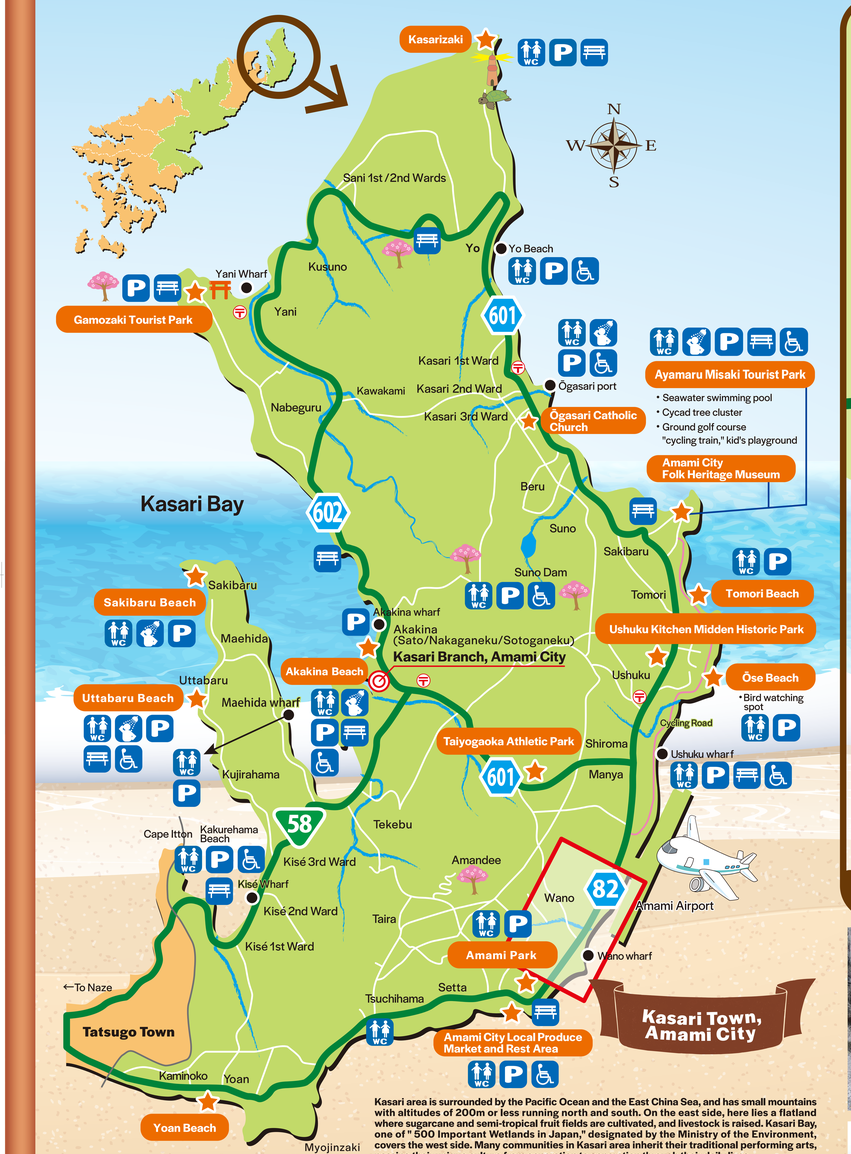
Kasari Area, Amami City Tale of Wano Community



Kasari area is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean and the East China Sea, and has small mountains with altitudes of 200m or less running north and south. On the east side, here lies a flatland where sugarcane and semi-tropical fruit fields are cultivated, and livestock is raised. Kasari Bay, one of " 500 Important Wetlands in Japan," designated by the Ministry of the Environment, covers the west side. Many communities in Kasari area inherit their traditional performing arts, passing their unique culture from generation to generation through their daily lives.

※ The scale below is presented as an approximate guideline.

