



HokkaidoWilds.org 2022 Annual Report



Posted on May 19, 2023
by Rob Thomson



2022 was a busy and fruitful year for HokkaidoWilds.org. We added almost 30 new route guides to the website, explored more of Hokkaido's amazing wild places with great people, and published our first ever physical product - the *Niseko Backcountry* ski map. Sea kayaking took center stage for our summer explorations, and we experienced our largest monthly website access numbers in January 2023.

QUICK LINKS

PRINT: English | Japanese

[BC Map](#)
[Posts](#)
[Outreach](#)
[Goals](#)
[Web Stats](#)
[Finances](#)

PREAMBLE

2022 marked our fourth full year of operation for HokkaidoWilds.org as a voluntary association (任意団体). During the first half of the year, Japan was still in pandemic mode, but just in time for winter the borders opened, and 'our people' (adventure-loving folk from overseas) came flooding back in - we recorded our highest website access numbers ever (15,000+ unique visits in January 2023).

We were thrilled to finally publish our first physical thing - the *Niseko Backcountry* topographic map for backcountry skiing in the greater Niseko area. 2022 was also our first full season of sea kayaking - we loved exploring some of Hokkaido's amazing coastal areas.

KEY POINTS

ROUTE GUIDES

In 2022, we published **22 backcountry ski routes** and seven paddling routes - all with **high-quality printable PDF maps** for free download.

NISEKO BACKCOUNTRY MAP

We finally published our printed large-format folded topographic map for backcountry skiing in the greater Niseko area - ***Niseko Backcountry***. This was the culmination of two years of development, and over **seven months of liaising** with the local backcountry community. We've already **sold 1,100 maps**. Once profitable, we'll be donating profits to mountain volunteer groups in the Niseko area.

WEBSITE ACCESS

With the return of inbound tourists to Japan, we've recorded the **highest website access numbers** since launching the site in 2018 - 15,000 visits in January 2023.

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 local Niseko retailers who took a gamble on stocking our *Niseko Backcountry* ski map. [See them here](#). Our *Finances* breakdown below shows that local stockists were our largest source of map income (wholesale). We cannot thank them enough for their confidence in the map.

PEOPLE OF THE HOKKAIDO WILDS

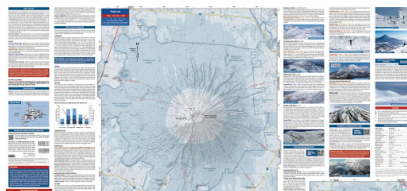
As with previous years, HokkaidoWilds.org was a success in 2022 because of the following amazing people (in alphabetical order) who joined us on adventures, planned adventures we were a part of, and gave us invaluable advice. HokkaidoWilds.org co-founders Rob and Haidee are stoked to get to enjoy Hokkaido's amazing wild places with these awesome folk.

- [Alex Johnson](#)
- [Andy Tranter](#) (unsung HokkaidoWilds.org web guru)
- [Ben Herman](#)
- [Chris Auld](#)
- [Greg Belyakov](#)

- [Greg and Mari](#)
- [Saoka Wakasugi](#)
- [Simon Daly](#)
- [Timbah Bell](#)
- [Tim and Madoka Wheelock](#)

PUBLICATION OF *NISEKO BACKCOUNTRY*

Arguably the highlight of 2022 for us was the publication of *Niseko Backcountry* - a physical printed backcountry ski map for the greater Niseko area. This was the culmination of our map-making efforts to date and represents a huge amount of work in both on-the-ground documentation and also in liaising with the local Niseko backcountry community. It was not without its challenges. While we received, as a majority, overwhelming support for the map, we were also on the sharp end of some very vocal opposition to the map - trailhead access (parking), perceived saturation of popular zones, visitor safety etc were all issues that are being grappled with in the Niseko area.



- Our full report on the development process of *Niseko Backcountry* is here (PDF, 1.5Mb).
- Companion site: <https://hokkaidowilds.org/niseko-backcountry-topomap-companion-site>
- Copies sold in 2022: 1,077 copies
- Copies donated to mountain safety organizations: 50 copies ([details](#))
- Revenue/costs breakdown: See 'Finances' below. Any profit made on the map will be donated to mountain safety and mountain use initiatives in the greater Niseko area. We haven't got to profitability on the map yet, but hope to in 2023.



