

SKI

CYCLE

HIKE

PADDLE



HUTS

BLOG ▾

ABOUT ▾



HokkaidoWilds.org 2021 Annual Report



Posted on Apr 14, 2022
by The Hokkaido Wilds



The 2021 fiscal year for HokkaidoWilds.org has seen 28 new route guides added to the site, including hitting our target of 50 river and lake paddling routes. Offline, we've also been involved in more outreach activities than ever before. For a second year running, we've seen dramatically low visitor numbers to the site, no doubt due to travel restrictions due to the pandemic. We were thrilled to receive a national ward in Tokyo for our topographic maps, and were happy to be involved in the Adventure Travel World Summit, held virtually in Hokkaido. For the first time we made a call for support from readers, and are greatly indebted to the support received. *HokkaidoWilds.org is a non-profit unincorporated volunteer association, providing outdoor information in English for Japan's northern-most island of Hokkaido and surrounding regions.* [日本語の報告書はこちら→](#)

QUICK LINKS

PRINT: [English](#) | [Japanese](#)

[Posts Added](#)[Website Edits](#)[Outreach](#)[Goals](#)[Web Stats](#)[Finances](#)

PREAMBLE

2021 marked the third full year of operation for HokkaidoWilds.org. It was another year of a Hokkaido void of international travellers. We kept pressing on, however, and managed to hit our target of documenting 50 Hokkaido river and lake canoe routes. Overall, we've published fewer routes than in previous years. This is partly because of many more local outreach engagements we've been involved in, but also because of the continued absence of some of the HokkaidoWilds.org authors due to pandemic-induced Japan entry restrictions.

Locally, there was some buzz around the 2021 Adventure Travel World Summit – we were thrilled to be involved in the kickoff symposium. We were also thrilled to be awarded Grand Prize at the national 2021 Geo Activity Contest in Tokyo.

KEY POINTS

ROUTE GUIDES

In 2021, we hit our target of **50 paddling routes** documented in three years. We announced an extension to this goal – up to **20 sea kayaking routes** over the next three years.

OUTREACH

2021 has been a busy year for outreach – lots of Hokkaido Outdoor Forum committee work, public presentations, exhibitions, and consulting gigs. We value this sort of collaboration with the wider Hokkaido outdoor industry, but seek to reel some of this in 2022, to focus on our core 2025 goals.

WEBSITE FUNCTIONALITY

With the help of a professional (plus a good CDN and server), the

Website access numbers continue to be much lower than pre-pandemic levels. However, Japan is slowly relaxing border measures, and we expect an influx of visitors (both to the site and Hokkaido) from summer 2022 onwards.

HokkaidoWilds.org **website is now loading faster** than ever before. We added **JAN avalanche risk icons** to Niseko area backcountry ski posts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

- Huge thanks to HokkaidoWilds.org readers again this year for the encouraging comments and for following along our adventures here in Hokkaido.
- A special thanks to the HokkaidoWilds.org readers who supported us financially after [we made public how readers could support our activities](#). See [finances](#) below for more details.
- Thank you to the [Biwako Canoe Center](#) for giving us a very generous discount on one of the sea kayaks we'll be using for our sea kayaking documentation project.
- Thank you to the [Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism](#) for choosing us to exhibit at the 2021 Geo Activity Contest – the Grand Prize was very encouraging for us.
- Special thanks to [Chris](#) for allowing us to commandeer his Niseko cabin over the winter.
- Thanks to Andrew Tranter for coming on board and helping us out with website backend network optimizations – the website has never been faster to load.
- Thank you to [@joekkaido](#) for creating a custom badge for the Daisetsuzan Grand Traverse route guide, and to Danielle for doing some badly needed user experience research for the site.

POSTS ADDED OVER THE YEAR (from April 1st 2021 till March 31st 2022)

15

Ski Tour Routes

124 routes
Running total

0

Cycle Routes

42 routes
Running total

3

Hiking Routes

83 routes
Running total

8

Canoe Routes

50 routes
Running total

2

Huts

42 huts
Running total

SKI TOURING ROUTES

We published a total of 15 established ski touring routes over the last year. No doubt conspicuous to our regular readers was our focus on the Niseko Range this year. First and foremost the reason for this focus on the Niseko area is because of the attractiveness of the range for backcountry skiing. Snow quality, accessibility, facilities, onsen...for all its trappings as Asia's premiere winter destination, few can deny the place offers some incredible skiing in the backcountry. We also have other intentions though. Our [Instagram](#) followers will have noticed us teasing a full Niseko Range backcountry map...details to be revealed before the 2022/2023 season!

