



 Shibetsu River


標津川 Canoeing Map 1:25000





 5hrs  
Time

 24km  
Distance

 Class II  
Difficulty

 2/5  
Remoteness

 2/5  
Water clarity

 May-Oct  
Best season

**Shibetsu River (標津川) is lined with nice thick trees, insulating the paddler from otherwise well-developed surrounding farmland. The trees along the riverside are home to a plethora of birdlife, including kingfishers and stalks, and the occasional curious deer. That said, the river itself is a rather tortured shadow of its former self. Decades of straightening work has left the lower 20km or so simply one long drainage for the surrounding towns' water purification plants - we were quite often paddling with the distinct aroma of stale greywater. Three awkward portages around weirs or fishing installations are also a drawback of this river.**

**LOCATION**  
The Shibetsu River flows from the very far-western edge of the Shiretoko mountain range in eastern Hokkaido eastwards towards the Nemuro Straight on the Okhotsk Sea. It forms somewhat of a demarcation line between the bendy wetland rivers further south towards Nemuro, and shorter, more rocky rivers to the north.

**Put-in location:** This route starts on the river left under Ryokoho-bashi Bridge (緑豊橋) about 3km west of central Nakashibetsu Town. The riverside is accessed via a grassy, overgrown double-track gravel road, accessed from Route 833 about 140m before the traffic lights.

**Take-out location:** It's possible to take out right at the river mouth. Vehicles can be driven onto the gravel area on the north side of the river mouth. Guidebooks suggest it's also possible to take out on the river left under Samon-bashi Bridge (サーモン橋) about 250m upstream of the urai river-wide fishing installation. This point should be accessible by



vehicle via the gravel road leading to the fishing headquarters. That said, from our observations it looked easier to take out on the river right (although bollards prevent cars being drive on the river right stopbanks). We recommend scouting a few take-out points beforehand.

**GENERAL NOTES**  
As we've written on the can, this long lower section of the Shibetsu River has a lot of birdlife on the one hand, but suffers from stinky waste water on the other. We wouldn't completely avoid going back for another daytrip on the river, and it's worth making the effort to tick it off if you're keen...but still...

**ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES**  
This is a solid full day route, so we recommend starting early in the day to avoid any strong headwinds on the final 10km or so of wide river.

Starting from under Ryokuho-bashi Bridge, paddlers may be surprised at how busy the river is for the first 4-5km or so. The river has plenty of bends in it here and there were multiple strainers to dodge. Beyond Nakashibetsu Town, however, the river calms down and it's just a matter of going with the flow. The two weirs in the middle of the route were typical Hokkaido headaches. The river banks approaching the weirs are tall and grassy, with ankle-deep, sloping mud at the water's edge. Expect to have to scramble up, using only handfuls of grass to pull yourself up. Getting a canoe up onto the banks requires hauling it by the painter line. Descents back to the riv-



er are as equally bothersome, requiring some careful bush-bashing. Beyond the weirs it is stress-free paddling until the river-wide urai fishing installation. We opted to portage this and paddle to the ocean, but it's also possible to take out just before the urai under the Salmon Bridge.



**TRANSPORT**  
**By car** | There's plenty of parking at the take-out on the coast. There's room at the put in for one car, but beware of getting parked in if an angler drives down the gravel road behind you. Also, the gravel access road is quite overgrown, so it may not be suitable for those who are precious about their car.  
**Public transport** | Nakashibetsu Town is accessible by local bus from the coast. After parking your car near the take out, walk 4 minutes to the Reitokojo-mae bus stop (冷凍工場前). From there, as of November 2020, there's buses running to Nakashibetsu four times a day on weekdays (7:34am, 10:14am, 1:54pm, 5:44pm), and two times a day on weekends and holidays (8:04am, 1:54pm) – see the timetable here. The trip to the Nakashibetsu Bus Terminal will take about 45 minutes. From the Nakashibetsu Bus Terminal, a taxi (Nitto Hire, TEL: 0153-72-3231) to the put in at Ryokuho-bashi Bridge will cost about 2,000yen. The taxi driver will likely not know the Ryokuho-bashi Bridge (緑豊橋) by it's name, so you'll need to direct the taxi driver to the gravel road. When leaving the bus terminal in the taxi, ask the driver to take you towards the suburb of kawanishi hachi-chome (川西8丁目), and that will get you going in the right direction.

**SAFETY NOTES**  
Take care in the first 5km or so of the route, where the river is still quite bendy – there are multiple downed trees along the way which require careful maneuvering to avoid. The two weirs are not runnable. Pull up on the river left in plenty of time.

**ONSEN NEARBY**  
At the end of the route, try Hotel Kawabata (ホ

RIVER DETAILS

This route is on Shibetsu River (標津川), or Shibe-ot in the Ainu indigenous language. The river is a Class A (一級河川) river, 77.9km in total length. This section of the river is between 20m and 80m wide. The gradient for this section of river is 1.33 mpk (7.02 FPM).

Water level notes: We paddled the river during quite heavy rain, and enjoyed an overall full-feeling river at 20.94m as measured at the Shibetsu-kawa Higashi-go-jo gauge. We'd suspect the river would be enjoyable down to about 20.80m, but haven't confirmed this.