BUY NISEKO BACKCOUNTRY ONLINE



POSTS ADDED OVER THE YEAR

These are new route guides we published on HokkaidoWilds.org from April 1st 2022 till March 31st 2023.

22	0	0	7	0
Ski Tour Routes	Cycle Routes	Hiking Routes	Paddling Routes	Huts
146 routes	42 routes	83 routes	57 routes	42 huts
Running total	Running total	Running total	Running total	Running total

SKI TOURING ROUTES

We published a total of 22 established ski touring routes during the 2022 fiscal year. Many of them were situated in the greater Niseko area, as we worked frantically to get as many of the *Niseko Backcountry* map routes written up in detail on the site. We also started to put more attention on the bigger peaks in the central Hokkaido mountain ranges - Daisetsuzan and the Tokachi Range.

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



PADDLING ROUTES

2022 was the first full season for us to document what the Hokkaido coast has to offer for the sea kayaker. It did not disappoint. Hokkaido's coast has some incredible gems - rugged and tower cliffs, sea caves, crystal clear water, diverse wildlife, and some extremely remote spots that offer a feeling of wilderness seldom accessible with other activities in the Hokkaido outdoors.

The seven paddling posts we published in 2022 don't include the other seven or so coastal areas we documented but hadn't posted before the end of March 2022 - the sea kayaking PDF topomaps take a lot of time to create, so the pace of publishing is somewhat reduced. We'd estimate at least twice the time is required for sea kayaking posts compared with other posts - combining marine chart data and land-based topomap data is a time-consuming but rewarding process.

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



OTHER NOTABLE POSTS

- Based on three (short) seasons of exploring Hokkaido's lakes and rivers, we published our [top 10 picks for canoeing in Hokkaido](#).
- The *Niseko Backcountry* companion web page - we wanted our paper backcountry ski map for the Niseko region to be a fusion of online and analogue information. So, we published a comprehensive web page as a companion to the map, with links to our detailed online route guides.
- We gave away the data required to replicate our *Niseko Backcountry* physical ski map. We hope by making the data open source, this will encourage others to create English-language resources for other parts of Japan.



OUTREACH

0	0	2	4	2	1	2
Award	Articles	Committee Roles	Public talks	Public meetings	Collaboration	Media Appearances

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

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

- Canterbury Sea Kayaking Network Talk (Christchurch, New Zealand) - Haidee and Rob had the pleasure and honour of sharing about adventure in Hokkaido

with a packed gear room at [Further Faster](#) in Christchurch, New Zealand. It was such a privilege to share with other keen Kiwi adventurers everything that Hokkaido has to offer to the DIY explorer traveler (August 23rd, 2022 - [link](#)).

- **9th Rumoi District Tourism Seminar** - Rob was asked to speak about HokkaidoWilds.org's view of the Rumoi area's potential for adventure tourism at a seminar attended by 40 people in the tourism industry in the area. Hosted by the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (Rumoi Development and Construction Dept) (December 5th, 2022)
- **2021 Mountain Day Symposium** - We were invited to speak at the International Mountain Day Symposium in Toyama Prefecture (Kurobe), about our views on the challenges and potential of the Daisetsuzan Range for hiking adventures (December 10-11th, 2022 - [link](#)).
- **Japan National Tourism Office (JNTO) Netherlands Hokkaido Webinar** - Rob gave a talk via video link to about 60 travel agents in the Netherlands about adventure in Hokkaido (February 23rd, 2023).

COLLABORATION

- Rob was happy to help the Hokkaido Police with editing their [English translation of their backcountry ski notice](#), which advises backcountry visitors about the risks inherent in enjoying Hokkaido's winter mountains.

