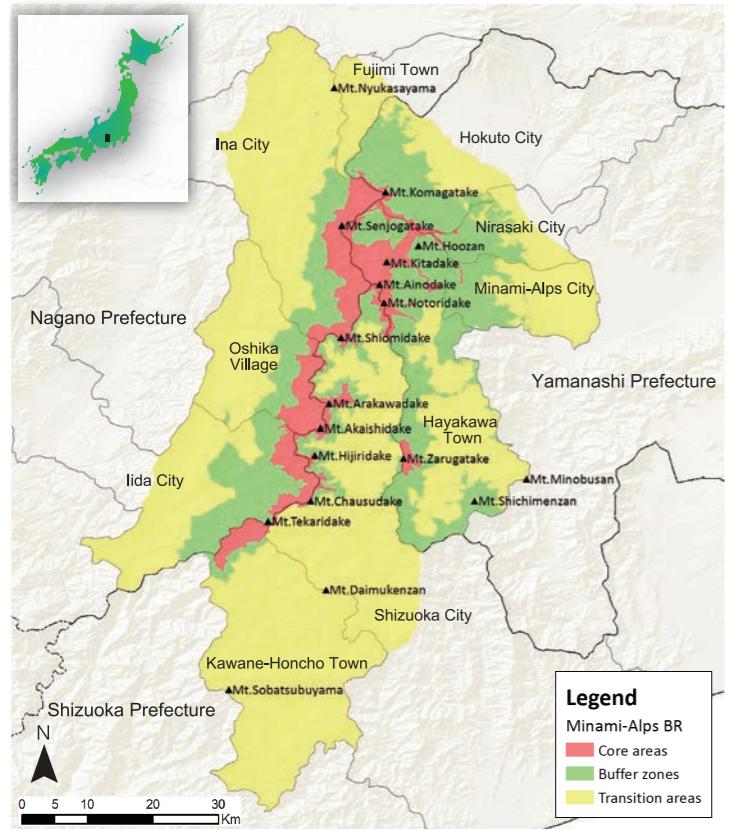


# Minami-Alps Biosphere Reserve

The Minami-Alps are also known as the Akaishi Mountains and straddle the three prefectures of Yamanashi, Nagano and Shizuoka. Stretching 15 km from east to west and 50 km from north to south and including more than ten peaks exceeding 3000 m, this is one of Japan's largest mountainous areas. It is also one of the wettest areas in Japan, having a distinct vertical distribution of forest from lower altitudes to the alpine zone at 3000 m. Being a habitat for endemic plant species such as Kitadakeso (*Callianthemum hondoense*) and the southern limit of animals such as the Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus mutus japonicus*), a bird species that can be traced back to the Ice Age, the alpine zone is home to a highly diverse natural environment. The mountain ridges contain many remnants of elevated peneplain and glacial landforms (*cirques*), and active crustal movements are causing the mountains to rise by 4 mm per year even today.

On the cultural level, the steep mountainous topology has been hindering exchange among the areas along the Fujikawa river, the Oigawa river and the Tenryugawa river since ancient times. For this reason, unique cultural spheres with distinct traditions in social customs, food culture and folk arts developed in these areas, and have been passed on until present.

Program development and other initiatives are in progress to preserve this invaluable natural environment and the unique way of life having its roots in such environment, and pass it on to the next generations.



Minami-Alps Biosphere Reserve Zoning Map

## Ten municipalities united

The ten municipalities in the three prefectures, in which the mountains of the Minami-Alps have been blocking communication, have formed the Minami-Alps Biosphere Reserve under the banner of "High Mountains and Deep Valleys Fostering Biological and Cultural Diversity".

Positioning the natural environment and culture of the Minami-Alps as common assets, the Biosphere Reserve is designed to help create an attractive region which makes use of its natural bounty and expands exchanges within the region through joint initiatives for the sustainable use and permanent conservation of its superb natural environment.

## Area

Total area	302,474ha
Core areas	24,970ha
Buffer zones	72,389ha
Transition areas	205,115ha

## Registration process

**Sept. 2013** Decision made for a national recommendation for the Minami-Alps area to become a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

**End of Sept. 2013** Application submitted to the MAB Secretariat  
**March 2014** Examination by the UNESCO International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves

**April 2014** Recommendation of the examination results to the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme

**June 2014** Examination and decision on the registration during the 26th session of the UNESCO International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme held in Sweden

高い山、深い谷が育む生物と文化の多様性



Paper cutout cover: Dojo Yanagi



MINAMI-ALPS  
BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Nirasaki City, Minami-Alps City, Hokuto City, Hayakawa Town (Yamanashi Prefecture)  
Iida City, Ina City, Fujimi Town, Oshika Village (Nagano Prefecture)  
Shizuoka City, Kawane-Honcho Town (Shizuoka Prefecture)

Minami-Alps Biosphere Reserve Promotion Office Address:  
376 Ogasahara, Minami-Alps City, Yamanashi Prefecture 400-0395 Phone: +81-55-282-7261

<http://minami-alps-br.org>



High Mountains and Deep Valleys Fostering  
Biological and Cultural Diversity



MINAMI-ALPS  
BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Nature to protect and nature to utilize.  
People connected through mountains.  
A balanced coexistence of nature and man.

