

BIHORO MUSEUM

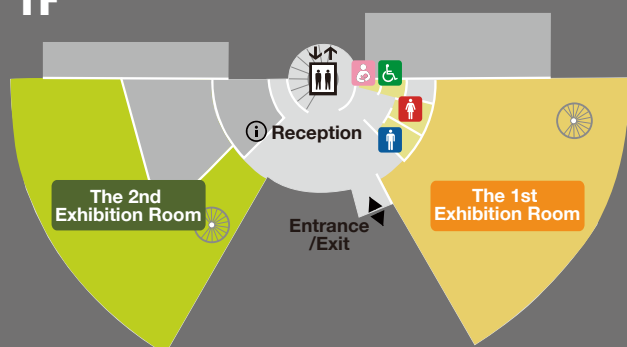
Guide to Exhibits

1F The 1st Exhibition Room • The 2nd Exhibition Room

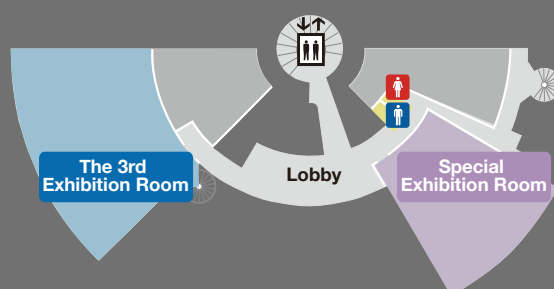
2F The 3rd Exhibition Room • Special Exhibition Room



1F



2F



Bihoro and rivers

The Town of Bihoro is nestled between the Abashiri River and the Bihoro River. Many streams of various sizes run through the town, and these have been a part of people's lives since olden times.

1 Lake Kussharo

Lake Kussharo is a caldera lake that was created as a result of repeated volcanic eruptions between 7,000 and 300,000 years ago. It is Japan's largest caldera lake, and the volcanic eruptions that gave rise to the lake affected the geology of Bihoro.



3 The life of the Ainu

Let's look inside a chise, a traditional Ainu dwelling. We can see a net on the earth floor. It is used for a river fishing technique called urai. A fireplace is in the center of the room, and a kina mat of woven cattail leaves is laid out. The space at the back of the room was used for storing valuable items, including various pieces of lacquerware that the Ainu acquired through trade with Japanese.



▲ Wading the rushing Abashiri River

5 Bihoro at the end of the Edo Period

In 1858, at the end of the Edo Period, the explorer Takeshiro Matsuura visited Bihoro during his expedition to Hokkaido. Matsuura left a meticulous record of his experiences in nature and of people's lives in Bihoro. For example, Matsuura waded the shallow waters of the swift Abashiri River. He interviewed a landlord in a village about the residents' livelihoods. He slept on a dry riverbed and caught salmon and fox for food.



2 People in ancient times

Bihoro, where many rivers flow, seems to have been a pleasant place for people in ancient times to live. As many as 130 archaeological sites have been excavated in Bihoro. These sites show traces of ancient people's activities, and some of these sites date back to the Paleolithic age of more than 10,000 years ago. Various types of earthen vessels and stone artifacts have been unearthed from the archaeological sites.



4 The natural environment in early summer

Bihoro, a town blessed with great natural splendor, is in Eastern Hokkaido. More than 60% of the town is forested. The Abashiri River and its largest tributary, the Bihoro River, flow through the town.

In early summer, plants begin to bud and living things become active. Animals busy themselves looking for a mate and rearing their young. Birds sing in trees, seeking partners. Foxes look after their cubs and hunt for food.

At night, Blakiston's fish owls in the woods catch fish for their young. In winter, brown bears and chipmunks hibernate in burrows, awaiting spring.

6 The start of agriculture in Bihoro

After the establishment of the Public Office for the Administration of Bihoro and Five Other Villages in 1887, increasing numbers of people came from Honshu, Japan's main island, to reclaim the land for farming. These people started by building plain huts to shelter from the weather. Then they cut down primeval forests so that they could till the soil.

Plow horses needed to navigate around the large tree stumps that were left unremoved.



The 2nd Exhibition Room

Farming and nature

The Town of Bihoro has the largest artificial reservoir in Hokkaido. It was built in 1970. The reservoir is a habitat for many species.

1 Bihoro Warm Water Reservoir

Because water taken from the Bihoro River is too cold for irrigation, it is warmed by the sun while the water gradually flows from the top step to the bottom step on the bottom surface of the reservoir. The warmed water flows through irrigation channels to rice fields at the lower reaches of the channels.