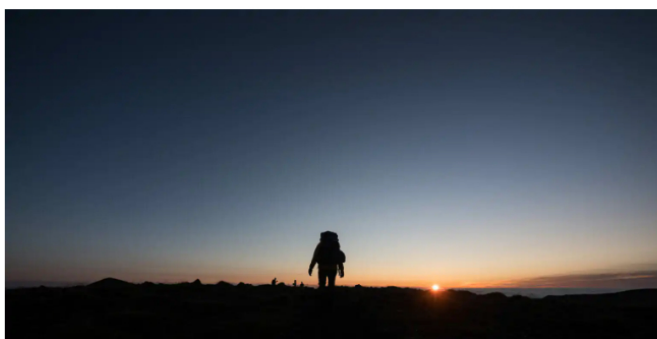
See all ski tour routes: <https://hokkaidowilds.org/skitour>



HIKING ROUTES

Without our star hiking author, Rick, in the country, the hiking section of HokkaidoWilds.org was relatively quiet in 2021. We are, however, extremely proud of the full [Daisetsuzan Grand Traverse route guide](#) we created in August 2021. We've long felt this world-class multi-day traverse deserved a full, high quality guide, and we're hoping ours goes some way to fulfilling that need. The accompanying [PDF maps and printable guide](#) is hands down the most comprehensive we've created for the site yet.

See all the hiking routes here: <https://hokkaidowilds.org/hike>



CANOE ROUTES

Three years ago, we set a [goal of paddling 50 Hokkaido canoe routes](#) in three seasons. [We did it](#), and we're super proud of the resource we've created. Haidee and Rob were very much beginner paddlers at the start of it all, and are now solid intermediate paddlers, keen to continue to explore and document Hokkaido waterways.

On the back of the canoeing success, we've now announced a plan to [document up to 20 sea kayaking routes around Hokkaido](#).

See all the canoe routes here: <https://hokkaidowilds.org/water>



OTHER POSTS

Early in the 2021 fiscal year, we poured a lot of development into an [English-language online tool](#) that generates the official documentation required to register digital two-way radios in Japan. We hope those who have used it (there have been a handful) have found it useful.

We also spent a considerable amount of time translating the new [Lake Toya Rules and Manners Guide](#). We like to think this helped bring publicity to the proposed rules, and helped guide discussions towards more inclusive recommendations for the lake's use.



WEBSITE FEATURE UPDATES

Server and network improvements

Systems engineer extraordinaire Andrew Tranter came on board in 2021 to help us [sort out the network structure of HokkaidoWilds.org](#). This has resulted in a massive speed increase in loading times on the site, and has helped us rationalize make more efficient the costs we pay to host and deliver the site to users.



Japan Avalanche Network (JAN) Niseko area avalanche risk icons

The Japan Avalanche Network continues to broaden its coverage of avalanche



forecasting in Hokkaido. In the 2021/2022 season, they were putting out bulletins three times a week. [We made a widget](#) to display avalanche risk icons to give Shiribeshi area backcountry skiers a quick visual indication of current snowpack stability in the area.



Core Values

We've done a lot over the years in outreach, particularly to the local Hokkaido outdoor community, to communicate what our intentions are as a voluntary association. We realize that we haven't done quite as much towards the English-speaking outdoor community in Hokkaido. So, this year we updated our ['About Us'](#) page with the five core values that drive what we do at HokkaidoWilds.org.

- Inspiration
- Information
- Education
- Collaboration
- Open Access



Call for support

In late 2021, we let readers know how they can [support our documentation efforts](#) here in Hokkaido. This was a new thing for us, but it was in response to a number of readers asking if they could help out – particularly with the sea kayaking documentation project. In response, we gratefully received some donations to our operational fund.