テル川畑, 500yen) in Shibetsu Town on the Okhotsk coast. ■



ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

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



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**MAP, TEXT, PHOTOS** | Rob Thomson

[hokkaidowilds.org](http://hokkaidowilds.org) 2020/11/16

MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan

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6km

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

ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE

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The map shows Nakashibetsu-cho (中標津町) and Nakashibetsuko (中標津空港). The Shibetsu River (標津川) flows through the town. Key landmarks include Nakashibetsu Golf Club (知床GC), Nakashibetsu-hashi (中標津大橋), and Nakashibetsu-shogakkomae (中標津小学校前). The map also shows the Shibetsu-kawa (標津川) and the Tawara-bashi (俵橋). A red dotted line indicates a route through the town, starting from the river and passing through Nakashibetsu-hashi, Nakashibetsu-shogakkomae, and Nakashibetsu-sukomae (中標津高校前). The map includes a scale bar (0 to 1,000 m) and a magnetic north arrow (9° 07' West). The map is labeled with various place names and landmarks in both Japanese and English.



Symbol Key

(some may not be present)

6km

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# Shibetsu River

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標津川 Canoe Map 1:25000

0 250 500 750 1,000 m

1 cm on the map equals 250m on the ground

Magnetic declination: 9° 07' W | Map by [hokkaidowilds.org](http://hokkaidowilds.org) CC BY SA 2020/11/16



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

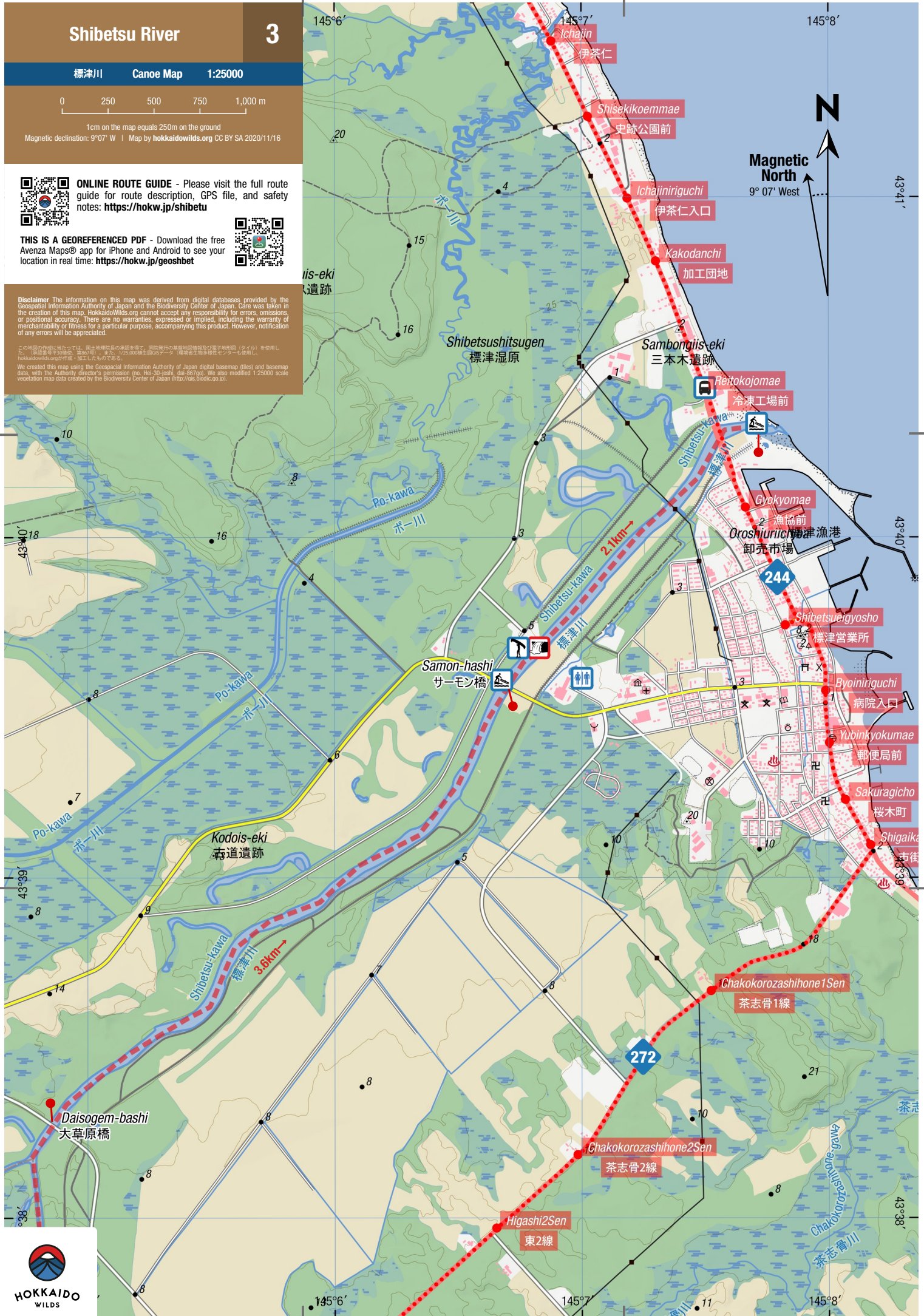
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## PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS

### 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.



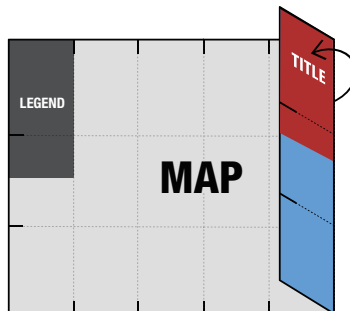
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

## ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

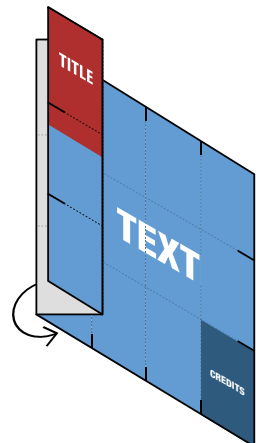
1



2



3



4



5



6



7

