




Abashiri River

網走川 Canoeing Map 1:25000







6hrs
Time




33km
Distance




Class I
Difficulty



2/5
Remoteness



3/5
Water clarity



May-Oct
Best season

Abashiri River (網走川) in far eastern Hokkaido first flows into the expansive Lake Abashiri (網走湖) and then makes a final meander through Abashiri City to the Okhotsk Sea in northern Japan. The river and lake teems with birdlife, including eagles, kingfishers, storks, and other birds of prey. The lake section hugs the eastern shoreline, and requires a very favourable wind forecast - whitecaps can form on this otherwise shallow lake very quickly. With a JR train line close by, however, there are a number of escape routes along the way. The final stretch of the route through Abashiri City takes the paddler past the expansive Abashiri prison, and then finally along side fishing vessels and sea birds.

LOCATION
Abashiri River is located in far eastern Hokkaido, not far from Memanbetsu Airport near Abashiri City. The river flows from high up in the Akan Volcanic group northwards into the Okhotsk Sea.

In addition to the put-in and take-out locations below, there are also plenty of locations around Lake Abashiri where paddlers can access the water (e.g., Yobito Campground, Memanbetsu Campground).

Put-in location: If doing the full route, the most practical point to put in is around Bihoro Town (美幌町), not far from Bihoro



JR Train station (美幌駅). There's an easily accessed riverside area around – there's a rough trail down to the riverbed. Further upstream there are multiple weirs in quick succession, which makes paddling upstream of Bihoro less appealing.



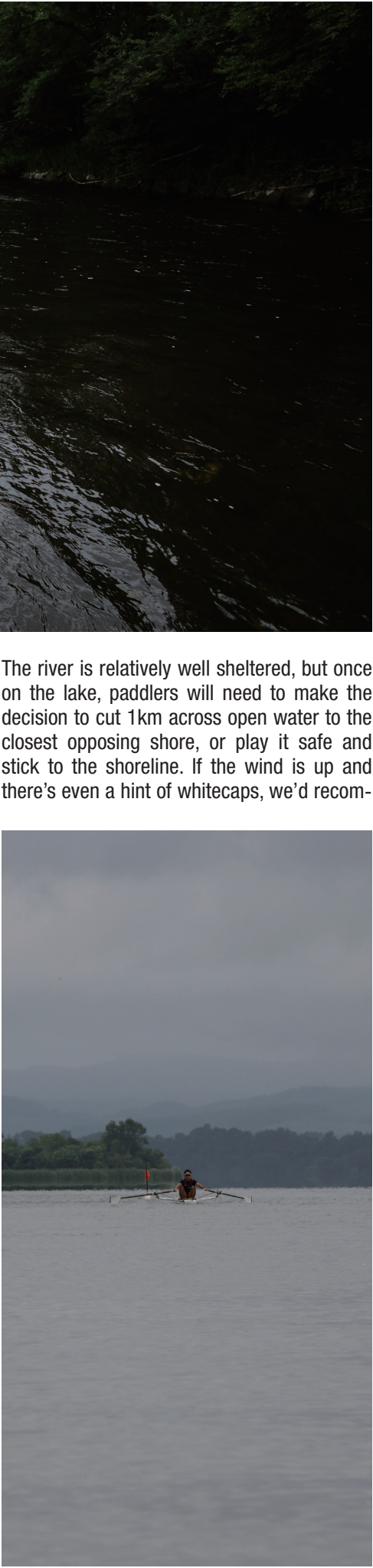
Take-out location: If doing the full route, we recommend taking out halfway between Chuo-bashi Bridge (中央橋) and Abashiri-bashi Bridge (網走橋) in Abashiri City. There's plenty of parking at the nearby carpark.

