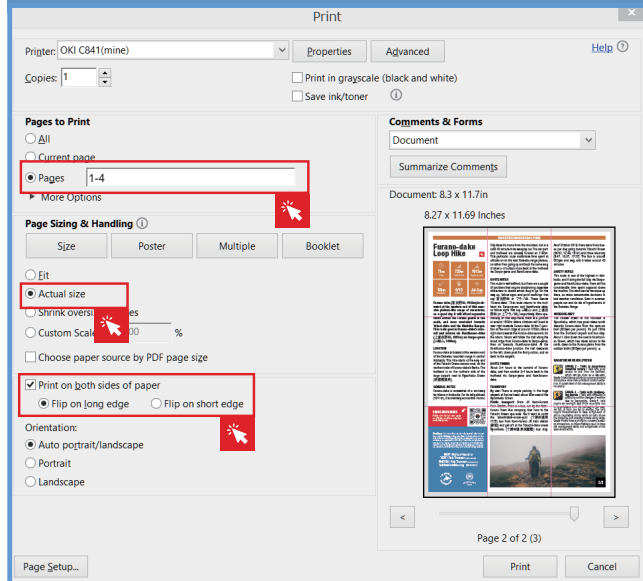
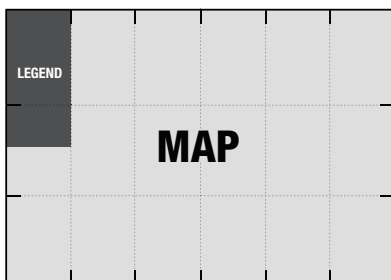


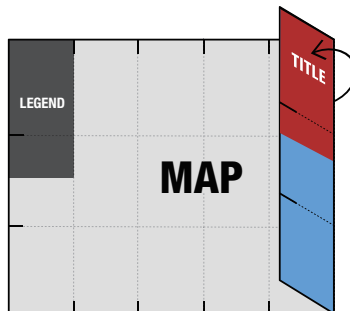
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

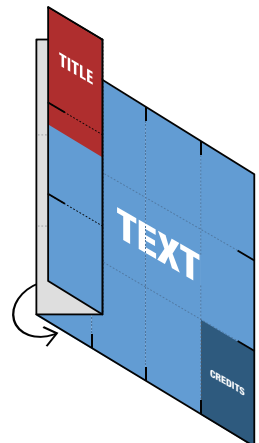
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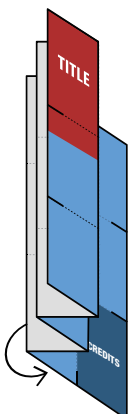
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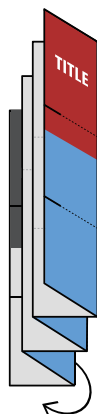
3



4



5



6



7

