

7 Irago Misaki

いらごみさき
<伊良湖岬>



Koijigahama

A : Wow! What a beautiful beach we have here!

B : I told you! Here we are at Koijigahama, at the tip of the Atsumi Peninsula.

A : Mmm... The soothing sound of the waves, the refreshing sea breeze on my cheeks, and this beautiful white sanded beach under the crystal-clear blue sky. It's super here!

B : Oh! You sound like a poet today. Ok, Miss Poet, I have a quiz about this beach. This beach welcomes two famous visitors from the sea, two kinds of visitors, to be exact. Can you guess what they are?

A : Well ..., a UFO and ...no, no, I'm just kidding. I don't know. Can you give me a clue?

B : One is an animal and the other is not.

A : Mmm....., I give up. What are they?

B : Big red turtles and coconuts from far away southern islands!

A : Turtles and coconuts from the sea! That is so romantic! Tell me more about them.

B : Sure, but before that, let's get out of the car and take a walk on the beach! I'm dying to get out of the car.

A : Yes, let's. Maybe, we will come across some of those "visitors!"

B : You are always so optimistic!

A : I think I was born this way!



A coconut with a message plate
「やしの実博物館」にて撮影



A loggerhead turtle landing for spawning
豊橋市環境部環境政策課発行リーフレット
「アカウミガメが来る表浜の自然を守ろう!」より

Irago Misaki ~ Famous Visitors to the Beach ~

Irago Misaki (promontory) is a famous sightseeing spot at the top of the Atsumi Peninsula. One of the reasons that makes it famous is its beautiful beach, which attracts some special “visitors.”

One is a coconut. There is a famous song describing this beach one day in the past. The song is “*Yashinomi*,” written by the poet, SHIMAZAKI Toson. “*From an island far away, whose name I do not know, a coconut has arrived, at the end of a journey. Since you left your land, how many months have you been drifting on the sea?*” The words are written as if he had seen this beach, but actually, he never visited Irago Misaki. It was his friend, YANAGIDA Kunio, who came here and found a coconut on the beach. When he told Toson about this later, Toson found it very interesting and imagined the long romantic journey the coconut had made on the sea. This is how these beautiful words were actually written.

Since 1988, The Atsumi Sightseeing Association has been carrying out an interesting project every year. People flow real coconuts to see whether they will drift along like the coconut sung

in the song. As palm trees grow in a warm climate, the coconuts were thought to come from some southern island far away. The association chose Ishigakijima as that “southern island” and releases about 100 coconuts from there every year. Each coconut has an “owner.” You can be an owner of a coconut if you enter a draw and pull out a winning number. The coconuts are released with a message plate attached to them that asks the finder to call the association when he or she finds it. If your coconut successfully arrives at a beach anywhere in Japan (except Okinawa), the owner and the finder are supposed to be invited by the Atsumicho Sightseeing Association to Irago Misaki as an award. They are honored to stay in a splendid hotel. However, for a long time, not one of the coconuts released made it to Irago Misaki.

In 2001, the time finally came. A local high school student found a coconut with a plate attached to it on the beach in Irago Misaki while he was playing with his friends. This was the moment that the people of Irago had long been waiting for.

Why don't you be one of those owners next time?

Another famous visitor to the beach at Irago Misaki is the loggerhead turtle. This is a big turtle, the average size of which is about 100 cm. It comes to spawn eggs during the nights from May to September. Look at the table on the next page. In 2001, 41 spawning nests and 2,758 eggs were found, and 1,564 baby turtles were born here.

The turtles are loved by the local people. To protect those eggs from being harmed by animals such as wild dogs or raccoon dogs, volunteers periodically collect them and take them to a special area of the beach protected with nets. And if a local fisherman finds a turtle in their fishing nets, they always give it a drink and release it. Doesn't it seem like they treat the turtles as familiar guests?

