


Goko Cliffs


Shiretoko Peninsula

知床五湖断崖

Sea Kayaking Map


1:25000






6.5hrs

Time




24km

Distance




7/10

Difficulty




4/5

Remoteness



5/5

Water clarity



Jun-Sep

Best season

The Shiretoko Go-ko (Five Lakes) Cliff 知床五湖断崖 is a towering precipice on the coast west of the popular Shiretoko Five Lakes walkway. While punters line up in droves to board crowded, noisy, fummy cruise boats that sail at speed there and back, the sea kayaker can enjoy the myriad cliffs, overhangs, waterfalls, and caves at her own pace along this truly spectacular stretch of coast. With precipitous cliffs plunging straight into the Okhostk Sea, this paddle takes the kayaker past the impressive Otoko-no-namida Falls 男の涙, the remote and picturesque Iwaubetsu Bay, and allows fleeting views of the towering mountains in the peninsula's interior - in particular the rugged Ito-zan 硫黄山 (1562m). Within the Shiretoko National Park World Heritage Site, this is hands down the best sea kayaking day-paddle in Hokkaido, if not one of the best in all of Japan.

LOCATION
The Shiretoko Peninsula is at the very far east of Hokkaido, about a 6 hour drive east of Sapporo City. This there-and-back sea kayak day trip starts from the bustling fishing/tourist village of Utoro on the northwestern side of the peninsula, and follows the remote nothern coast for about 10km east.

Put-in location: The put in is about 2kmm northeastt of the Utoro village center. This Utoro Village side of the

Shiretoko Peninsula is notoriously bad for coastal access by the sea kayaking public – most of the access paths are either roped off or are private accessways. Currently, the best independent kayakers can do is to scramble down the low concrete embankment off to the side of the sidewalk to thee beach about 2km northheasst of Utoro village center. Note that the only public parking in the area is 2km south at the Utoro-Shiretoko Roadside michi-no-eki. When offloading boats and gear near the put in, keep in mind that Route 334 is a busy road, so make sure to keep boat and gear offloading quick and efficient, parking as far to the side of the road as possible to as to not block traffic.

Note that as per Hokkaido bylaws, sea kayakers (and other pleasure-boaters) are not permitted to use fishing ports (so, Utoro Port is not available as a put-in location).

Take-out location: This is an out-and-back route, so the takeout location is the same as the put-in.

GENERAL NOTES
As mentioned in the blurb above, this stretch of coast is arguably one of Japan's best one-day sea kayaking locations. Incredible awe-inspiring cliffs, waterfalls, mountain views, and a feeling of remote wilderness that is very rare in Japan.

T his air of remoteness is, of course, somewhat shattered between the hours of 9am and 4pm, however, as scores of tourist boats power their way along the outer coast to give their paying customers glimpses of said remoteness.

For the most part, the tourist boats keep well offshore, however, as they have to avoid the 100-300m long set nets that dot the coast.

SHIRETOKO PENINSULA

This means that while the sea kayaker can usually see the boats away in the distance, you'll rarely actually encounter them, apart from at select locations such as some of the larger cliff-bound bays and waterfalls.

Note that in the summer in Hokkaido, the sun rises at around 3:30 am. If the weather allows you to get on the water at around this time, it's entirely possible you can avoid the majority of the tourist boats altogether.

Short version: If you're not up to the full 20km return trip to Shiretoko Goko Cliffs, consider just going to Otoko-no-namida Falls and back. These falls are arguably the highlight of the trip, and will make for a very nice, less committing 6km return paddle.

Kayak rental: Unfortunately, there are no out-fits we know of that offer sea kayaks for hire in the area. See Guide Options below for guides kayak excursion options.

ROUTE TIMING AND NOTES
We recommend allowing about 7hrs for this route, to make the most of the coves, waterfalls, and views along the way.

Set off from the stony beach just south of the Horobetsu River mouth, and paddle northeast across the small bay towards Cape Puyuni. The Horobetsu River mouth bay will be in the lee of any considerable swell, waves, or wind from the northeast, so don't be surprised if conditions are somewhat different as soon as you round the cape. About 2.25km after setting off, you'll pass the impressive Furupe Falls cove. This cliff-bound horseshoe-shaped inlet is but the first of many incredible inlets and bays along the route.

Another 750m along the coast is one of the main highlights of the trip – the Otoko-no-namida Falls (literally: Man's Tears Falls). These impossibly beautiful falls originate not at the top of the towering cliffs, but from within the cliffs, gushing out of the very rock itself, falling straight into the sea. Tour ferries motor into this bay from around 9am in the morning, so we highly recommend a dawn start so you can enjoy these falls free from the scourge of the madding crowds.

2.5km on from Otoko-no-namida Falls is the beautifully remote Iwaubetsu Beach. Given a clear sky forecast, you'll get great views of the remote interior peaks of the Shiretoko Range as you paddle into the bay. The general public is not allowed to drive down to the beach, nor are they allowed to walk down through the private aquaculture farm premises to the beach. If you do land on the beach, keep stops short,

keeping to the southern end of the beach.