OUTREACH

1

Award

2

Articles

2

Committee Roles

6

Public talks

1

Forum workshop

1

Advisory role

2

Media Appearances

Geo Activity Contest Grand Prize

Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Geospatial Information Authority of Japan

We were taken aback but very happy to [win Grand Prize](#) at the national 2021 Geo Activity Contest in Tokyo in December. Judges reported being impressed by the usefulness, novelty, and real-world importance of the UTM-grid equipped English-language topographical maps HokkaidoWilds.org creates using official Japan map data. [Wilds provided us with two runner-up awards at the 2019 Geo Activity Contest.](#)

data. vved previously won two runner-up awards at the 2017 Geo Activity Contest.

ARTICLES

Rob penned two published articles in 2021.

- **Article in Japan Workers' Alpine Federation Hokkaido Branch 50th Anniversary Proceedings**

The [Japan Workers' Alpine Federation](#) is one of Japan's oldest alpine federations, made up of chapters across Japan. We were thrilled to have the opportunity to share our thoughts about what is special about Hokkaido's great outdoors (and the culture that goes with it), in the [Hokkaido Chapter's](#) 50th Commemorative proceedings. This was a good opportunity to share more widely with the Hokkaido outdoor community the aims and vision of HokkaidoWilds.org. See [the paper \(in Japanese\) here](#).

- **Geo Activity Contest Extended Abstract**

In [this abstract](#), Rob argued for the introduction of UTM grids on topographical maps in Japan.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

As with previous years, we were happy to be invited to speak at a number of events and symposiums.

- **ATWS Kickoff Symposium** – The Adventure Travel Trade Association's Adventure Travel World Summit was held virtually in 2021 in Hokkaido. For the official 'Kickoff Symposium' for the summit, The Hokkaido Tourism Association invited us to share our thoughts on how Hokkaido might grow adventure tourism locally within Hokkaido, and to participate in a panel discussion (September 8th, 2021 – [link](#))
- **2021 Hokkaido Outdoor Forum Talk Session MC** – Rob facilitated the official talk session at the 2021 Hokkaido Outdoor forum (November 30th, 2021 – [details](#))
- **2021 Hokkaido Outdoor Forum Workshop** – Rob led a workshop at the annual Hokkaido Outdoor Forum, so brainstorm with participants about the unique aesthetic, safety, and weather of the Hidaka Range, as it is due to become a national park (December 1st, 2021 – [photos](#))
- **2021 Hokkaido Outdoor Forum Exhibition** – We exhibited our English language topomaps at the forum, to share with the wider outdoor community in Hokkaido what we're up to (December 1st-2nd, 2021 – [details](#))
- **Geospatial Information Authority of Japan's (GSI) 2021 Information Sharing Symposium** – GSI asked us to speak at the Hokkaido branch's annual information sharing symposium, attended by government and NGOs interested in learning about use cases of map data (Feb 25th, 2022 – [link](#))
- **Digital Hokkaido's online symposium** – We shared with Hokkaido industry stakeholders our use of Japan government map data to produce our English-language topomaps with UTM grids (March 18th, 2022 – [video](#))
- **The Association for Thinking about Mountain Toilets 23rd Forum** – The Yama-no-Toire-wo-kangaerukai (literally Association for Thinking about Mountain Toilets) is a voluntary association that does a huge amount of work in Hokkaido to improve backcountry toilets here. They asked us to share our thoughts about the backcountry toilet situation in the Daisetsuzan Range (March 19th, 2022 – [photos](#), [video](#), [slides](#)).

MEDIA APPEARANCES

The Construct Hokkaido newspaper – a newspaper aimed at the construction industry – ran a couple of stories on the English mapping work HokkaidoWilds.org is doing, [here](#) and [here](#).

Advisory Role – JTB Adventure Tourism Monitor Tour (Jan 18th till 23rd, 2022) | We were invited to take part in a six-day adventure tourism tour package development tour in January.

COMMITTEE WORK

- **Hokkaido Outdoor Forum** | Rob continues to contribute time to help with the running of the annual [Hokkaido Outdoor Forum](#): an annual gathering of over 200 people involved in the wider Hokkaido outdoor industry. He is part of the Steering Committee for the forum.
- **Hokkaido Outdoor Network (HON)** | Rob is the vice-chairperson of the [Hokkaido Outdoor Network](#) (HON) committee. HON seeks to be an online portal for the Hokkaido outdoor industry – connecting, educating, and growing the wider Hokkaido outdoor industry.