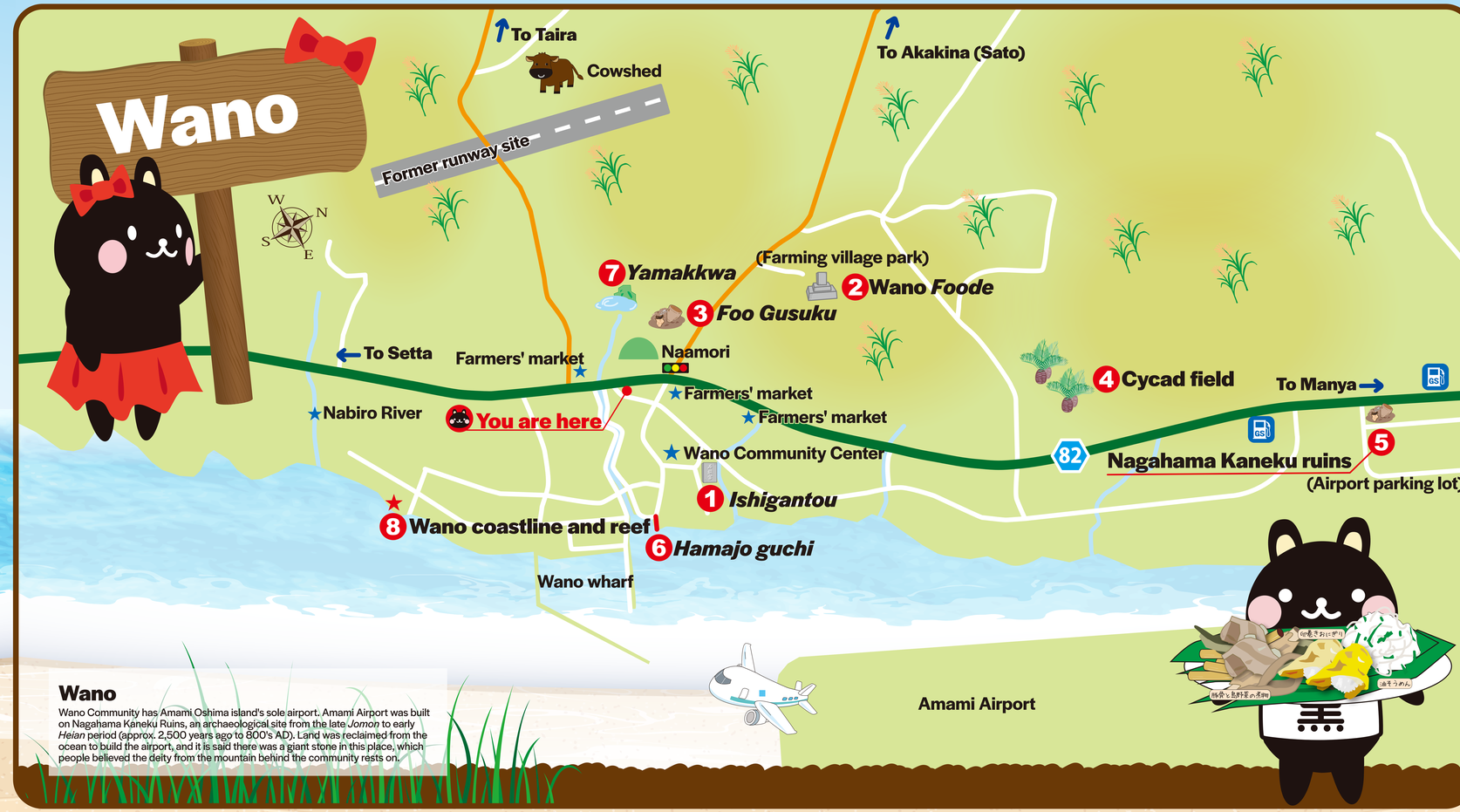
0Km 1Km 2Km 3Km 4Km 5Km

Administration: Amami City

Amami City HP

Legend

- Toilet
- Rest area
- Shower
- Barrier-free toilet
- Parking area
- Kasari Branch, Amami City
- Major Sightseeing Spots and Facilities



Wano

Wano Community has Amami Oshima island's sole airport. Amami Airport was built on Nagahama Kaneku Ruins, an archaeological site from the late *Jomon* to early *Heian* period (approx. 2,500 years ago to 800's AD). Land was reclaimed from the ocean to build the airport, and it is said there was a giant stone in this place, which people believed the deity from the mountain behind the community rests on.

Ishigantou

Shigandang allegedly came from Ryukyu (*Okinawa*), and was influenced by China. One of these stones, believed to have mythical power to repel evil spirits and suppress disasters, is situated at the T-junction in Wano Agari area.
A senior local recalls that, when he was a *child*, he was severely scolded by an old man for breaking seashells using the concave part of this stone right next to an electric pole. This *shigandang* has long watched over the community for generations.

Wano *Foode*
(sacred place, monument to the loyal dead)

On the west side of Wano Community, there are three sacred spots that the locals pray at for peace and prosperity in their households. On September 9th of the Lunar calendar, each household has a *gantate* ritual to make a wish for peace, prosperity, health, and welfare.
Wano *Foode*, also called *Teckiwa*, was a place where people used to make prayers while holding earthenware jars filled with *miki* (Amami's traditional fermented drink).

Foo Gusuku

Wano Community has areas called Ō Gusuku, Mae Gusuku, Tenyama, Tonochuda, Shizato, and Foo Gusuku, which implies some sort of relationship with fortresses in the Middle Ages. With the fact that there used to be a ship course between Kikaijima island and Wano, Wano is considered to have had a functional role as an important hub for both ocean and land routes.
Further research is expected.

Cycad Field

Wano Community has three rivers: Arikumogawa River, Ushirogawa River, and Maekawa River. The east side of the community faces the ocean, and there are valley-shaped lands on the west side. The majority of slopes are filled with cycad clusters, which form small forests. The locals say the cycad is a valuable resource with nothing to waste: the leaves are used to light fires for cooking and as green manure in the paddy field, while the seed and trunk provide starch.

Nagahama Kaneku ruins

Amami Airport is built on reclaimed land over a sand dune and coastline reefs. A series of research and excavation projects discovered old sand dunes from the *Jomon* period to *Kodai* era (3rd - 7th centuries) as well as small archaeological ruins that indicate prehistoric life. Visitors paying close attention may find a stone monument indicating Nagahama Kaneku Ruins in the vegetation at the right side of the airport exit.

Hamajo guchi

Communities facing the ocean often have *Hamajo guchi*, pathways to the beach. Wano's *hamajo guchi* is situated at the center of the community, providing the residents with a haven of rest. "Over the coral stone wall," the old residents recall, "the place was covered by various trees such as banyan trees and textile-screw pine trees, forming a tunnel. The scene was shining with a beautiful sand beach and ocean."

Yamakkwa (Drinking Water)

Ensuring daily water and drinking water is an essential requirement to form a community. Old locals recall that people used to collect water from *Yamakkwa* in the upstream of Maekawa River which runs past the south side of the community, and that females used long wooden sticks, called *oho*, on their shoulders with a water bucket on each end.

Wano Coastline and Reef

Wano Nagahama Beach, a 400m long white sand beach, has developed reefs offshore. The islanders have gathered fish and seashells here since the ancient times. The reefs have long functioned as a "farmland in the ocean." *71* reefs have been given names, indicating this fact.