GENERAL NOTES
Despite Lake Abashiri being quite the tourist trap, the lake is expansive enough that paddlers won't notice – the large tourist hotels are well spaced out here and there on the south-eastern shoreline, and for the most part on this route, you'd never know they're there. With the river flowing into the lake, then flowing out of the lake again to the sea, it's quite an interesting canoe touring route. Japanese guidebooks we've seen lament at the water quality of the river and lake, and we concur to a degree – it's a fairly typical low-lying lake that could do with some water quality control. But it's still worth a paddle, and the birds don't seem to care – we saw majestic eagles as well as diminutive kingfishers. A bit of a birdwatcher's paradise.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES
Be prepared for a very long day if planning to smash this out in one day. It would likely take over 5 hours, considering there's about 15km of flat-water paddling involved.

Starting from Bihoro, head downstream at a reasonable pace as the river keeps flowing relatively fast. After about 10km, the river slows down considerably, essentially becoming an extension of the lake. Expect to be flat-water paddling for about 15km of this route.

EASTERN HOKKAIDO



mend taking the safe option and head south around the shoreline towards Memanbetsu Campground. In this latter case, add another hour (5km) at least to the route. The shoreline along the western side of Yobito-hanto Peninsula is quite spectacular, home to a plethora of birdlife.

The final few kilometers of the river from the lake through Abashiri City is quite interesting in their own right. You'll paddle past the large Abashiri Prison walls; the new prison, not the infamous historic site. You may see rowers training at and near the river inflow from the lake too. At about 5km downstream from the lake, there's a river-wide salmon fishing installation that may need to be portaged around from late summer into the autumn – portage on the left.

For taking out, there's a nice artificial beach just upstream of the Abashiri-bashin Bridge, with a large parking lot nearby.

TRANSPORT
By car I Near the put-in in Bihoro, it would be acceptable to park one's car on the grass area near the river, here. At the take-out in Abashiri City, there's a large car parking area next to the public library.
Public transport I Quite conveniently, there's the JR Sekihoku (石北本線) trainline running the length of this route, so there's good rail access from the end of the route (Abashiri JR Station 網走駅) and the beginning of the route (Bihoro JR Station 美幌駅). Both stations are about a five minute walk from the river. Along the way, if the weather packs in, there's the likes of Memanbetsu JR Station (女満別駅) at the far south end of the lake, and Yobito JR Station (呼人駅) about half way along the

RIVER DETAILS

This route is on Abashiri River (網走川), or Apa-shir in the Ainu indigenous language. The river is a Class A (一級河川) river, 115km in total length. This section of the river is between 20m and 70m wide. The gradient for this section of river is 0.43 mpk (2.27 FPM).

Water level notes: This section is at the very lower end of the Abashiri River, so we would not expect it to suffer from low water levels, even in the height of summer.

eastern side of the lake (about 4km walk from the lakeside). Trains are relatively infrequent during the day, so we'd recommend taking a look at Google Maps to get an idea of when trains are running..

SAFETY NOTES
The river sections of the river are relatively straight forward, but this route involves some open-water paddling across Lake Abashiri. Carefully consult the weather, and avoid the route if the wind is up, particularly if blowing from the west. We got caught out with strong westerlies as we were paddling along the western side of the lake. We had to pull the plug, walk to the nearest station, and return to the canoe the next day.

ONSEN NEARBY
There's no onsen close by within Abashiri City, but we visited the ultra-local sento (public bath) within the city – Tokiwa-yu (ときわ湯). It's nothing special, but it felt like stepping back in time. ■

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: <http://hokw.jp/abasir>

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MAP, TEXT, PHOTOS I Rob Thomson

hokkaidowilds.org 2020/11/25

MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT I Dominika Gan

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1 cm on the map equals 250m on the ground
Magnetic declination: 9°25' W | Map by hokkaidowilds.org CC BY SA 2020/11/24

(some may not be present)



between points

— 600 — Contour lines
(100m, 10m)

National Highway

Power transmission lines

 Prefectural Road

Trees/no tree

Municipal Road

 Rocks/cliffs

Minor Municipal

 Onsen (hot spring)