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

In our [overall mission statement document](#), we say "by 2025, our goal is to have written detailed online route overviews for the following in Hokkaido and surrounding areas: 150 ski touring routes, 120 hiking routes, 50 canoe routes, and 120 bikepacking/cycle touring routes."

We're very happy to say [we hit our target with the canoe routes](#). In hindsight, we could have shot a little higher though – there are still a number of rivers we still want to paddle! We also announced a [3-year plan to document up to 20 sea kayaking routes](#). Therefore, we've upped the ante on the paddling routes – our goal is now 75 paddling routes by 2025.

Given how accessible hiking is in Hokkaido, we really need to start putting more effort into documenting hiking routes. As for the cycling routes...[Chris](#) was still stuck outside the country in 2021 so there's no progress there yet. But he has some good Google-Satellite scouted plans afoot.

Progress towards 2025 Goals

SKI TOURING ROUTES



HIKING ROUTES



125/150

83%

83/120

69%

PADDLING ROUTES (GOAL ADJUSTED TO 75 ROUTES)

50/75

67%

CYCLING ROUTES

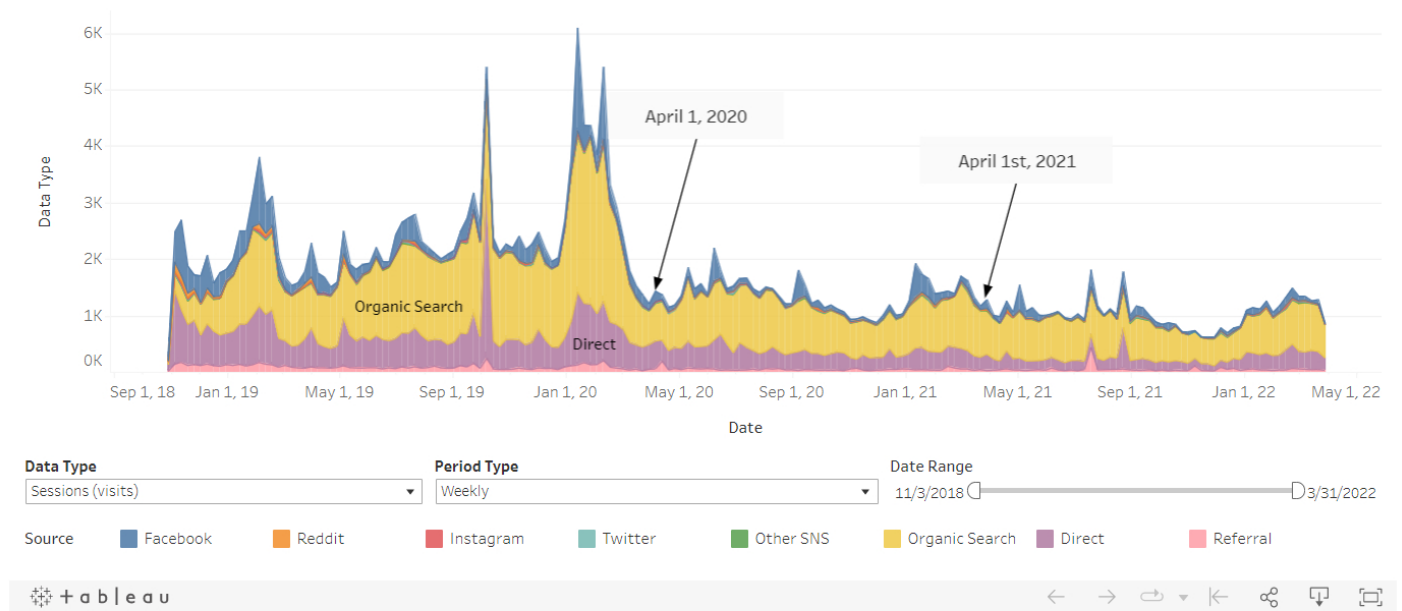
43/120

38%

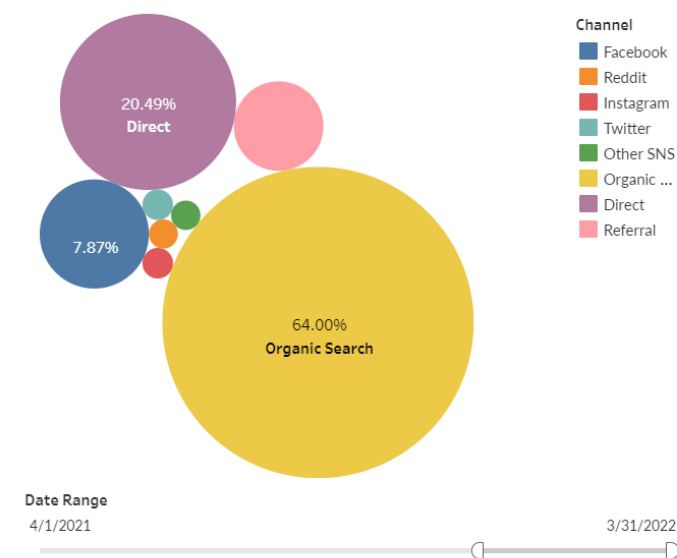
WEB ANALYTICS

The pandemic appears to continue to impact site visitor numbers, with around 1000 visits per week – over half of our pre-pandemic access numbers. Organic search continues to be the main way users access the site. Instagram and Facebook engagement rates have dropped over the last six months or so. This is likely due to less regular posting on our part – algorithms love regular new content.