# High Mountains and Deep Valleys Fostering Biological and Cultural Diversity

## What is a Biosphere Reserve?

Biosphere Reserves were started by UNESCO in 1976, for the purpose of balancing the conservation of ecosystems with the sustainable use of nature (coexistence of nature and human society). The project is carried out by the Natural Sciences Sector of UNESCO under the MAB (Man and the Biosphere) programme and aims to preserve the rich ecosystems and biodiversity, learn from nature and achieve a sustainable development with respect to culture as well as economy and society.

In Japan, Biosphere Reserves are called "UNESCO Eco-park". Currently, 631 Biosphere Reserves are registered in 119 countries all over the world, with seven being located in Japan. (As of June 2014)

## The three functions of a Biosphere Reserve

Biosphere Reserves have three functions: conservation, logistic support, and sustainable development.

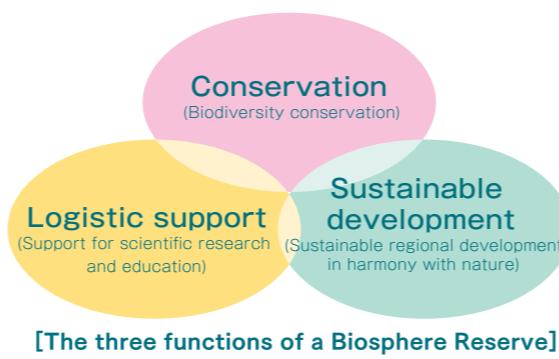
The individual functions are not independent, but mutually reinforce the Biosphere Reserve. To fulfill these three functions, Biosphere Reserves are organized into three zones.

## The three zones of a Biosphere Reserve

Biosphere Reserves consist of three zones, each of which play a different role.

### Core areas

The most important areas where the natural environment has to be protected, for example, the special protection areas in national parks.



### Buffer zones

These areas usually surround or adjoin the Core areas. They may be used for environmental education, outdoor activities, research as well as tourism and leisure.

### Transition areas

These areas allow human activities. Here, various stakeholders aim for a sustainable development of these areas' resources.

## Why a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve?

- The scheme allows us to create an organizational system for the permanent conservation of the mountain environment of the Minami-Alps, and to continue to protect the rich natural resource over future generations.
- As the fascination of our home as a Biosphere Reserve is communicated to the world, we can expect an increasing number of Japanese and international travelers for tourism and education.
- Biosphere Reserves are not covered by an international convention. A Biosphere Reserve is managed by existing domestic legislation.
- It can also be used as a site for environmental education and scientific research.

### Core areas

These areas are characterized by mountainous landscapes formed by peaks of the 3000 m class, which are typical for the Minami-Alps. Their primeval natural environment is home to precious plants and rare animals. Being designated as the Minami-Alps National Park and the Head of RiverOoi Wilderness Area the core areas are properly protected.



Mt. Akaishidake and a flower field on Mt. Arakawadake



Kitadakeso (*Callianthemum hondoense*, an endemic species)



Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus mutus japonicus*)



Scientific research in the alpine zone

### Buffer zones

The areas that surround or are adjacent to the core areas. Being designated as, for example, the Minami-Alps National Park and Yamanashi Prefectural Natural Park, buffer zones offer room for environmental education and the like while still being properly conserved.



Renge tsutsuji (*Rhododendron japonicum*) on Mt. Amariyama (Nirasaki City)



Minami-Alps Geotourism (Ina City)



UNESCO School activities (Minami-Alps City)

### Transition areas

Areas for ecotourism or the like drawing on landscapes of villages spreading out on mountain slopes, agriculture that harmonizes with nature, as well as history and culture.



Village of Shimoguri, located in a deep valley at an altitude of about 1000 m. (Iida City)



Oshika-Noson-Kabuki theater, which has a history of more than 300 years (Oshika Village)



Rice cultivation benefiting from abundant water resources (Hokuto City)



The Nyukasa moor colored with flowers (Fujimi Town)



Kayak touring (Kawane-Honcho Town)



Experience tour zooming in on wildlife (Hayakawa Town)