



## 2021 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story:

Environmental cultural type National Park (Singing Island).

Destination Name: *(include any state, province or region)*

Amami Oshima

Country:

Japan

Submitter name:

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Position:

Amami Oshima Tourism and Product Association, Secretary General

Nomination Category: *(Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)*

*Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.*

- Localizing the destination supply chain
- Decarbonizing the destination supply chain
- Culture & Communities
- Environment & Climate
- Nature & Ecotourism
- Tourism Reset & Recovery

*Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".*

*Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact [top100@greendestinations.org](mailto:top100@greendestinations.org)*

# DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

*Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.*

## Issues faced

The Amami Islands has its own unique natural environment, including subtropical laurel forests where many endemic species live and grow, beautiful coastal sceneries, and coral reefs, as well as unique characteristics such as lifestyles, traditional culture, longevity, and a natural environment conducive to fertility.

In recent years, the value of its natural environment has been attracting attention, and efforts are underway to designate it as a national park (March 2017) and register it as a World Natural Heritage site (IUCN recommendation in May 2021).

However, in Amami Oshima Island, the number of visitors continued to increase from about 394,000 visitors in 2014 to reach 530,000 in 2019.

In the forest area, eco-tours are increasing, with trekking, bird watching and night tours common in Amami City's Kinsakubaru Forest and Uken Village/Yamato Village's Mt. Yuwan-dake.

## Methods, steps and tools applied

The Wide Area Administration Association of Amami Islands implemented the "Regional Development Project Utilizing Environmental Culture" from FY 2014 to FY 2018, and produced a textbook on environmental culture and settlement's stories "Things to Leave Behind and Pass on in the Amami Islands: Treasures of 12 Settlements" to be Used for Promoting Ecotourism".

The "Overall Concept" was created by the Amami Islands Ecotourism Promotion Council in February 2017 based on the following:

1) To preserve and revitalize the diverse and unique nature of the Amami Islands and the local culture that has been closely connected with nature; 2) Provide a high-quality experience for visitors by refining the individuality of each island.

In addition, eight basic policies have been established for the purpose of creating a system that contributes to sustainable regional development in the Amami islands as whole.

1 : Promotion of community-led ecotourism

We tried to minimize the negative aspects (such as the impact on the natural environment) associated with the implementation of ecotourism by designing ecotourism by the local communities themselves, such as how to utilize local nature and what effect it will have on the community.

2: Reconceptualization and sharing of local resources



By sharing the extracted resources widely in the community and clarifying the conservation and utilization policies, we have been able to control development activities and avoid the situation where the resources are lost without being noticed.

### 3, Creating rules for appropriate use

Voluntary rules are "rules that continue to evolve" and will be reviewed flexibly in accordance with the state and use of resources, and set into enforceable rules when situations arise that make it difficult to preserve the natural environment and local culture.

4, Establishment of a unique tourism style in the Amami Islands and improvement of quality of guides  
Eco-tourism in forests and villages will attract attention in the future as an experiential activity unique to the Amami Islands, making it necessary to increase the satisfaction of users by providing high-quality nature experiences under appropriate safety management.

Since the quality of guides is very important for this purpose, we have introduced a registration and certification system to promote efforts to support the improvement of guide skills and to ensure the quality of guides.

### 5, Promote tourism as a comprehensive industry in the region

For tourists, not only the natural environment, but also the culture and livelihood born from the relationship with nature are major attractions.

By utilizing traditional crafts such as Oshima Tsumugi silk fabric, agricultural, forestry, and marine products, as well as a rich food culture, we will develop programs and specialties to generate ripple effects on primary and secondary industries and settlements, aiming for tourism as an integral industry.

### 6, Cooperation between eco-tour guides and local communities (settlements and industries)

When eco-tour guides and guides from agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and villages work together to create more attractive tours, eco-tour guides play the role of facilitating communication between local guides and participants based on the needs of the participants.

Since there are concerns about the impact on residents' lives due to the increase in the number of users, local rules will be established in advance to guide people through the settlements.

### 7, Contribution to local communities and environmental protection

We will also promote the return of profits in various ways, including participation in conservation activities such as the extermination of invasive species, advice on environmental conservation using knowledge and information, and cooperation in monitoring surveys.

### 8, Improving the quality of initiatives through adaptive management

Ecotourism is expected to have the effect of strengthening ties within the region through the process of tour implementation, inspection, evaluation, review and revitalizing the region by increasing the number of new people involved.



It is important to reflect the results of the inspection and evaluation and the voices of the users in the next initiatives, and to repeat the process of continuous improvement to enhance the quality of the initiatives and the power of the community, using the concept of spiraling up.

In addition, since the situation surrounding the region is expected to change drastically with the registration of the region as a World Natural Heritage site, it is important to have a mechanism to review efforts and methods flexibly in line with the principles, and the Ecotourism Promotion Council plays a role in this process.

