




Chitose River
Long-Run

千歳川 Canoeing Map 1:25000







4 hrs
Time




2.56
Gradient (mpk)




Class II
Difficulty



12km
Distance



5/5
Water clarity



Apr-Jun
Best season

The pristine Chitose River (千歳川) is a mainstay for Sapporo-based canoeists keen to get away from it all, and to hone one’s skills. This long-run route, only possible before the beginning of July each year, takes in a full, unbroken 12km of the river, including the exciting Class II+ drop just above the Indian Wheel installation at the Salmon Information Center in Chitose city center. From the second weekend of July, the Indian Wheel is installed, and river users have to make a long portage. Get in early, and enjoy a full run along one of the clearest, cleanest rivers in Hokkaido.

LOCATION
Quite amazingly, Chitose River is located less than 5km north of Hokkaido’s main airport, Shin-Chitose Airport, about 30km south of Sapporo City. You’d never know it, however – we’ve never heard planes while paddling on the river.

Put-in: The put-in for this route is at the Daiichi-Usakumai Bridge (第一烏柵舞). We’ve heard of people putting in further upstream, near the salmon hatchery, but any further upstream is inaccessible. Plus, there are a number of hydro dams further upstream on the river. At the normal Daiichi-usakimai Bridge put-in, there’s a large parking area. There are public toilets about 30m downstream on the cycling road.



Take-out: For this route, we opted to take out at the Neshikoshi Bridge (根志越橋), about 2km downstream from the salmon museum. There’s a gravel road down to the riverside, and a large area to park cars. Any further downstream and you’ll be paddling on the mind-numbing straightened section of the Chitose River.

GENERAL NOTES
We’ve paddled the Chitose River multiple times, including in a packraft. Public transport access is stellar, it’s easily one of Hokkaido’s clearest rivers, it almost always has enough water to paddle it, and there’s a good mix of fun, easy rapids and a strong flow to keep even experts happy. To run this full 12km route, however, you’ll have to hit the river before the second weekend of July. The Indian Wheel fishing installation is set up in July, and this requires a long portage. Taking out after the fun slider/drop just before the Indian Wheel is complicated, so if you want to run this drop – the largest on the river – then pre-July is the time to visit.

Broadly speaking, this route can be split into two sections, separated by the Chitose Sports



Center, about 7km from the put-in location. The first half involves more hazards, such as downed trees and the weir at the 2.2km point. The second half of the route involves fewer sharp bends, is closer to civilization, and the three Class II drops are perfectly manageable. Japanese guidebooks position this river as a great place for “beginners to take the shortcut to becoming experienced” under the guidance of more experienced paddlers, and is “the perfect watery piste for practicing foundational river skills” (Tamada, 1993).

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES
You’d happily smash this route out in two hours if you were in a hurry. But there are plenty of spots along the way to hone the eddy-in and eddy-out skills, so why not make a half-day of it?

The route starts just downstream from the Daiichi-Usakumai Bridge, at a large gravel parking area. This is a common area to start from for all river users. Pretty much straight away, the river is not mucking around, and most people who know the Chitose River as the meandering, clear, benevolent river will likely be taken aback somewhat by the speed of the flow. In less than 1km, there is the first of a couple of sharp bends with tree-trunks and branches protruding from the outer edge of the bends, waiting to pin down the unwary paddler. As a rule, keep to the inside of the bends.

There are a couple of bridges along the way, which require sooner-rather-than-later decisions to be made on which pier to avoid, and there are a few small islands in the river, where decisions need to be made on which branch to follow. The first island will accept either side, but the second is best to take the right branch, as the left side leads straight into very low

SOUTHERN HOKKAIDO



hanging strainer trees.

At the 2.2km point is the weir – under no circumstances should paddlers approach the water intake at the right-hand side of this weir. Sidle up to the left-hand bank of the weir just before the wide fish ladder, and assess your options. The portage is short – only 20m or so on a clear path. If you choose the fish ladder descent, keep to the center of the first two drops, and pull to the left to re-center for the remainder.

The remainder of the route to the Sports Center is relatively straight forward. There are two fun 1m drops along the way, where first-timers are advised to pull up to the left-hand bank and scout before tackling. The first of these (the Jakago drop 蛇籠の落ち込み) used to be the largest, but has lost its steepness in recent years.

