




Upper Chubetsu-gawa

忠別川Paddling Map1:25000







3hr
Time




10
Gradient (mpk)




Class II+
Difficulty



9km
Distance



5/5
Water clarity



May-Oct
Best season

The Chubetsu River 忠別川 flows from the central Daisetsuzan Range down towards Asahikawa City, through the funky town of Higashikawa. With a gradient of 10mpk, you'd be forgiven to think there are a few huge drops here and there. But in reality, this section of the river is essentially just one massive rapid, cascading down beautiful bedrock. The water clarity is impressive too - despite the large dam upstream, it's crystal clear. Wait for at least 17 cumecs output from the dam,

and you're going to be having an amazing time on this rip-roaring river section. Excellent public transport access too!

LOCATION

The Chubetsu River flows northwest from the northern end of the Daisetsuzan Range, not far from Asahidake, towards Asahikawa City, finally flowing into the mighty Ishikari River near Asahikawa JR train station.

Put-in: Paddlers usually put in on river left just below the short set of rapids downstream of Shibinai-bashi Bridge 志比内橋. There's a gravel road down to a parking area just under the bridge. From there, it's a 50m walk to the river.

Take-out: This short 9km upper section of the river finishes at the funky town of Higashikawa, at Higashi-bashi Bridge 東橋. The riverside on the river right has convenient stairs to take boats out of the river, and there's a large car park at the park golf course. It's also possible to paddle all the way down to Asahikawa City, but there's a few more weirs to portage around along the way.

GENERAL NOTES

We were very impressed by the clarity of the water and beautiful bedrock when we pad-dled this section in August 2021. With higher water, there'll be less clarity, particularly due to the water coming out of the Chubetsu Dam further upstream. True to its nature, this river section was fairly busy, feeling like one long continuous rapid. We didn't really notice any 'crux' areas – there were no large drops and we didn't notice any notable strainers or tricky bends. Things will of course be different

at higher water levels. Overall though, this is probably a section best suited for upper-in-termediate and advanced paddlers with solid self-rescue abilities.

Water level: The water level on this section of the Chubetsu River is 100% dependent on the outflow from the Chubetsu Dam, about 6km upstream. Ideally, you'll be looking for around 17m³/s (cumecs) outflow. At 15.6m³/s, we were only just able to enjoy things in our tandem packraft, with most rapids around Class II+. If you see 30-40m³/s coming out of the dam, then expect more or less a 9km-long Class III rapid. We know people who have pad-dled it at 54m³/s, and there appear to be no eddies for about 10km. See the online route

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overview for links to dam outflow levels.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES

We would allow a very leisurely 3 hours for this route, particularly if the water is high - you may want to stop every now and then to catch your breath.

Put in below the Chubetsu Hydro Station (best access is at the Shibinai Bridge). Paddle downstream. At the 2.5km mark, you'll enter the bedrock zone. If the water is clear, expect some lovely river scenes.

At the 3.5km mark, there's a large weir. This weir is often open, so you can paddle straight through, but, the outflow is across a large area of concrete blocks – these will not be runnable unless the water is very high. Even if the weir is open and the water is high, make sure to scout this before running. The weir can be port-aged on the river right – it's a bit of a scramble to get up the concrete wall on the far right about 75m upstream of the weir itself.

About 1km downstream of the weir is Koke-iwa Rapids 苔岩の瀬, the only rapid that is usually marked in guidebooks – the rest of the river just has so many other frequent rapids, that they're not named. Take out river right under Higashi-bashi bridge 東橋 in Higashi-kawa Town.

TRANSPORT

By car I There's plenty of room for cars to park under or near Shibinai Bridge at the put-in, and plenty of room at the park golf course at the take out. See the public transport options below if shuttling with just one vehicle. **Public transport** I Public transport access is pretty good on this route, with public buses running from Asahikawa City via Higashikawa Town to a bus stop near the put-in, on its way to Asahidake village. Buses run four times a day – see the online route overview for timetables. If you're in Higashikawa Town already, then get on the bus at Higashikawa Michikusakan bus stop ひがしかわ道草館 in front of the Michi-no-eki, and get off at Higashi 11-go 東11号 bus stop. From there it's about a 500m walk to the put-in. From the take-out at Higashi-bashi bridge, it's about a 650m walk north to central Higashikawa town. A taxi from Higashikawa

RIVER DETAILS

This route is on Chubetsu River (忠別川), or Chup-pet in the Ainu indigenous language. The river is a Class A (一級河川) river, 59.2km in total length. This section of the river is between 20m and 40m wide , with a normal flow rate of around 1m/s to 3m/s. The gradient for this section of river is 10 mpk (52.80 FPM).

to the put-in will cost about 1,500yen. Call Toko Taxis 東交ハイヤー on 0166-82-2530, but expect to have to speak Japanese. If you want to take a taxi, but your Japanese isn't up to scratch, call the Higashikawa Information Center on 0166-68-4777 - they have English-speaking staff, and will be able to arrange a taxi to come and pick you up.

SAFETY NOTES

At normal water levels (15-17m³/s out of the dam), this is a lively river, but at least there are eddies here and there. At 4017m³/s and above, eddies become few and far between. This means a very long swim for open-deck paddlers in the event of a capsize, or for kay-

akers unable to perform a roll.

ONSEN NEARBY

For a post-paddle onsen hotspring soak, we highly recommend Mori-no-yu Hanakagura Onsen 森の湯花神楽温泉 (650yen), on the southern side of the river, about 5km southeast of Higashi-kawa Town. If you don't mind driving (or catching a bus) up to Asahidake Onsen area, then that's the preferred option, of course. Amazing views of Hokkaido's highest peak of Asahidake 旭岳 2,291m, and plenty of onsen to choose from. Our favourite is the Yukomanso Onsen 勇駒荘 (1000yen). ■

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/chuber>

Disclaimer The information on this map was derived from digital data-bases 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

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MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan

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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.



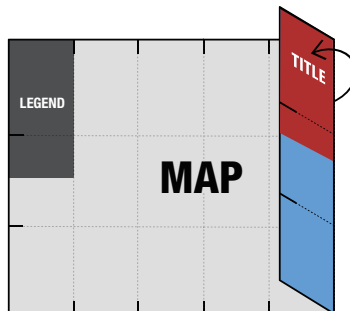
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

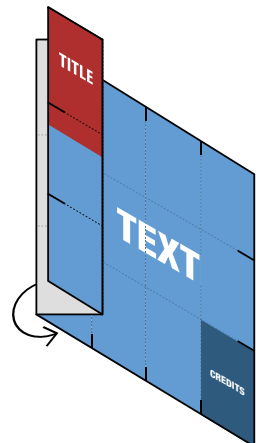
1



2



3



4



5



6



7