— — —

 Designated

► **THE FUTURE OF THE PAPERLESS OFFICE**

Put in/take out

[illegible]

ONLINE ROUTE GUIDES - Please visit the full route guides for route description, GPS files, and safety notes: <https://hokw.jp/abasir>



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We created this map using the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan digital basemap (tiles) and basemap data, with the Authority director's permission (no. Hei-30-joshi-da-6679-0). We also modified 1/25000 scale vegetation map data created by the Biodiversity Center of Japan (<http://gis.biodic.go.jp/>).



- Symbol Key** (some may not be present)
- Route (distance between points)
 - National Highway
 - Prefectural Road
 - Municipal Road
 - Minor Municipal Road
 - Walkway
 - Designated campsite
 - Put in/take out location
 - Dam/waterfall/weir
 - 600
 - Contour lines (100m, 10m)
 - Power transmission lines
 - Trees/shrubs
 - Rocks/cliffs
 - Onsen (hot spring)
 - Fumerole
 - Highway number
 - 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.

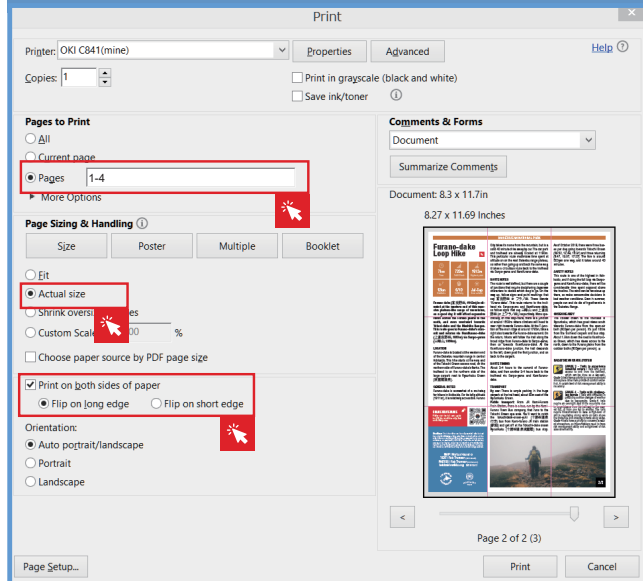
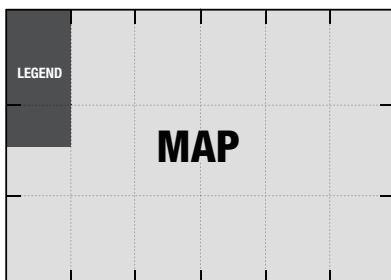


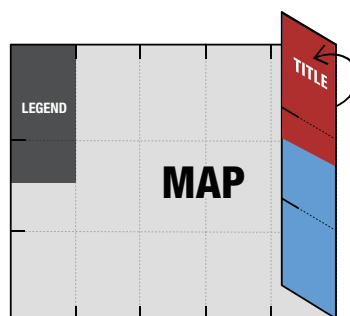
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

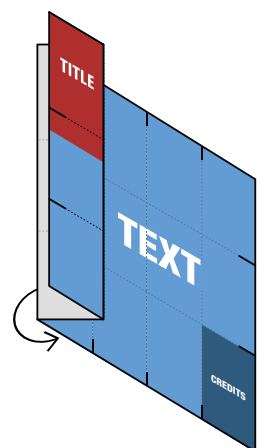
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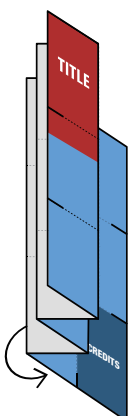
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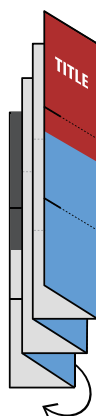
3



4



5



6



7

