

Chapter 1 Outline of Iwate Prefecture

■ Area and Geography

Iwate Prefecture is located in the northeast of Honshu, running 189 kilometers north to south in a long oval-like shape. The land area is 15,279 km² and is the second largest prefecture after Hokkaido, comprising 4% of Japan's 377,955 km².

Most of inland Iwate Prefecture is made up of mountainous hills. It shares a border with Akita Prefecture to the west, in which the Ou Mountains lie. Running parallel to this in the east are the Kitakamikochi Mountains. Between these two mountain ranges, the Kitakami River flows to the south, through plains that spread to the river valley.

The coastal areas to the north of Miyako are a typical raised coast with sea cliffs and coastal terraces. Areas further south of Miyako, on the other hand, show a contrasting landscape of a typical rias coastline formed by its submergence with the foot of the Kitakamikochi Mountains. In addition, the offshore area of Sanriku, blessed with excellent fishing and natural harbors, has become one of the world's leading fishing grounds.

■ Population

Population 1,284,384 (on October 1, 2014)

The population, which had remained steady since 1978, suffered a decline in 2004 from 1.4 million people, and decreased even further after that to 1.3 million in 2013.

Number of households 518,191 (on October 1, 2014)

The number of households is continually increasing, adding up to over 500,000 in 2008, and has continued to its present statistics. The number of persons per household has decreased, and household size continues to shrink.

■ Economy

Gross Prefectural Production (Nominal) 4.3812 trillion yen (National share 0.93%) (Real) 4.6928 trillion yen

Economic growth rate (Nominal) 4.8% (Real) 4.7% (both from the 2014 fiscal year)

The construction and transportation industry have grown both in nominal and real gross product terms through increased public investment, private-sector recovery, and demand for reconstruction.

Prefectural per capita income 2,547,000yen (rate compared to national income per capita(=100) : 92.5)

(Note) Prefectural per capita income is calculated by dividing the total income of residents and businesses in the prefecture by the total number of residents.

Breakdown of (nominal) gross prefectural product by industry: primary industries (agriculture, forestry and fishing) 3.6%, secondary industries (mining, manufacturing, construction) 23.8%, and tertiary industries 71.8%

Breakdown of employment by industry: primary industry 13.8%, secondary industry 24.1%, tertiary industry 62.1%. (from the 2011 fiscal year)

■ Agriculture

In 2013, agricultural production was 243,300,000,000 yen, placing Iwate 11th out of the 47 prefectures in Japan. Iwate plays an important role as a food supply base for Japan, as it is blessed with agricultural resources such as vast farmland and richly varying weather conditions, and a variety of farming techniques are being developed by utilizing the special characteristics of each region.

■ Forestry

In 2012, forestry production totaled roughly 18,300,000,000 yen, placing Iwate 5th in the nation.

Forested area accounted for 77% of prefectural land in 2011.

■ Fishing

In 2012, fishing production was about 28,900,000,000 yen, placing it 16th in the nation. Blessed with a reef that suits the growth of marine life as well as the quiet waters of the rias, Iwate has become a leading prefecture in “foster fishery”; for example, it is ranked number 1 in the country for abalone and number 2, after Hokkaido, for salmon.

In order to support this kind of fishing industry, the development of coastal fisheries, ports, and the production and livelihood of fishing villages along with distribution and processing systems are being promoted, as well as seed release for salmon, abalone, and so on.

■ Manufacturing

Manufacturing shipments in Iwate Prefecture totaled 2.295 trillion yen, due in part to promoting the relocation of businesses, including advanced technology industries, automotive industries, and the rebuilding of local businesses.

Among these shipments, transportation equipment at 30.8% and food manufacturing at 13.7% make up the highest proportion.

■ Tourism

The number of tourists exceeded 28,930,000 (as of 2013).

Iwate, the prefecture with the largest land area next to Hokkaido, is blessed with a wide variety of tourism resources such as rich nature, a deep history and culture, colorful local festivals, traditional arts, and food. Tours that take full advantage of the features of the region are under development as Iwate works to attract more tourists.

We are promoting tours that cover the inlands and the coast, using places such as Hiraizumi, which was registered as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site in 2011, as a way of disseminating information.



[Overview of the Disaster-Stricken Coast of Iwate Prefecture]

■ Overview

The coast of Iwate Prefecture is located in easternmost Honshu and is comprised of 5 cities, 4 towns, and 3 villages, from the town of Hirono in the north to Rikuzentakata City in the south. The total area of the region is about 4,946 km². The area is surrounded by a rich natural environment, such as the scenic Rikuchu coast, natural harbors, and even global fisheries.

In addition to a geographically advantageous water industry, Iwate boasts a share in the global market for precision machinery, steel industry, and cement manufacturing, along with its transportation network from land to sea, as the area is an industrial products shipping port.

However, the area has problems, including a weak economic base compared to the nation and inland areas of Iwate. As such, in Iwate, the thought that “Without development in the coastal areas, there is no development in the prefecture” has become the most important issue of the prefectural government, and thus the prefecture has focused on the promotion of the region.

■ Natural Characteristics

The coastline extends over 708 km, and consists of a beautiful seascape of cliffs eroded by the sea, a rich and varied view that can rarely be seen elsewhere in the country. Most of the area has been designated as part of the Sanriku Fukko National Park.



■ Population and Economy

In 2010, prior to the Great East Japan Earthquake Tsunami, there were around 274,000 people living in the coastal areas, making up 2% of the total population of Iwate Prefecture. As for age demographics, Iwate Prefecture has a high proportion of elderly people as compared to the nation as a whole, and on top of that, the elderly people have progressed toward the coastal areas.

Furthermore, the net production value of the coastal areas, at about 568.9 billion yen, accounted for around 2% of the production of the prefecture. Per capita income and job offer rates were slightly lower than the prefectural average.