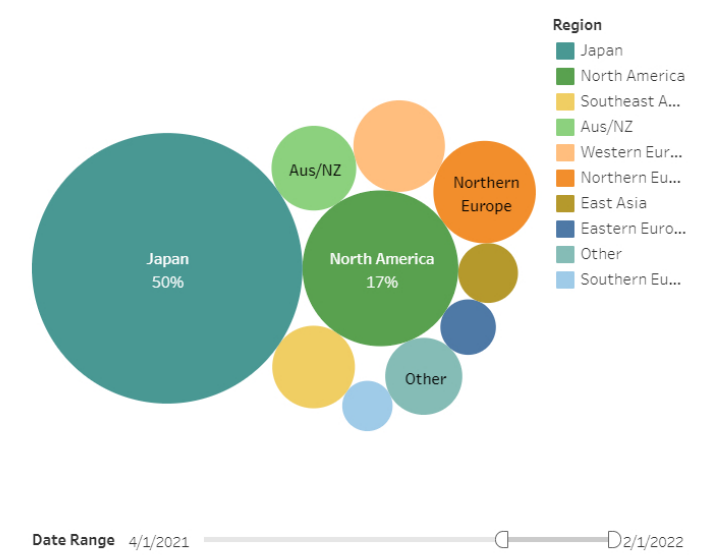
Website access by source



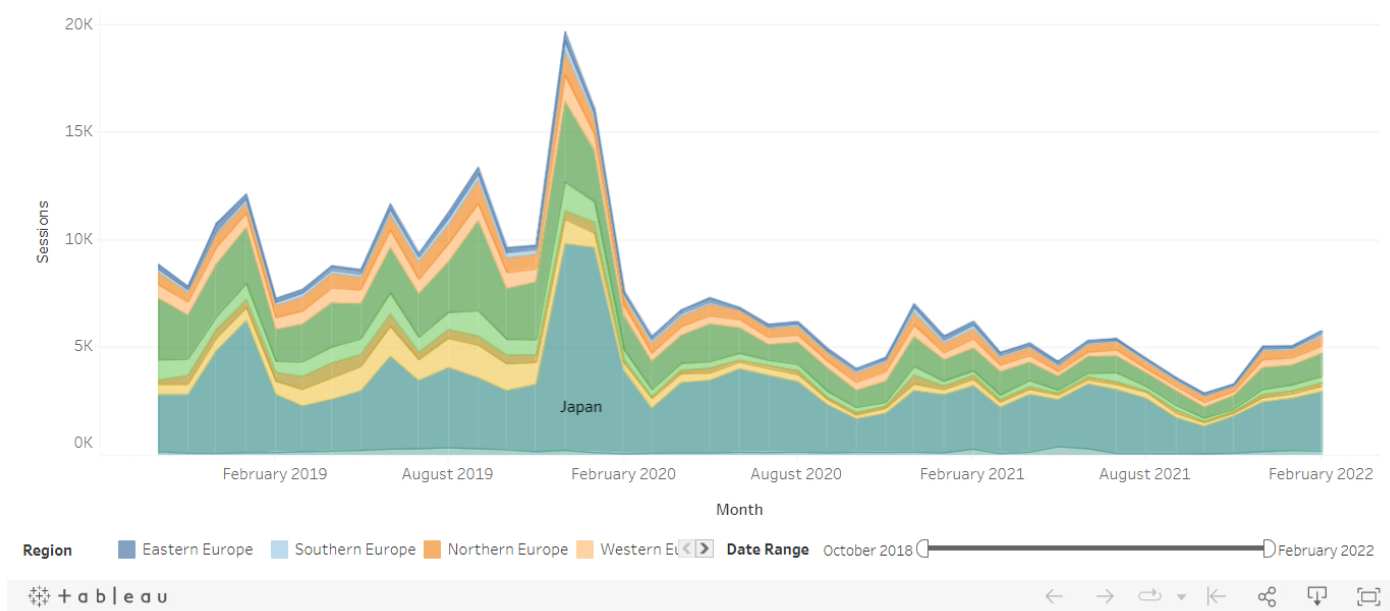
Sessions by source