See attached: Amami Islands Ecotourism Promotion General Plan, pages 8-10.

Specifically

Policy 2: Re-recognition and sharing of local resources

Policy 5: Promotion of tourism as a comprehensive industry in the region - "Amami Island Expo",

Policy 3: Establishing rules for appropriate use - "Rules for Appropriate Use of Kinsakubaru", "Santaro Line Night Tour Rules",

Policy 6: Cooperation between eco-tour guides and local communities (villages and industries) - "Local Rules for Kuninao Village" (PDF)

Policy 7: Contributions to Local Community and Environmental Conservation - "Amami Oshima Tourism and Products Federation Voluntary Project: Improvement of Tourism Facilities (Implementation of Tourism Area Clean Campaign, twice a year)" PDF, Amami Newspaper "Overuse" PDF

### Key success factors

In addition to implementing the above specific basic policies, support was provided for the securing and training of human resources who will play a central role in future industrial development, such as eco-tour guides, local interpreter guides and operators of the "Amami Island Expo" that provides experiential programs.

Another major factor in the success of the project was the certification by the Amami Islands Eco-Tourism Council of "a guide" with deep knowledge and philosophy about the nature and culture of the Amami Islands, who provides safe and high-quality experiences to visitors and is responsible for the environmental conservation of the region.

### Lessons learned



In some areas such as the Kinsakubaru Primeval Forest, there were concerns about the loss of the pristine atmosphere due to the concentration of many users during certain times of the year such as Golden Week.

There were also concerns about the impact on wildlife due to the increase in the number of uncaring tourists and individuals, such as roadkill caused by high-speed driving on nighttime forest roads and the chasing of the Amami rabbit, as well as the impact on rare wild animals and plants due to theft and poaching.

In order to resolve these concerns, we have promoted initiatives to support the improvement of guide skills and introduced a registration and certification system to ensure the quality of guides.

Local residents and other concerned parties prepared the "Rules for Appropriate Use of Kinsakubaru and Night Tour Locations (number of vehicles entering the area, speed limits, etc.)," which were disseminated to tourists and tested.

In addition, we must now consider the importance of introducing green slow mobility, aimed at observing speed limits.

*While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome? Click to add your text*

### Results, achievements and recognitions

*What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice? Has it received any rewards? Click to add your text*

The "Requirements for Registered Guides" and "Requirements for Certified Guides" for Amami Islands eco-tour guides were established.

In the "Eco-tour Guide Initial Stage Training Program", 153 people completed the training and were registered in Amami Oshima from 2014 to 2019. The certified guides total 75, with the list available to the public.

In addition, as a result of the concerted efforts of the national, prefectural and municipal governments, local residents, and tourism businesses, the IUCN recommended in May 2021 that the site is appropriate for World Natural Heritage listing, A decision will be made at the World Natural Heritage Committee meeting to be held on July 16.



As a result of establishing a registered and certified guide system, implementing voluntary rules, and informing tourists and local residents through the guides, the impact on wildlife has been minimized.

### Additional references

*Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from Youtube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL.*

[Amami Islands Ecotourism Promotion Overall Plan](#)

[Amami Oshima Eco-Tour Guide Liaison Council](#)

[Amami Islands Certified Eco-Tour Guide - Amami Islands Regional Administration Association](#)

[Trial Rules for Appropriate Use of Kinsakubaru.pdf](#)

[Wide Area Administration Association of Amami Islands](#)

[Agreement reached on Santaro Line night tour rule proposal - The Amami Shimibun](#)

Ministry of the Environment \_ Amami Islands National Park

[Collecting, sorting and investigating drifted garbage](#)

[Extermination of invasive alien species in Yamato Village Forest Police - The Amami Shimibun](#)

[Nature unique to Amami to be preserved for the future - The Amami Shimibun](#)

The 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Wildlife Conservation Center - The Amami Shimibun

[The 1st symposium to promote the Amami World Natural Heritage - The Amami Shimibun](#)

[Prefectural ordinance against exotic animals and plants - The Amami Shimibun](#)

[http://kyushu.env.go.jp/okinawa/pre\\_2021/post\\_143.html](http://kyushu.env.go.jp/okinawa/pre_2021/post_143.html)

[Implementation of a demonstration experiment on night tours in the vicinity of the Santaro Line](#)

[http://kyushu.env.go.jp/okinawa/pre\\_2020/post\\_130.html](http://kyushu.env.go.jp/okinawa/pre_2020/post_130.html)

[Measures against Invasive Alien Species | Amami Wildlife Conservation Center](#)

[Experience Programs in the Amami Islands: Amami Shima Expo](#)

[Amami Oshima, Tokunoshima, Northern Okinawa Island and Iriomote Island World Natural Heritage Nominated Sites | For the World Heritage List | Nomination Form and Management Plan](#)