MEDIA APPEARANCES

- **Hokkaido Shimbun Newspaper (February 2nd, 2023)** - An article about *Niseko Backcountry*, our backcountry ski map for the greater Niseko area ([link / screenshot](#)).
- **Yomiuri Newspaper (February 4th, 2023)** - An article about *Niseko Backcountry*, the English-language topographical map with backcountry ski routes overlaid for the Niseko region ([link / translation](#)).

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.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

- We organized two public meetings about our backcountry ski map for the greater Niseko area, *Niseko Backcountry*. These were very well attended (1st meeting - 30 people / 2nd meeting - 15 people), and gave us an opportunity to interact in person with local snow industry stakeholders. Full report from those meetings is [here](#).

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

We're very likely to hit our goal of 150 ski-touring routes by 2025. We're already at 142 routes on the site, and there is still so much to explore - central Hokkaido in particular, as well as a few more routes on Rishiri-zan in the far north. Likewise with the paddling routes - we have at least five paddling routes in the backlog presently, and there is simply so much more to explore.

For the hiking and cycling routes, we need to pick up the pace!

Progress towards 2025 Goals

SKI TOURING ROUTES

142/150 95%

HIKING ROUTES

83/120 69%

PADDLING ROUTES

57/75 76%

CYCLING ROUTES

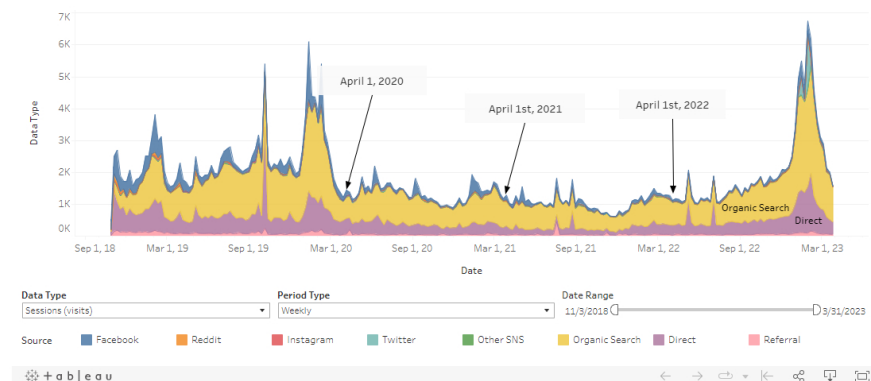
43/120 38%

WEB ANALYTICS

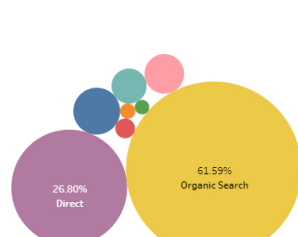
While the pandemic hit us hard in terms of visitor numbers from 2020 till mid-2022, the full re-opening of Japan's borders brought in a massive increase in users back to the site. We hit our highest ever monthly unique visitor number of over 15,000 people over the winter season of 2022/2023. Instagram follower count is also higher than it's ever been before, with over 3,000 amazing people following our updates there.

* We recommend viewing the graphs on a PC or other larger screen.