From Iwaobetsu Bay to Shiretoko Goko Cliffs, it is an extremely committing 10km-return paddle. It's committing in the sense that the cliffs plunge straight into the sea. The kayaker will have open ocean on one side, and sheer, towering walls of granite on the other. It's truly awe-inspiring, but a bad place to be if you need to get off the water in a hurry. Here and there there are small and large inlets with waterfalls and steep stony/bouldery beaches.

In the Shiretoko Goko Cliffs inlet, there is a small horseshoe cave that is fun to explore, so keep your headtorch handy. Return the way you came, for a full 20km return trip.

TRANSPORT
By car I The beach for the put in is accessible by car along National Highway 334 from Abashiri and Shari. It's about 2km northeast of the Utoro-Shiretoko michi-no-eki うとろシレトコ道の駅. There's no parking in the vicinity of the put-in. You'll need to drop your boats and gear at the put in, and drive back to the michi-no-eki, and then either walk or catch a taxi back to the put in.


Public transport I Utoro is accessible by public bus from Shiretoko-shari JR train station 知床斜里駅. Take the Shari Bus Shiretoko Line from Shari Bus Terminal 斜里バスターミナル just in front of Shiretoko-shari JR Station to the end of the line at Utoro-onsen Terminal ウトロ温泉ターミナル. As of 2022, there were seven buses per day running from Shari to Utoro. From there, it's a 1.5km walk northeast along Route 334 to the beach for the put in.

SAFETY NOTES
As is the case with most sea kayaking areas

in Hokkaido, this route is very exposed to the open sea. There is a large fetch across the Okhostk Sea to the north-west. Also note that escape options for this route are extraordinarily limited once past the Iwaobetsu River mouth. Any bays along the route are flanked by impassible cliffs. Sea temperatures in the Okhosk Sea are markedly colder than other areas in Hokkaido. Also take care when approaching and crossing any fixed gear fishery equipment along the route. There are a lot of set nets along the coast, many affixed to the cliffsides by enormous ropes under huge tension. If the swell and waves are up, these ropes can be extremely dangerous.


ONSEN NEARBY
Our pick for post-paddle soak is the Yuhidai Hotspring 夕陽台の湯 (500yen). The name literally means 'sunset hill hot-spring', as it sits high up overlooking the main Utoro township, with great views west towards the setting sun. The outdoor bath is small but nice. ■

Japanese Map Glossary		
Romaji	Kanji	English
cho	町	town
dake/mine	岳/峯	peak
eki	駅	station
goya/koya	小屋	hut
gyoko	漁港	fishing port
ike	池	pond
iwa	岩	rock
kaigan	海岸	coast
kawa/gawa	川	river
ko/mizumi	湖	lake
ko	港	port
misaki	岬	cape
onsen	温泉	hot spring
sawa	沢	stream
shima	島	island
tani/dani	谷	valley
taki	滝	waterfall
today	灯台	lighthouse
toge	峠	pass
wan	湾	bay
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/shiregoko>



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MAP, TEXT, PHOTOS

I Rob Thomson

hokkaidowilds.org 2023/04/01



MAP FOLD & LAYOUT CONCEPT | Dominika Gan

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知床五湖断崖 Sea Kayaking Map 1:25000



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Symbol Key



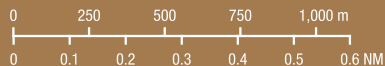
 **ONLINE ROUTE GUIDE** - Please visit the full route guide for route description, GPS file, and safety notes: <https://hokw.jp/shiregoko>



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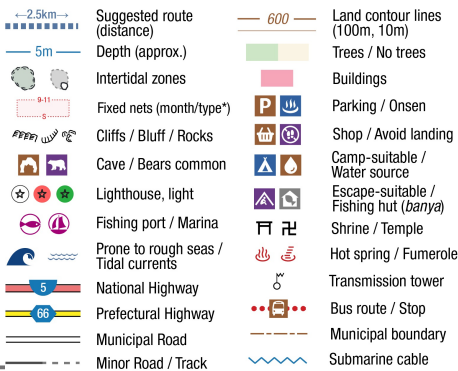
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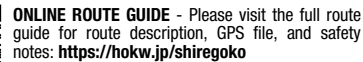


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Symbol Key



*S=sake (salmon), M=maguro (tuna), H=hokke (mackerel), lw=iwashi (sardine), Ik=ika (squid), Ms=masu (Cherry/pink salmon), B=buri (yellowtail), K=karei (flounder)

