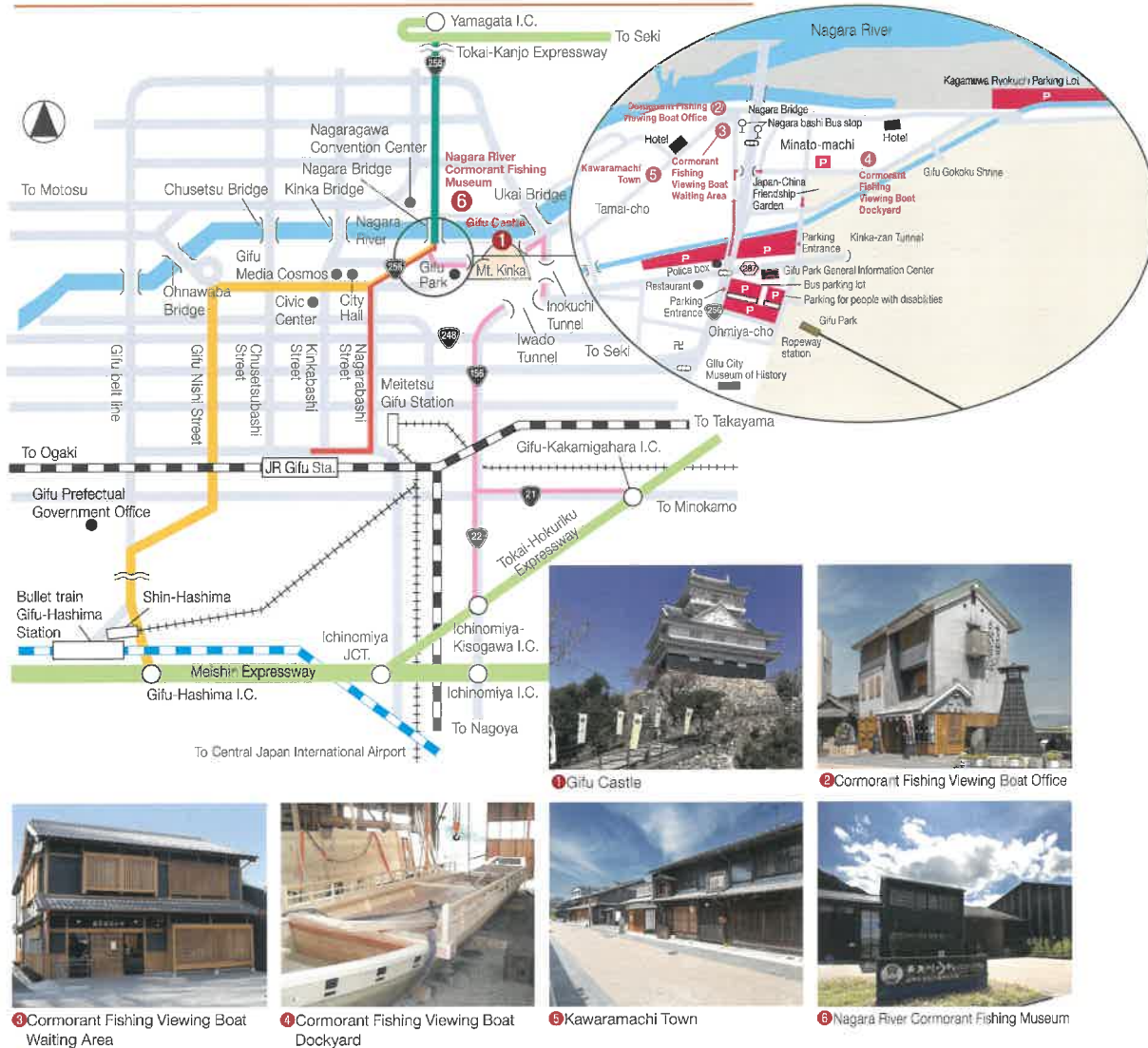
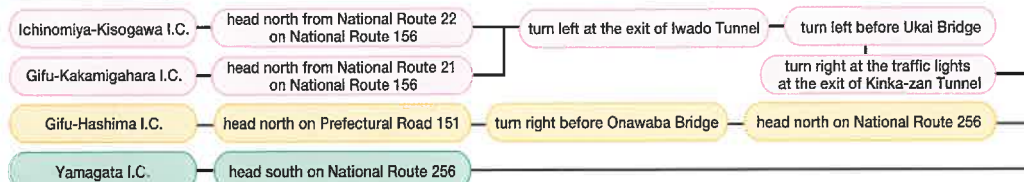