From the Sports Center, you’ll enter the Chitose City center proper. Lush green riversides are replaced by high concrete walls. The river itself is still impossibly clear though. About 2.5km beyond the sports center you’ll approach the steep drop just before the salmon fishing/information center area and walking over-bridge. It’s a good idea to scout this drop on foot before putting in. In general, enter the drop hugging the left side of the small grassy island to the right…check the video below… and head straight down.

From this last drop, it’s about 2km of benign slow-flow padding to the takeout..

TRANSPORT
By car I There is ample, free parking at the put-in location. There’s also plenty of parking at the takeout, just below the stopbanks or under the bridge.

Public transport I A taxi from Chitose JR Train Station (7.4km) will likely cost around 2000yen all the way to the put in point. Tell the driver you want to go to Meon Cafe in Rankoshi-chiku (蘭越地区にあるMEON農苑カフェ), which is about 850m before the put-in location on the gravel road. From the cafe, you can tell the driver to keep driving a little further. The closest paddlers will get to the put-in location by public transport is the Usakumai Bridge Bus Stop (烏柵舞橋バス停), serviced by a Chuo Bus from Chitose JR Train Station. Google Maps has bus routing details. From there, it’s a 1.2km (about 15min) walk to the put-in location. Buses run from Chitose JR Train Station 4-6 times a day, with the earliest leaving the station at 8:51am. The trip takes about 20 minutes, and costs 320yen one way. From the takeout at Neshikoshi Bridge, it’s an 850m walk to the Seiryu 3-chome Bus Stop (清流3丁目). From there, there are about two buses

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

RIVER DETAILS

This route is on Chitose River (千歳川), or Si-Kot-Pet in the Ainu indigenous language. The river is a Class A (一級河川) river, 107.9km in total length. This section of the river is between 10m and 25m wide , with a normal flow rate of around 2m/s to 4m/s. The gradient for this section of river is 2.56 mpk (13.52 FPM).


per hour running to Chitose JR train station (Google Maps has bus details).

SAFETY NOTES
At first glance Chitose River looks quite tame. It’s a deceptively fast-flowing river, however, and most paddlers will be taken aback at how quick the river moves. Eddies are relatively few and far between too, so this river requires at least low intermediate paddling skills to keep safe. As a rule, hug the inside corners of bends; there are hefty strainers awaiting on the outside. The fish ladder on the left side of the weir can be pushy, so keep your wits about you. Note that Chitose River is quite cold throughout the year – take care on colder days and as usual, always carry a spare set of clothes.

ONSEN NEARBY
The closest onsen to the Chitose City Sports Center is the Fujiya Onsen (420yen per person) on the opposite side of the Chitose Aoba Park. However, there is also an old-school sento public bath close to the Chitose JR Train Station, which is worth a visit if you’re hankering for a warm soak. ■

ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

Please visit the full route guides for GPS files, interactive maps, and extra safety notes: <https://hokw.jp/chilong>




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.

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MAR FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan

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Chitose River

千歳川 Canoe Map 1:25000

0 250 500 750 1,000 m

1cm on the map equals 250m on the ground

Magnetic declination: 9°36' W | Map by hokkaidowilds.org CC BY SA 2007/07/31

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

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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.



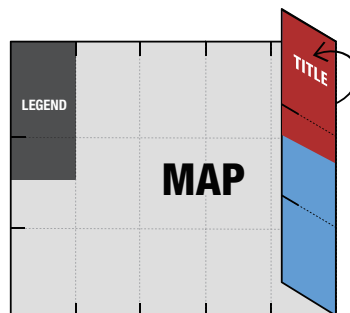
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

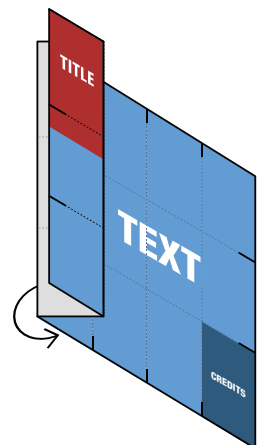
1



2



3



4



5



6



7