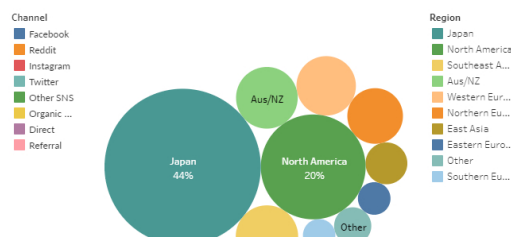
Website access by source



Sessions by source

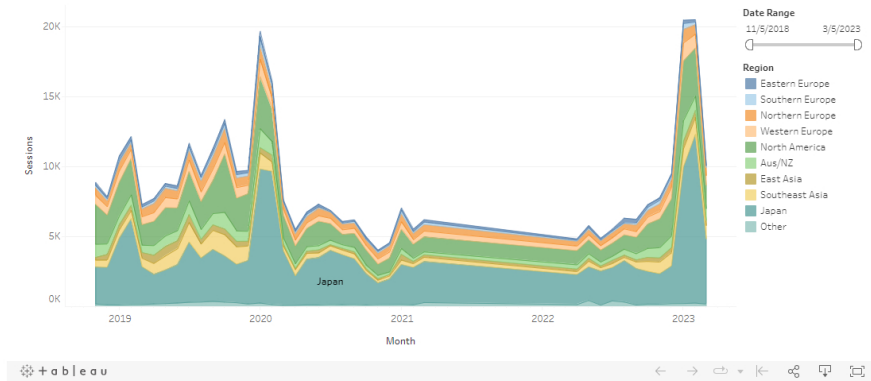


Sessions by region

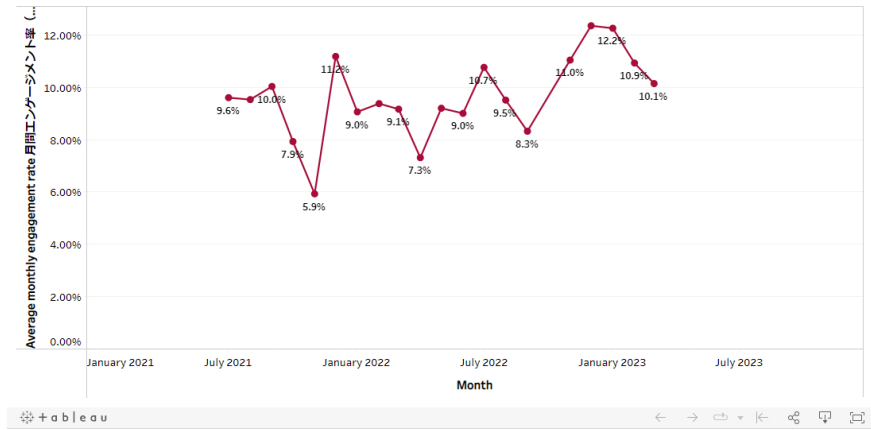




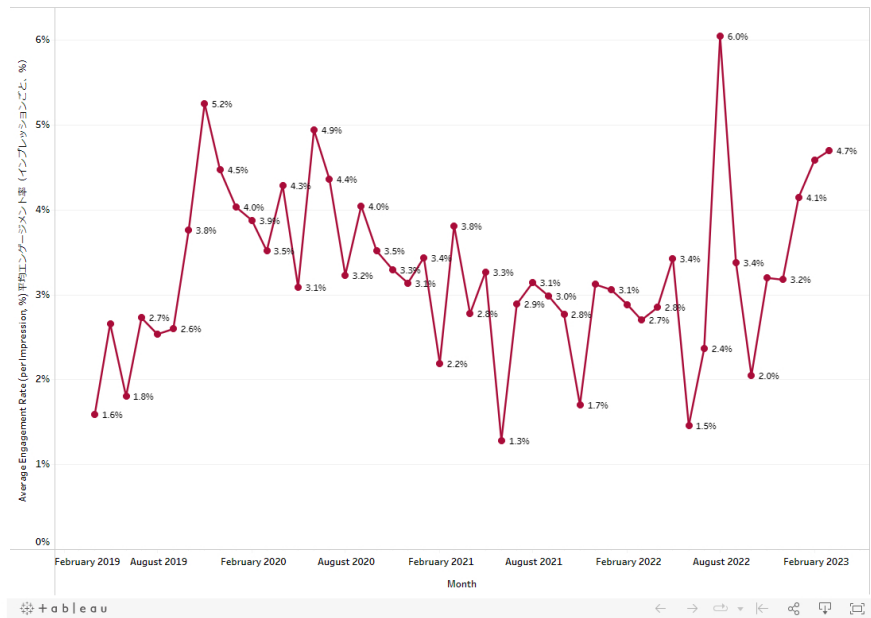
Sessions by region



Instagram post engagement (per impression) インスタグラムエンゲージメント率 (インプレッション毎)



HokkaidoWilds.org Monthly Facebook Engagement Rate (月間フェイスブックエンゲージメント) (2019~2023)