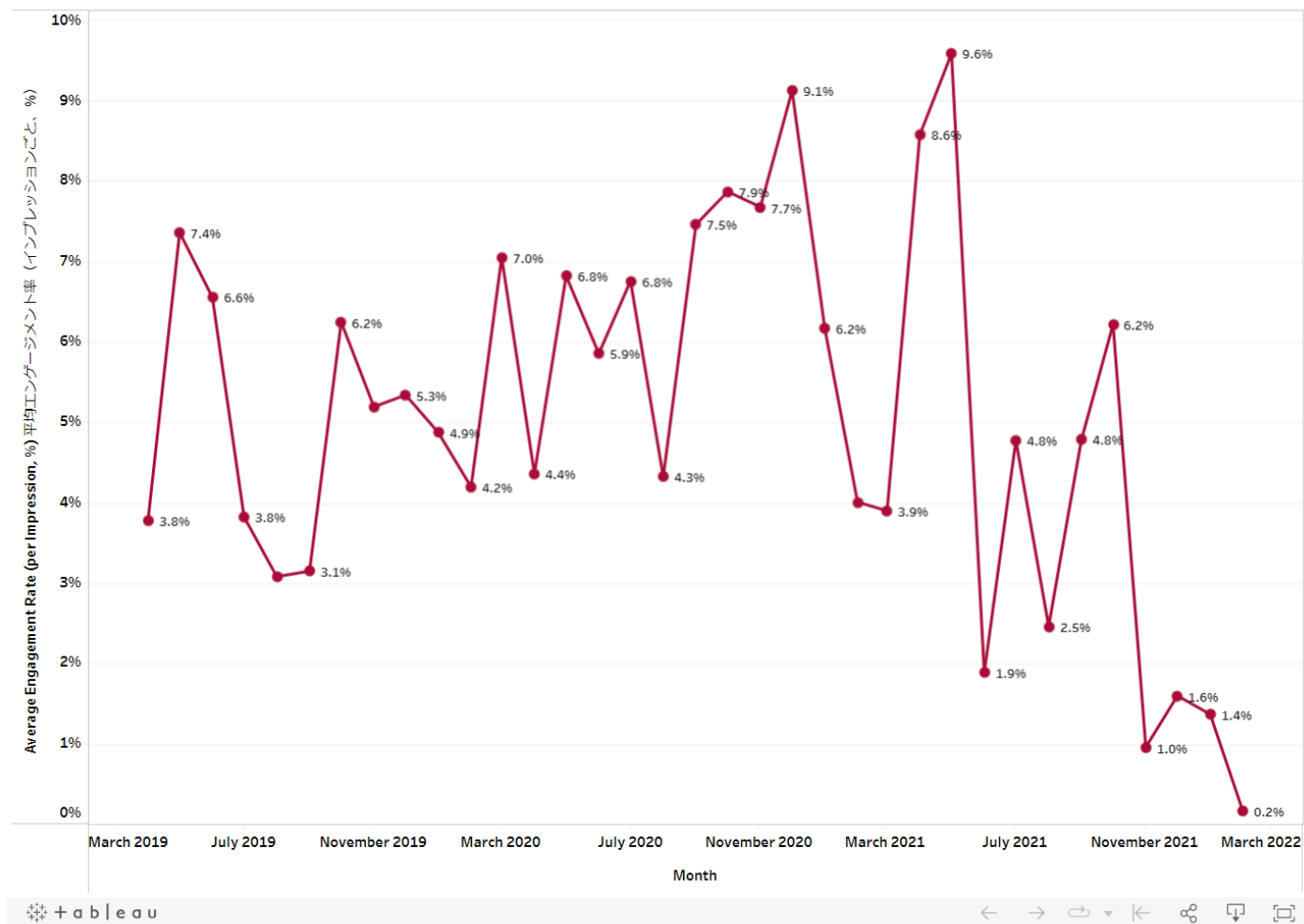
Sessions by region



Sessions by region

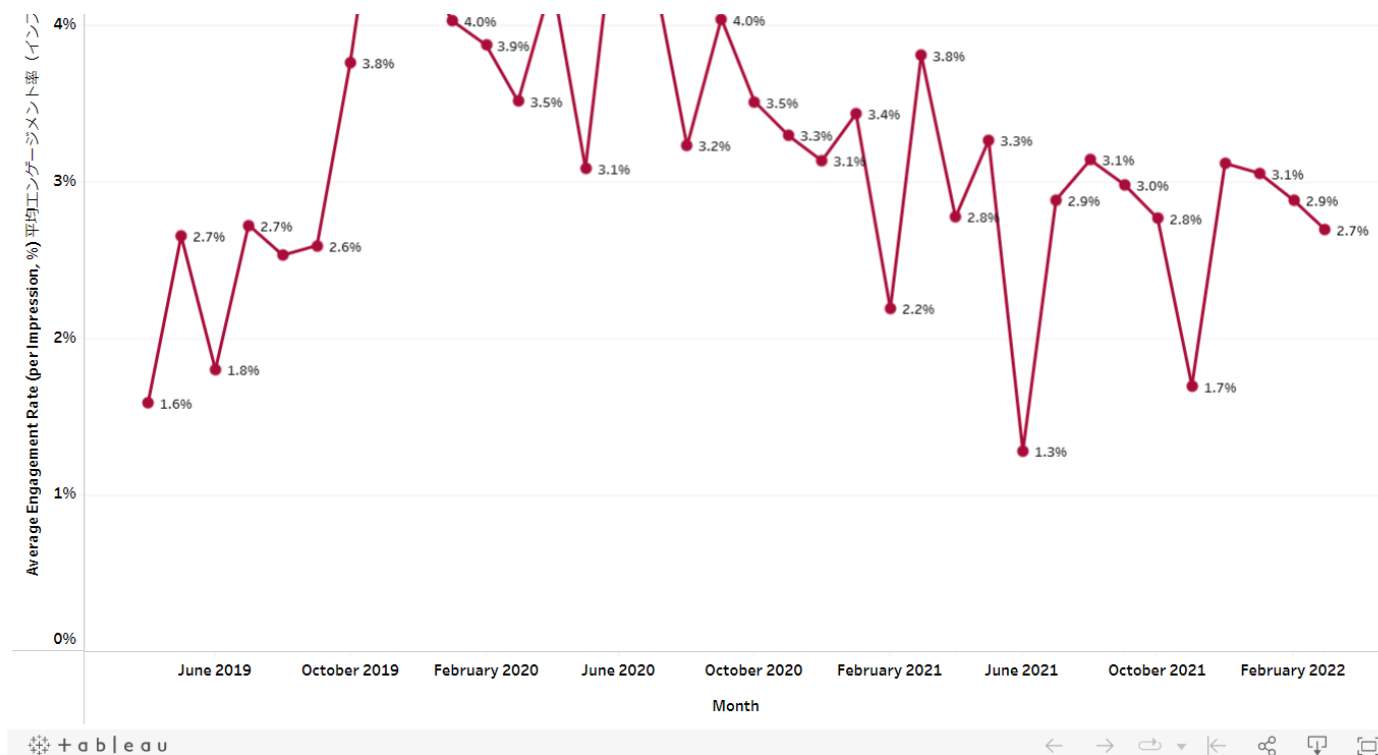


HokkaidoWilds.org Monthly **Instagram** Engagement Rate (月間 インスタグラムエンゲージメント) (2019~2022)



HokkaidoWilds.org Monthly **Facebook** Engagement Rate (月間 フェースブックエンゲージメント) (2019~2022)