Generally speaking, it is estimated that only one out of 5,000 eggs



The monument of the song
“*Yashinomi*”



The arrival spots of the coconuts released from
Ishigakijima (石垣島) (「やしの実博物館」にて撮影)





will grow to be an adult turtle. Human beings can also threaten their lives. For example, if you drive onto the beach and leave tyre tracks there, they may prevent the newborn turtles from getting into the sea and cause them to die. The tracks can create walls of sand too high for the tiny turtles to walk over. Furthermore, simply throwing plastic bags into the sea may also lead to the death of many turtles. When plastic bags float in the water, they look like a squid, one of the foods most favored by the turtles, and they may swallow them and die. We should remember that our thoughtless behavior could easily harm other creatures.

Other famous visitors can be seen in the sky. They come in the form of various kinds of eagles and hawks. In autumn, a large number of people from all over Japan come here to watch the birds.

A parking lot for 200 cars is always crowded, especially on the weekends in late September and early October. Irago Misaki is a very famous spot for bird watchers.

Eagles and hawks don't usually live in groups. Then why are they seen flying in groups? The reason is that it is the season for them to migrate. They fly south in order to live in a warmer climate. Look at the map below. Irago Misaki looks like the top of a funnel, doesn't it? It is said that this shape makes Irago Misaki such a good spot for bird watching. Imagine the birds flying from the right side of the map to the left side (the south). If you were an eagle, what landmark would you follow? The coast lines on both sides of the peninsula would be the best to follow. Where do they come together? Right. It is at Irago Misaki. And again, if you were an eagle, where would you take a rest on your long journey? The answer may be the place just before the ocean starts, the ocean that you have to fly over. Taking the continuous coastline of the Pacific Ocean into consideration, you will see that Irago Misaki could be the first big rest stop on that long journey.



Irago Misaki



So what do you think of Irago Misaki? Now you have more reasons to come and visit!

Coconuts' arrival (「やしの実投流経緯及び漂着状況」(渥美町環境協会提供資料)より)

Year	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	2000	2001	Total
Released *1	100	100	110	115	112	92	95	102	110	110	103	104	117	94	1,464
Caught *2	2	2	0	10	3	5	2	5	6	18	1	6	0	5	65

*1 Released from Ishigaki-jima *2 Caught somewhere in Japan excluding Okinawa including the first arrival at Irago(1)

The Logger head turtles' arrival (「平成13年度渥美町海亀保護活動の概要」(渥美町海亀保護連絡会)より)

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
First arrival	May 30	May 15	May 23	June 6	May 24	
Final arrival	July 23	August 11	September 9	August 18	September 14	
Total Arrivals	8	29	38	64	54	193
Spawning nests*1	2	14	26	41	41	124
Eggs total	222	1,212	2,985	4,193	2,758	11,370
Hatching *2	122	741	1,111	455	1,564	3,993

*1 産卵巣 *2 孵化数 (確認数)

----- <WORDS & PHRASES> -----
 peninsula 半島 describe 描写する drift 漂う as if ~まるで~のように
 release 投流する be supposed to ~ ~することになっている
 the loggerhead turtle アカウミガメ spawn eggs 産卵する raccoon dogs タヌキ
 squid イカ migrate 渡りをする funnel 漏斗(ろうと)

EXERCISES

COMPREHENSION CHECK 文の内容に即して，以下の設問に英語で答えなさい。

- (1) Did SHIMAZAKI Toson actually visit Irago Misaki?
- (2) What kind of project does the Atsumi Sightseeing Association promote every year?
- (3) What is written on the plates attached to the coconuts?
- (4) If your coconut is found by someone, what will happen?
- (5) In 2001, what happened on the beach at Irago Misaki?
- (6) What has been the earliest arrival date of the turtles in the last 5 years?
- (7) How are the turtles treated by the local people of Irago?
- (8) According to the passage, what can prevent the baby turtles from reaching the sea?
- (9) How can a plastic bag kill a turtle?
- (10) How many eggs have been successful in hatching in the last 5 years?
- (11) According to the statistics, among the eggs spawned in the last 5 years, how many will grow into adult turtles? Calculate it.
- (12) What is the best season for bird watching in Irago Misaki?
- (13) Why do the birds migrate?
- (14) According to the passage, what makes Irago Misaki a good spot for bird watching?



ACCESS

[CAR] about 70 minutes' drive from Toyohashi (豊橋), through Route 259 or Route 42

[FERRY] 30 minutes from Morozaki (師崎)



Koijigahama



Hii no sekimon (stone-gate)