Transportation

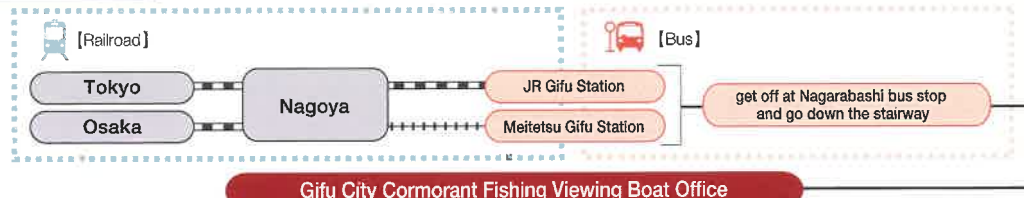


Access

Automobiles



Public transportation



Tourist Information

Gifu City Tourism and Convention Division 40-1 Tsukasa-machi, Gifu City, 500-8701 TEL: +81-58-265-3984

Gifu City Tourist Information Office JR-Gifu Station (2nd Floor), 500-8856 TEL: +81-58-262-4415

Gifu Convention and Visitors Bureau Kyowa Kogyo Building 6F, 1-8-5 Kanda-machi, Gifu City, 500-8833 TEL: +81-58-266-5588

Inquiries:

Reservation is required for viewing on the boats. (Individual reservation from one person)

Gifu City Cormorant Fishing Viewing Boat Office

1-2, Minato-machi, Gifu City, 500-8009

TEL: +81-58-262-0104 FAX: +81-58-264-2061

URL <https://www.city.gifu.lg.jp/foreign/eng/yoka/2000143.html>

Reservations can be made online.

Our official website is here.



2024.3 3,000

CORMORANT FISHING ON THE NAGARA RIVER

ENGLISH

ぎふ長良川の鵜飼



Cormorant fishing season:

May 11 ~ October 15

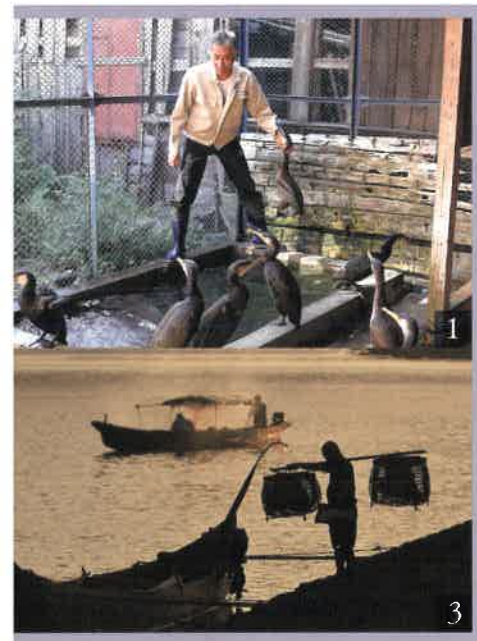
City for Int'l Conference and Tourism

Gifu City



Mascot Character for Cormorant Fishing on the Nagara River "Ooh-tan"





◆ Fishing process

- 1 **Select cormorants**
Select 10 to 12 healthy cormorants on each day to take fishing in the evening.
- 2 **Prepare cormorant boat**
Load tools needed for cormorant fishing, such as split pinewood used to light a torch fire that will light up the river, on the boat.
Insert leaves of a rose of Sharon in the pole supporting the fire basket, so that the sap will allow the pole to move smoothly.
- 3 **Load cormorant basket**
After preparing the boat, load the cormorant basket with cormorants inside on the boat.
- 4 **Go upstream**
Go up the river in the boat to a place to prepare for fishing.

- 5 **Wait for sunset**
Make a wood fire and wait for the sun to set.
- 6 **Draw lots to determine fishing order**
Each day, six boats draw lots to determine the order in which they will fish.
- 7 **Start cormorant fishing**
 - ① Take out the cormorants from the basket one by one and tie a rope to each of them for the fishing masters to control them while paying attention to their condition.
 - ② Tying the rope around the birds' neck is called "kubi-yui," (they adjust the tightness of the knots depending on the cormorants' condition and the size of sweetfish to catch) and tying it around their belly under the wings is called "hara-kake."
 - ③ The torch is lit, ready to go fishing!
- 8 **Finish**
The cormorants rest on the edge of the boats after their work.



Profound unity between fishing masters and cormorants, passed down through the history

A master of haiku, Matsuo Basho, once read, "splendid, then ends in sorrow, the boat of cormorants." Cormorant fishing has a very long history in Japan, which is mentioned even in the *Chronicles of Japan (Nihon Shoki)* (A.D. 720) and the *Records of Ancient Matters (Kojiki)* (A.D. 712). Historical leaders protected cormorant fishing, including Lord Oda Nobunaga, who established the official title of Cormorant Fishing Masters (*usho*), and Lord Tokugawa Ieyasu, who loved sweetfish sushi and had them delivered to his Edo Castle. It is told that cormorant fishing on the Nagara River, with a history of 1,300 years (according to historical records of year 702), has been preserved as one of Gifu's distinctive summer events and is still practiced today. Cormorant Fishing Masters have been part of the Imperial Household Ministry (the current Imperial Household Agency) since 1890, and are given the status of "the Imperial Household Agency's Board of the Ceremonies."