Hokkaido Wilds Top Pages : Apr '21 - Mar '22

Ranking	Pageviews	Page
1	7973	https://hokkaidowilds.org/
2	5391	https://hokkaidowilds.org/skitour
3	5135	https://hokkaidowilds.org/cycle
4	4909	https://hokkaidowilds.org/hike
5	4254	https://hokkaidowilds.org/自転車のダイナモハブに使う自作（diy）のusb;
6	3629	https://hokkaidowilds.org/diy-bicycle-dynamo-usb-charger-for-smartphones-and-battery-packs
7	3130	https://hokkaidowilds.org/shimano-alfine-8-speed-internal-gear-hub-oil-bath
8	3007	https://hokkaidowilds.org/シマノ8段内装ギア（アルフィーネ）の分解/ヨ
9	1971	https://hokkaidowilds.org/huts
10	1825	https://hokkaidowilds.org/paddling
11	1499	https://hokkaidowilds.org/japan-road-laws
12	1471	https://hokkaidowilds.org/about
13	1377	https://hokkaidowilds.org/bears-in-hokkaido

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (Apr '21 – Mar '22)

HokkaidoWilds.org has two accounts – a 'foundation' account and an operational account.

1. Foundation Account: We received a whopping 5,241yen in affiliate link income this year, as we finally hit the payment threshold for our Amazon affiliate account. This will be donated to local Hokkaido volunteer groups working to keep access to the Hokkaido outdoors safe and accessible (learn more about the [HokkaidoWilds.org Foundation](#) here).

2. Operational Account: The operational account is funded through indirect revenue, such speaker's and consulting fees etc. We use these funds primarily for web and administrative costs. This year, however, we wrang the account dry late in the year to help pay for the four sea kayaks we'll use for our [Hokkaido sea kayaking documentation project](#). This year, with help from Andrew Tranter, we've also had [a big rationalization in our web costs](#). We're now making much more efficient use of operational funds in the web department – a few plugin licensing costs have been shaved in favor of a better CDN.

FOUNDATION ACCOUNT		OPERATING ACCOUNT	
Affiliate Link Income		Income	
Total HokkaidoWilds Fund Income		A) Carried over Apr 1, 2020	359,538
HOKKAIDOWILDS FOUNDATION FUND OUTGOINGS		Donations (HokkaidoWilds.org-related committee, consulting, and speaking fees paid to Rob)	416,750

Total HokkaidoWilds Fund Outgoings	0
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Donations (from HokkaidoWilds.org readers)	69,312
Reimbursements (web-related)	25,800
B) Total income	511,862
Expenses	
Web (plugin licenses and hosting)	130,329
Exhibition panels (GEO Activity Contest)	47,849
Sea kayaks	514,717
C) Total expenses	692,895
YEAR-END NET ASSETS as of 2021/3/31 (A+B)-C	178,505



0 SHARES

COMMENTS | QUERIES | DISCUSSION

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Email*

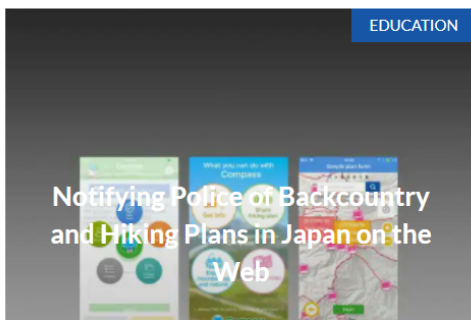
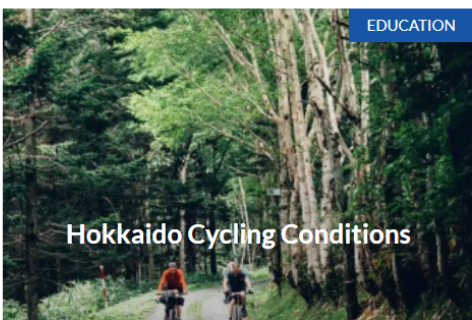
Website

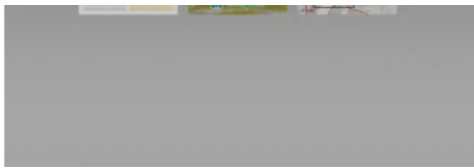
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