Hokkaido Wilds Top Pages : Apr '22 - Mar '23

Ranking	Pageviews	Page
1	21136	https://hokkaidowilds.org/
2	20912	https://hokkaidowilds.org/skitour
3	7406	https://hokkaidowilds.org/cycle
4	5621	https://hokkaidowilds.org/hike
5	4044	https://hokkaidowilds.org/huts
6	4012	https://hokkaidowilds.org/自転車のダイナモハブに使う自作 (diy) のusb充電器
7	3626	https://hokkaidowilds.org/mt-yotei-backcountry-ski-routes
8	3296	https://hokkaidowilds.org/シマノ8段内装ギア (アルフィーネ) の分解/手入
9	3226	https://hokkaidowilds.org/道の駅 札幌 道の駅 札幌 道の駅 札幌 道の駅 札幌 道の駅 札幌

9	3200	https://hokkaidowilds.org/en-us/cycle-dynamo-usb-charger-for-smartphones-and-battery-packs
10	2957	https://hokkaidowilds.org/ja-hokkaido-winter-search-and-rescue-trends-2014-2019
11	2775	https://hokkaidowilds.org/shimano-alfine-8-speed-internal-gear-hub-oil-bath
12	2596	https://hokkaidowilds.org/traveling-with-a-tern-folding-bike-on-the-train-in-japan
13	2336	https://hokkaidowilds.org/paddling
14	2272	https://hokkaidowilds.org/seasons-safety-while-ski-touring-in-hokkaido
Apr '22 - Mar '23		

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (Apr '22 – Mar '23)

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

1. Foundation Account: Our Amazon.co.jp Affiliate income was higher this year than previously, mainly thanks to sales of *Niseko Backcountry* via our affiliate link. 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). We were hoping that we would have made a profit on *Niseko Backcountry* map sales in order to add to the foundation account, but are yet to cover the next print run's costs, so that will have to wait.

2. Operational Account: The operational account was mainly funded in the 2022 fiscal year by sales from our map *Niseko Backcountry*. This year was the first time HokkaidoWilds.org, as a voluntary association, has been involved in revenue-generating activities (apart from a very small affiliate link income stream). As such, we're still figuring out cash-flows. Ideally, in the future, we'd be in a position where website costs are covered by revenue from map sales, and anything over and above those costs can be donated to other voluntary groups in Hokkaido. We are keen to save up enough funds in the Operating Account to cover a future print run of *Niseko Backcountry* (around 750,000yen), so we're not quite at the point of being able to donate to other causes.

FOUNDATION ACCOUNT		OPERATING ACCOUNT	
Income		Income	
A) Carried over Apr 1, 2022	5,241	A) Carried over Apr 1, 2022	178,505
Affiliate Link Income	17,533	Donations (HokkaidoWilds.org-related committee, consulting, and speaking fees paid to Rob)	63,980
Map income donations (from Operating Account)	0	Map sales (Wholesale)	887,134
Total HokkaidoWilds Fund Income	22,774	Map sales (Amazon)	258,022
HOKKAIDOWILDS FOUNDATION FUND OUTGOINGS		B) Total income	1,209,136
Total HokkaidoWilds Fund Outgoings	0	Expenses	
		Web (plugin licenses and hosting)	147,722
		Map Costs (development, printing, postage etc)	944,289
		Gear replacement (camera lens)	63,752
		C) Total expenses	1,155,763
		YEAR-END NET ASSETS* as of 2023/3/31 (A+B)-C	
		*These have been retained (i.e. not donated to Foundation Account) to cover tax and map printing costs payable in 2023.	231,878

 0 SHARES

COMMENTS | QUERIES | DISCUSSION

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Type here...

Name*

Email*

Website

☐ Yes, add me to your mailing list

Post Comment +

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)

SEE MORE LIKE THIS

EDUCATION



Please **steal** our Japan (Niseko) backcountry ski map

EDUCATION

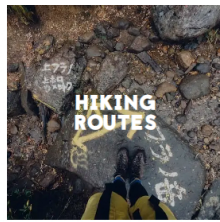


Hokkaido Cycling Conditions

TESTED IN HOKKAIDO



How to Convert a Shimano Alfine 8 Speed Internal Gear Hub to Oil Bath



FOLLOW ON INSTAGRAM