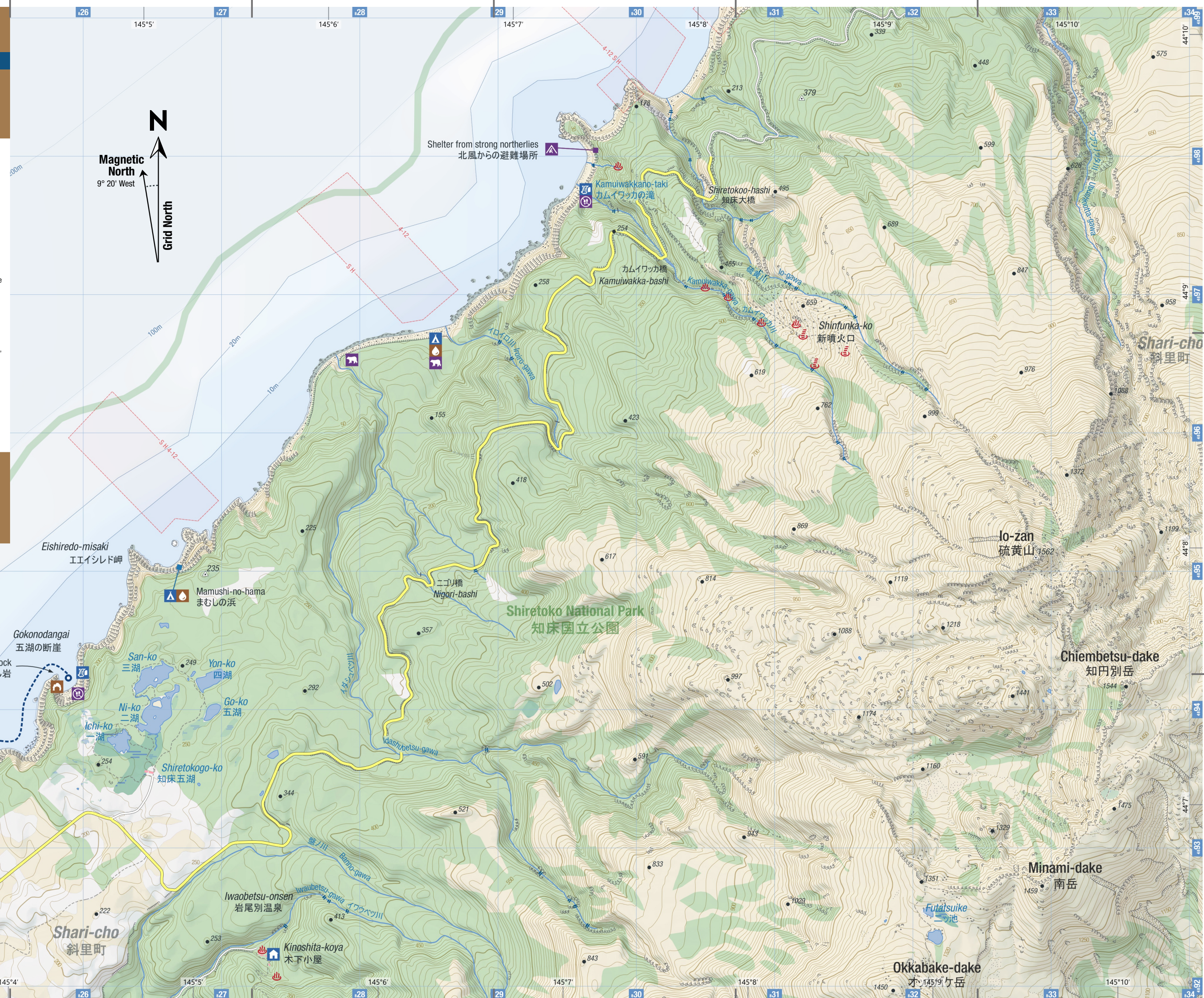


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PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS

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.



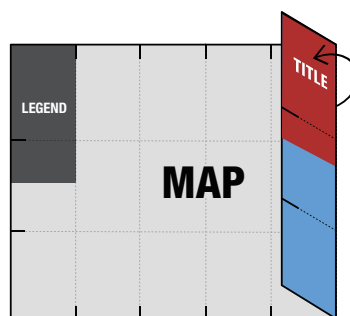
Figure 1. Ensure "Actual Size" is selected (Windows).

ORIGAMI INSTRUCTIONS

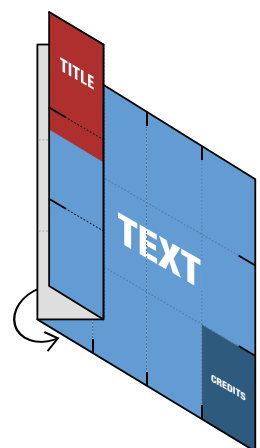
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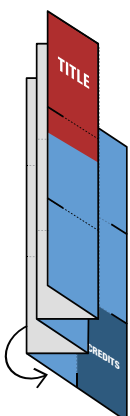
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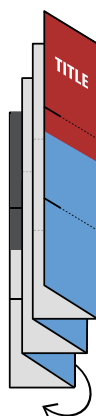
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4



5



6



7