2 The use of tractors in Bihoro

Farmers in Bihoro began to use tractors in 1952. These were brought to Bihoro as part of a project that aimed to improve soil through mechanization. Farmers expected a lot from the powerful tractors that replaced their horses. In those days, a horse could till half a hectare of land in a day, versus the 2 to 3 hectares per day of a tractor.



▲ Heike firefly (*Luciola lateralis*)



▲ *Sympetrum pedemontanum elatum*



▲ Sakhalin lake minnow (*Rhynchocypris perenurus*)



▲ Japanese tree frog (*Hyla japonica*)



▲ Water pygmy weed (*Tillaea aquatica*)

3 Living things in the Warm Water Reservoir

More than 40 years have passed since the Warm Water Reservoir was built, and it has become a habitat for various species. For some species that are threatened with extinction in Hokkaido, the reservoir is a critical habitat. In autumn, armies of dragonflies take flight as one walks around it. The reservoir has the largest population and the greatest diversity of dragonflies of any habitat in Bihoro. It is a paradise for dragonflies. Surveys have identified dragonflies of more than 40 species, many of which lay eggs and mature in and around the reservoir.

Many fish species that inhabit marshy places live in the reservoir. The sakhalin lake minnow (*Rhynchocypris perenurus*) is one such species. This species used to inhabit

swamps near rivers, but its habitats were lost due to recent land development. Thus, the reservoir is an important habitat for sakhalin lake minnow. Frogs and other amphibian species lay eggs in the reservoir.

Some plant species that grow in moist places and paddy fields, such as water pygmy weed (*Tillaea aquatica*), grow in the reservoir. Marshy places where these plants can grow have been decreasing in number recently.

Although the Warm Water Reservoir is artificial, it has created an environment similar to that of a *satoyama*, a place where people live and where various species adapt to the landscape.

4 Plants growing at Bihoro Pass, and plants with which people are familiar

It is cloudy or misty on many days around Bihoro Pass, where strong winds frequently blow and the natural conditions are harsh. Although the pass is only 500m above sea level, alpine and sub-alpine plants commonly seen in Hokkaido, such as *Dactylorhiza aristata*, grow there. The pass is an important place where people can observe plants

that grow only in mountains.

In the urban area of Bihoro, there are natural forests along rivers and in parks. People visiting these forests between April and November can see flowers in great diversity. *Adonis ramosa* and *Corydalis ambigua* are particularly popular, as their flowers tell of the arrival of spring.



Dactylorhiza aristata

Experiencing New Things

Wow! Look at these butterflies! They're pretty.



The 3rd Exhibition Room

Getting in touch with the world of art

Works of fine art created in the Okhotsk region are closely associated with local landscapes and culture. Artists who created works that feature people's lives and natural features that are characteristic of the region, such as lakes, forests, the sea and sea ice, acquired distinctive styles that fitted with their times.

The Bihoro Museum has a collection of 2,000 artworks related to Bihoro.



1
Naoji OSAME
Flowers
(Date unknown)
Watercolor on paper



2
Hiromi KISHIMOTO
Locusts on the Shore
(2001)
Oil paint on canvas



3
Masaaki YOKOMORI
A Horse and a Man
(1964) Oil paint on canvas

Major artists

1 Naoji OSAME 1910 - 1996

Osame painted while teaching at elementary schools and junior high schools in Bihoro, Abashiri and Kitami. He painted landscapes of the Ishikari region and eastern Hokkaido, including Bihoro, and used opaque watercolors to cultivate his expressive skills.

2 Hiromi KISHIMOTO 1937 - 2011

Kishimoto lived in Bihoro from early childhood until the age of 16. Throughout his career, he painted scenes of everyday people, such as passengers on a train and people in a barber shop. In his later years, he often painted insects and plants. These paintings were based on his memories of childhood in Bihoro, where he familiarized himself with insects and plants.

3 Masaaki YOKOMORI 1927 -

Yokomori studied painting under Kaichi Igushi, who was a leader of the art world in the Okhotsk region. Yokomori created many pieces while working at a library and elsewhere in Bihoro. His works are exhibited at schools in Bihoro and are familiar to many of the townspeople.

Special Exhibition Room

Various special exhibitions are held in the room and the lobby. These include a winter exhibition of children's art, a collection of donated materials, and traffic safety posters and essays.

The results of research conducted by museum curators on diverse topics such as nature, history and fine arts are used in the creation of exhibit panels, materials and models that help explain Bihoro to visitors.

