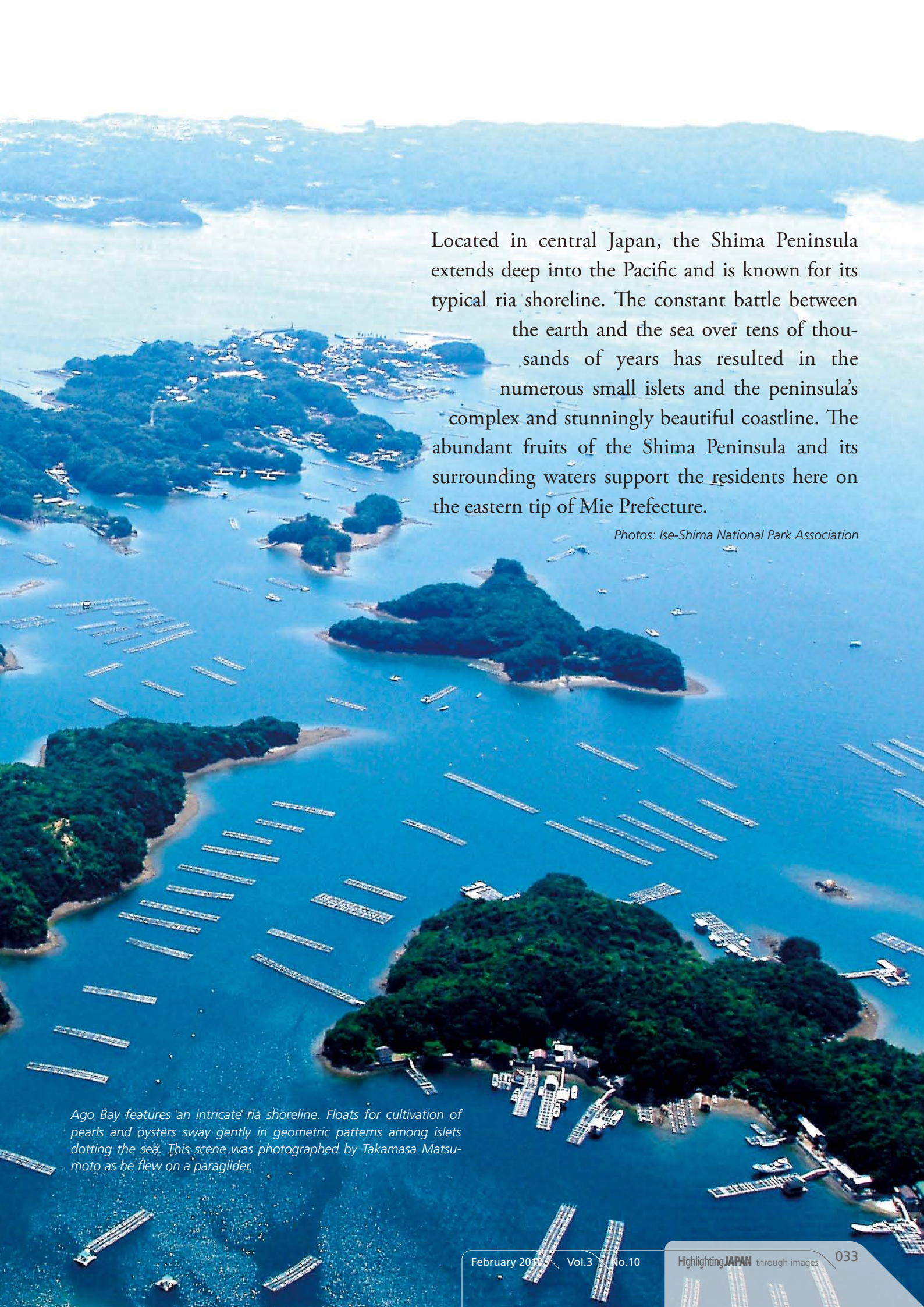




PEOPLE COEXIST WITH NATURE  
AT ISE-SHIMA NATIONAL PARK



Located in central Japan, the Shima Peninsula extends deep into the Pacific and is known for its typical ria shoreline. The constant battle between the earth and the sea over tens of thousands of years has resulted in the numerous small islets and the peninsula's complex and stunningly beautiful coastline. The abundant fruits of the Shima Peninsula and its surrounding waters support the residents here on the eastern tip of Mie Prefecture.

