

Chapter 1: Outline of Iwate Prefecture

■Area and Geography

Iwate Prefecture is located in the northeastern part of Honshu and is a long oval shape, measuring approximately 122 km horizontally and 189 km vertically. At 15,279 km², it is the second largest prefecture in Japan after Hokkaido, accounting for 4% of Japan's total area of 377,955 km².

Most of the inland area of Iwate Prefecture is mountainous, with the Ou Mountains on the western border with Akita Prefecture, and the Kitakami Mountains in the eastern part running parallel to these mountains. The Kitakami River flows to the south between these two mountain ranges, through the plains that spread to the river valley.

The coastal area north of Miyako City is a typical uplifted coast with sea cliffs and coastal terraces. On the other hand, the area south of Miyako City is a contrasting landscape, with a typical Japanese rias coastline formed by submerged water at the foot of the Kitakami Mountains. The offshore area of the Sanriku coast is one of the world's largest fishing grounds, blessed with excellent fishing ports and harbors.

Location of Iwate Prefecture



Map of Iwate



■Population

Population: 1,144,407 (as of October 1, 2024)

The population dropped below the 1.4 million mark in 2004, which had been maintained since 1978, and has since declined, falling below 1.3 million in 2013 and 1.2 million in 2021.

Number of households: 535,326 (as of October 1, 2024)

The number of households is increasing, but the number of persons per household, calculated by dividing the population by the number of households, is decreasing.

■Economy

Gross Prefectural Product (Nominal) 4.7474 trillion yen (National Share 0.89%) (Real) 4.6565 trillion yen

Economic growth rate (Nominal) -2.2% (Real) -3.0% (both in the 2020 fiscal year)

The construction, logistics/postal, and accommodation/food services industries have shrunk, resulting in a 2.2% decrease in nominal terms and a 3.0% decrease in real terms, which is a continuation of the decrease seen in the 2019 fiscal year.

Prefectural per capita income: 2,666,000 yen (rate compared to national income per capita (=100): 89.2)

Note: Prefectural per capita income is calculated by dividing the total income of residents and businesses in the prefecture by the total population of the prefecture.

Breakdown of (nominal) gross prefectural product by industry: primary industries (agriculture, forestry, and fishing) 3.1%, secondary industries (mining, manufacturing, and construction) 27.2%, and tertiary industries 69.2%.

Breakdown of employment by industry: primary industry 9.8%, secondary industry 26.1%, tertiary industry 64.1% (in the 2020 fiscal year)

■Agriculture

In 2021, agricultural production was 265.1 billion yen, placing Iwate 2nd in the Tohoku region and 10th 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 rich weather conditions, and a variety of farming techniques are being developed by utilizing the special characteristics of each region.

■Forestry

In 2021, forestry production was approximately 19.3 billion yen, which is 4% of domestic production and places 6th in the nation.

The forested area in the 2020 fiscal year is approximately 1.18 million hectares, accounting for 77% of prefectural land, with a good balance of conifers and broad-leaved trees.

■Fishing

In 2021, fishing production was about 29.6 billion yen, placing Iwate 3rd in the Tohoku region and 14th in Japan. Blessed with the calm waters of the Rias Coast and reefs suitable for the growth of marine products, the prefecture is a leader in "foster fishery" with abalone ranking 1st, wakame 2nd, and salmon 3rd in Japan.

To support the fishing industry, the prefecture is working to improve the infrastructure of coastal fishing grounds, fishing ports, and fishing villages, to develop distribution and processing systems, and to seed release salmon and abalone.

■Manufacturing

Manufacturing shipments in Iwate Prefecture were 2,494.3 billion yen in 2020 with about 23.3% of those from the automotive industry and about 16.5% from the semiconductor industry, due in part to the development of manufacturing infrastructure by those industries as well as the expansion of local industries. The prefecture's economy is driven by the highly internationally competitive manufacturing industry.

■Tourism

The total number of tourists exceeded 18.33 million (in 2022).

The prefecture, which is the second largest in area after Hokkaido, is blessed with a wide variety of tourist attractions, with its rich nature, deep history and culture, colorful local festivals and traditional performing arts, and cuisine. The aim is to expand tourism by actively

making use of the region's characteristics.

In cooperation with coastal municipalities and businesses in the tourism industry, we will open all reconstruction roads, pass on the lessons and realities of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, make progress in new community development, and develop tourism by utilizing local resources.



Overview of the Disaster-Stricken Coast of Iwate Prefecture

■Overview

The coast of Iwate Prefecture is located in easternmost Honshu and consists of five cities, four towns, and three villages, from Hirono Town in the north to Rikuzentakata City in the south. The total area of the region is approximately 4,946 km². The region is surrounded by a rich natural environment, including the scenic Rikuchu Coast, natural harbors, and world-class fishing grounds.

In addition to the fishing industry, which takes advantage of its geographical location, the region has global market share in the precision machinery, steel, and cement manufacturing industries, along with its extensive transportation network that is used to transport industrial products produced in the inland regions of the prefecture to shipping ports.

However, the coastal region has a weak economic base compared to the inland areas of the prefecture and the rest of Japan. As it is thought that "without the development of the coastal areas, the prefecture will not develop," the prefectural government has been focusing on the development of this region as a top priority task.

■Natural Characteristics

The coastline, which stretches 708 km in total, is composed of beautiful and varied sea-eroded landscapes that cannot be found elsewhere in Japan. Most of the area has been designated as Sanriku Fukko National Park.



■Population and Economy

In 2010, prior to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, the population of the coastal region was approximately 274,000, accounting for about 20% of the population of Iwate Prefecture. As for age demographics, Iwate Prefecture has a higher percentage of elderly people than the rest of Japan, with population aging progressing especially in the coastal areas.

In addition, the net production value of the coastal areas in 2008 was 568.9 billion yen, accounting for about 20% of the prefecture's total. Prefectural per capita income and job offer rates were below the prefectural average.