



# REBUN

## THE FLOWER ISLAND

Cape Sukoton is the northernmost point on Rebus.

*Approximately two hours away by ferry from Wakkanai City in Hokkaido, Rebus Island is especially cool and delightful during the summer as hundreds of types of flowers bloom among its mountains and on its shores, and the surrounding sea offers up delectable fare.*

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**A**ROUND sixty kilometers west from the shores of Wakkanai on the northern tip of Hokkaido, Rebus Island is a narrow isle extending from north to south in the Sea of Japan just northwest of Rishiri Island. Many alpine plants that grow on mountains two thousand meters above sea level on Japan's main

island of Honshu grow at ground level or above here on Rebus, so it is also known as "Floating Flower Island."

Over three hundred types of alpine flowers bloom on Rebus from the end of May to the end of September. Many tourists visit yearly to see flowers found only on the island, like the Rebus lady's slipper orchid and *Rebus-usuyuki-so*, a species of edelweiss.

"To experience the diverse plant life and wildlife of Rebus, we recommend going trekking," says Koji Horiuchi of the Rebus Island Tourist Association.

There are seven trekking courses, and they cover a range of beautiful landscapes. Even casual hikers can explore the island with ease, since the highest peak,

Mount Rebus, gently inclines to a height of 490 meters. Along with the mountain plants there are many wild birds, and the Sea of Japan—which changes its aspect according to the time of day—is fascinating. The panoramic view of Mount Rishiri rising from the sea on neighboring Rishiri Island is also a spectacular sight.

Out of the seven trekking courses, Rebus fans tend to favor the two-hour Momoiwa Observatory course on the southern part of the island. "It has the most flowers in bloom, and is a great course for beginners without many ups and downs," Horiuchi explains. Meanwhile, the cape exploration course covers the northern area and leads to Cape Sukoton, where you can get a grand panorama of the Sea



The local fishing port viewed from Momoiva Observatory



A view of Mount Rishiri from Rebun Island



Rebun lady's slipper orchid, a native plant



Rebun-usuyuki-so



Fan columbine



Daylily

of Japan. You can also visit other picturesque locations like Cape Sukai to see the clear cobalt-blue waters crashing against the sharp cliffs.

Guided trekking tours will tell you about the notable plant life and characteristics of the island and take you to the best flower-viewing spots of the season. Be sure to bring trekking shoes, rain gear and warm clothes, by the way, in case the weather suddenly changes.

Rebun Island is also a treasure trove for seafood. With the Tsushima warm current and Liman cold current merging here, the sea is full of plankton, making it one of Japan's best fishing areas. You can savor a variety of seasonal seafood throughout the year, which during the summer includes kelp, sea urchin and the arabesque greenling. There is also a "sea urchin cracking experience center" on the eastern side of the island, operated by the Ship and Fishery Cooperatives, where only in summer you can open and eat freshly harvested sea urchin. The sweet flavor of fresh sea urchin that melts in your mouth leaving a trace of ocean scent is simply exceptional.

Summer mornings on Rebun Island start with harvesting sea urchin while the waves are calm. If you'd like to see the daily routines on the island, why not take a morning walk along the shore?

"We spot many tourists talking to the local fishermen," Horiuchi says. "Such fishing scenes are normal for us, but it is an unusual sight for many tourists, and that makes us very happy. The people on the island are very kind, so if you have any questions, please ask and talk with them."

Add the island's pleasant temperatures to the rare wildflowers and the chance to sample the bounty of the surrounding seas, and you can see why a journey to Rebun Island would be a memorable one. **7**



The island is known for delicious fresh sea urchin and abundant seafood