*Photos: Ise-Shima National Park Association*

*Ago Bay features an intricate ria shoreline. Floats for cultivation of pearls and oysters sway gently in geometric patterns among islets dotting the sea. This scene was photographed by Takamasa Matsumoto as he flew on a paraglider.*



NATURE  *Ise-Shima National Park*

## PEOPLE COEXIST WITH NATURE AT ISE-SHIMA NATIONAL PARK

Inland on the peninsula stands the complex of structures that is Ise Grand Shrine which has from the ancient times been perched atop the hierarchy of the country's many Shinto shrines. The Isuzu River flows through Ise Grand Shrine and separates the shrine's sacred areas from the real world. Visitors reach the sacred and divine place after crossing the Uji Bridge over the Isuzu River. A line of gigantic cedar trees, clearly

centuries old, tower overhead. A solemn calmness prevails over the shrine grounds, which are completely clean.

With time, Mother Nature in the form of waves has sculpted this majestic area as the powerful waters of the Pacific massaged the shoreline. The natural phenomenon of erosion worked its magic, producing sharp creeks, bays, cliffs and caves along the shoreline. Ago Bay, which reaches deep inland

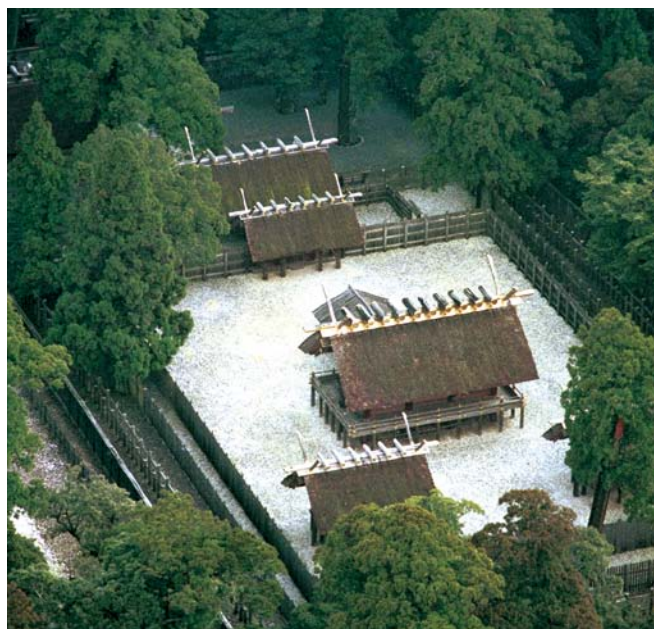


*Ago Bay is renowned for its majestic, picturesque sunset glow.*

*"Meoto-iwa" (husband-and-wife rocks) loom against the sky at sunset in Futami-ga-ura, Ise City.*



*The inner sanctuary of Ise Grand Shrine, where its guardian deity is said to reside, is rebuilt once in every 20 years.*



into the peninsula, is known as the birthplace of pearl cultivation as this is the site where a Japanese inventor first successfully cultivated man-made pearls.

Another spot—Matoya Bay—is known for cultivation of the large Matoya oyster. Floats used in the cultivation of nature's bounty float gently on the surface of the bay, making geometrical patterns and representing a peaceful mixture of nature and the work of

man merging beautifully. Along the bay, female divers can be seen collecting abalone.

The Shima Peninsula coastline is distinguished by its tidal patterns in which seawater and freshwater are mixed depending on the time of the day. This also makes for a visual treat as lumps of plants that can withstand the saline environment, such as hibiscus hamabo and false bindweed, produce flowers en masse on the shores in early summer.