The set of 122 "tools for cormorant fishing on the Nagara River" is designated as an Important Tangible Folk Cultural Property of Japan, and "techniques of cormorant fishing on the Nagara River" is designated as an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property of Japan. Cormorant Fishing Masters, dressed in traditional costume, call out "Ho, ho" as they manipulate cormorants to catch sweetfish, inviting viewers into an "ethereal" world.

Usho Cormorant Fishing Master

Currently there are six Cormorant Fishing Masters (*usho*), a position in the Imperial Household Agency's Board of the Ceremonies that has been passed down for generations. Their lives are dedicated to cormorant fishing, in which they master the skills and techniques learned from their parents and lovingly raise their cormorants all year around. They show us their beautiful techniques with wearing traditional costumes called Kazaori Eboshi (a hat) and Koshimino (grass skirt) which make them look courageous.

Cormorant Fishing on the Nagara River

Elegance of 1300 years, depicted in the spectacle

■ Cormorant fishing season:
May 11 – Oct. 15

* Every day during the period except no-cormorant-fishing days.



Cormorants



The cormorants for fishing are migratory birds. Young Temminck's cormorants captured in the wild in Juo-cho, Hitachi, Ibaraki Prefecture, are intensely trained under *usho* to grow into fully-trained fishing cormorants. Guided by their master's ropes, they work very hard and hunt down sweetfish, which is sure to touch your heart.

◆ Viewing

- 1 **Reception (From 5:30 p.m.)**
Complete your registration before the reserved time at Cormorant Fishing Viewing Boat Office and receive your boat ticket (Your ticket shows the name of the boat).
- 2 **Fishing orientation (About 5:45 p.m.)**
The fishing master describe cormorant fishing at the viewing boat terminal.
(Except for dates reserved to fish for imperial usage and for fireworks event.)
* Cormorant fishing for imperial usage is to fish sweetfish in "imperial fishing area" which is closed for regular fishing to deliver for imperial family, and it is conducted 8 times a year.
- 3 **Departure (5:30 – 7:15 p.m.)**
Board the boat reserved for you. The boats head for the viewing point. Enjoy the sight of the Nagara River and Mt. Kinka and the surrounding scenery.
* Passenger boat: ① 6:15 p.m. ② 6:45 p.m. ③ 7:15 p.m.
* Charter boat: Any time between 5:30 p.m. and 7:15 p.m.
- 4 **Stop at the edge of the river**
The boats stay near the edge of the river until cormorant fishing begins. Enjoy your dinner and drinks. There is a bathroom boat stationed along the riverbed, please feel free to use them.
- 5 **Cormorant fishing begins (About 7:45 p.m.)**
Fireworks to signal the beginning of cormorant fishing are set off and the event begins. Viewers will see either "karikudari" cormorant fishing and "so-garami," or "tsukemise" cormorant fishing and "so-garami," depending on the river condition and number of viewing boats on the water.
Karikudari
Viewing boats go downstream in parallel with a cormorant fishing boat.
Tsukemise
Viewing boats will be stationed to watch the cormorant fishing boats go downstream right by your boat one by one.
- 6 **So-garami**
Cormorant boats line up using the full width of the river and drive the sweetfish into shallow water, which is the highlight and finale of the cormorant fishing.
- 7 **Leaving the boats (About 8:30 p.m.)**
Leave the boats as you enjoy the afterglow of the spectacle.

◆ Viewing boats information

* Departure schedule and the maximum number of passengers are subject to change.

◆ Passenger boat

Departure schedule: ①18:15 ②18:45 ③19:15

◆ Charter boat

Departure schedule: Any time between 5:30 p.m. and 7:15 p.m.
Max. number of passengers: 15–50 persons

Specially Featured

Luxury Viewing Vessels (private charter only)

Names of vessels: Shiratsuki, Aiyama, and Hanakagari
Departure schedule: Any time between 5:30 p.m. and 7:15 p.m.
Max. number of passengers: 10 for Shiratsuki, 15 for Aiyama and Hanakagari



Shiratsuki



Soft indirect lighting and white wood create a space imitating white moonlight.



Aiyama



Clear ceiling with top light lets in moonlight.



Hanakagari



Gorgeous interior design inspired by torches in colors such as orange and scarlet.



Passenger boats and Charter boats

