




Niikappu River

新冠川 Paddling Map 1:25000







1 day
Time




3
Gradient (mpk)




Class II
Difficulty



23km
Distance



4/5
Water clarity



May-Oct
Best season

Paddling the Niikappu River 新冠川 is a dreamy, relaxing, unique experience. It flows through one of Japan’s most intensive thoroughbred horse breeding locales, giving the whole area a remarkably other-worldly atmosphere. If you’re lucky, you might see horses being moved across the river as you paddle. At the very least, there are a couple of river-side paddocks with curious horses keen for a tickle under the chin. You might also see cattle meandering along the riv-



er-banks, being led along by bell-ringing milking boys. Not to mention an abundance of salmon running in the autumn, and a plethora of birdlife throughout the season. It might have just made it to our favourite chill-out river list in Hokkaido.

LOCATION

Niikappu River flows southwest from high up in the western side of the wild Hidaka Range. This relaxing section of river still has a decent flow to it as it winds its way to the Pacific Ocean coast at the small town of Niikappu.

Put-in: Put in about 200m downstream of a weir about 20km north of the coast. Access to the river is a bit of a grass-whack/bush-bash, and the entry is a bit fast-flowing, but it’s doable. Grab fist-fulls of grass and you’ll be fine. There’s no parking at the put in, so you’ll need to park on the verge of the main road.

Take-out: The take out is much more civilized than the put in. There are plastic boat-friendly steps down to the river, a large parking area, and public toilets. It’s also convenient for calling a taxi, as the take out is next to a municipal youth center (青年の家, *seinen-no-ie*).

GENERAL NOTES

We’d heard the Shin-Hidaka region of Hokkaido was a popular area for horse-breeding. We didn’t quite realize just how intensive it is. It seems people in Niikappu Town don’t do anything else. Horse motifs around town, and out of town, the farmland appears to be 100% thoroughbred rearing land. Hopelessly aesthetic, and lots of curious horses out and about. The river itself is fairly relaxing, with rapids and swifts and max out at Class II. The only issue we encountered with the lower water levels was some very tight manoeuvring required to avoid strainers and low-lying branches close to

HIDAKA

the riverside when squeezing down the deeper flows on some of the swifts. In this sense, while this route is billed as a ‘Beginner’ route, it still requires good canoe manoeuvring skills.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES

With all the shuttling and horse-viewing involved, this is best thought of as a leisurely day-trip of about four hours of on-the-water time.

After putting in, strap in for some tight manoeuvring down swifts if water is low, avoiding minor strainers and low-lying branches close to the banks. The swifts are followed by stretches of slower moving water, but overall, the river has a good flow to it for the entire way. At around the 5km point, there’s a noticeable concrete slab reinforced stopbank on river right. Cows are sometimes led along the top of this stopbank. At the 9km point there’s a weir. Portage on the river right, but note that while it’s easy to pull up on the side of the river, it’s a bit of a bush-bash and/or a high-ish scramble down the dry concrete spill-over section of the weir. The weir is open at certain times of the year – we’ve lined the canoe down the open portion of the weir before. At around the 20km point, there’s a nice spot to pull over on the river right and walk 20m up to a horse paddock. If there are horses in the paddock, they’ll probably muster up the courage to come and check you out. The river flow on the final 1km or so to the takeout is quite slow, almost flatwater slow. The flow is slow enough to paddle all the way to the river mouth and then back up to the takeout – highly recommended as the wild Pacific Ocean is a sight to behold.

TRANSPORT

By car: There’s limited parking at the put-in. If parking near the put-in, you’ll be on the road verge somewhere, to make sure to park well to the side and don’t block access to any gravel roads. There is plenty of parking at the take-out at the Youth Center (青年の家, *seinen-no-ie*).

Public transport: There is no public transport to the beginning of the route. There is a public inter-city bus to Niikappu (Niikappu Bus Stop, 新冠バス停) however, and from there it’s a 6,500yen taxi ride for the 20km up to the put

RIVER DETAILS

This route is on Niikappu River (新冠川), or Ni-kap in the Ainu indigenous language. The river is a Class A (一級河川) river, 77.3km in total length. This section of the river is between 12m and 40m wide. The gradient for this section of river is 3 mpk (15.84 FPM).



in. In the past, there was a JR train line running to Niikappu, but the train line was mothballed after damage due to the 2016 typhoons.

SAFETY NOTES

There are plenty of swifts and Class II rapids on this river, and a number of them tend to push towards the twiggy, low-lying-branch-ridden riverside. Inexperienced paddlers should take

care and make conservative decisions.

ONSEN NEARBY

The nearby Niikappu Onsen Re-cord-no-Yu 新冠温泉レコードの湯 (500yen) is a great place for a soak. There are nice outdoor baths, as well as an attached restaurant and hotel. ■

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/niika>



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.

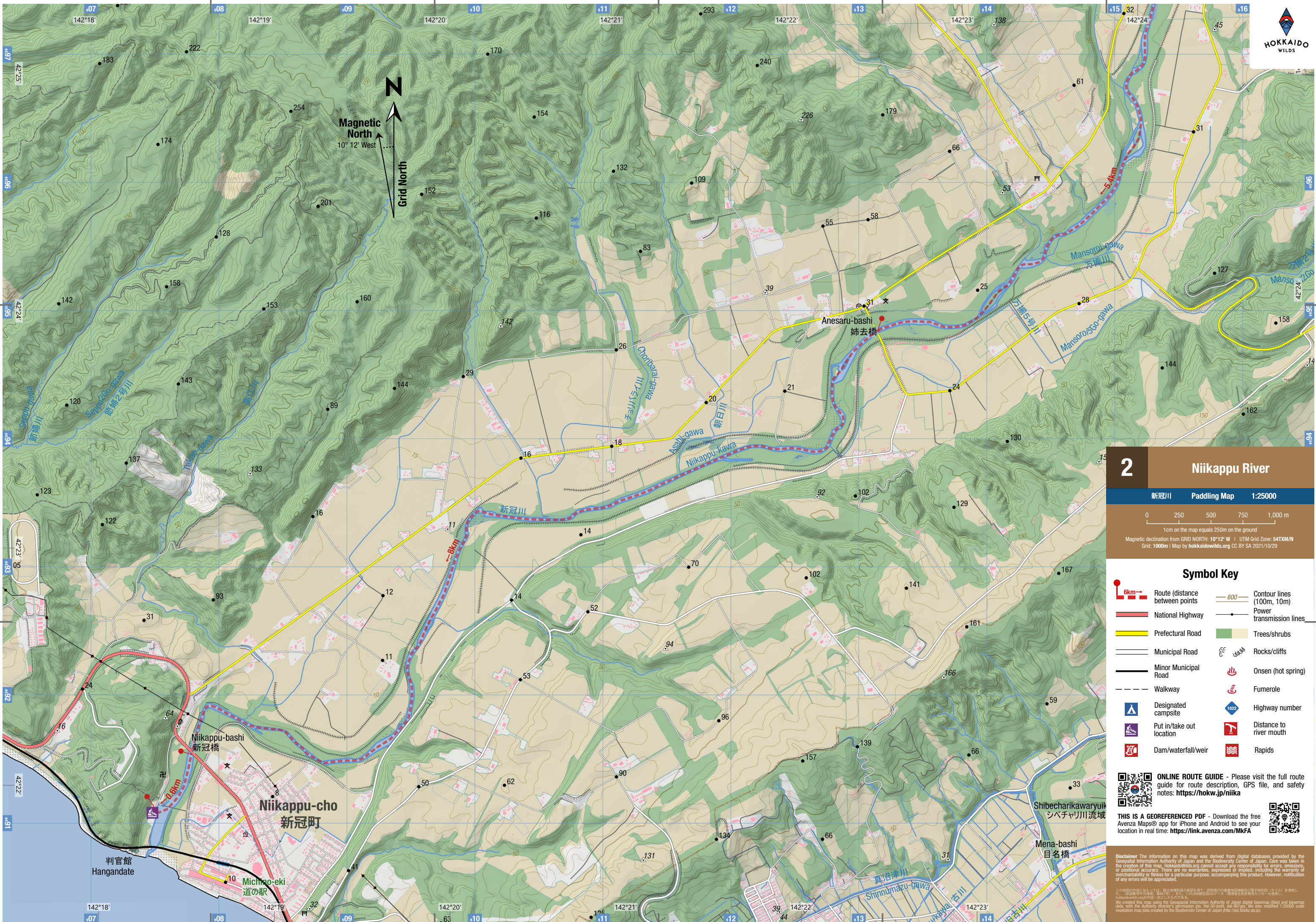
MAP, TEXT, PHOTOS | Rob Thomson

hokkaidowilds.org 2021/11/02

MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan

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Niikappu River

新冠川 Paddling Map 1:25000

1cm on the map equals 250m on the ground

Magnetic declination from GRID NORTH: 10°12' W | UTM Grid Zone: 54TXM/
Grid: 1000m | Map by hokkaidowilds.org CC BY SA 2021/10/29

Symbol Key

Route (distance
between points)

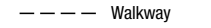
National Highway



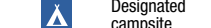
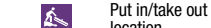
Prefectural Road



Municipal Road

Minor Municipal
Road

Walkway

Designated
campsite

Put in/take out location



Dam/waterfall/w



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



© app for iPhone and Android to see you
al time: <https://link.avenza.com/MkFA>



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この地図の作成に当たっては、国土地理院長の承認を得て、同院発行の基礎地図情報及び電子地形図（タイル）を使用した。1:50,000縮尺の国土地理院図（第267号）また、1:25,000縮尺のGISデータ（環境省生物多様性センターも使用し、hokkaido-hanare.comが作成）に加工した。また、1:25,000縮尺のGISデータ（環境省生物多様性センターも使用し、hokkaido-hanare.comが作成）に加工した。

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, dat. 88790). We also modified 1:25,000 scale data from the map data used by the Biodiversity Center of Japan (<http://bio.cri.ac.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.



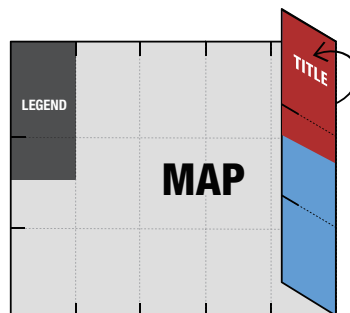
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

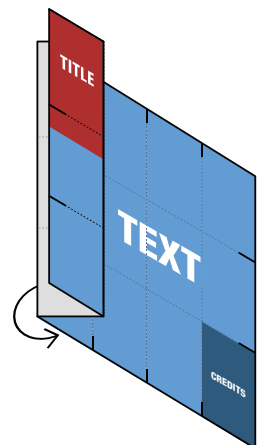
1



2



3



4



5



6



7

