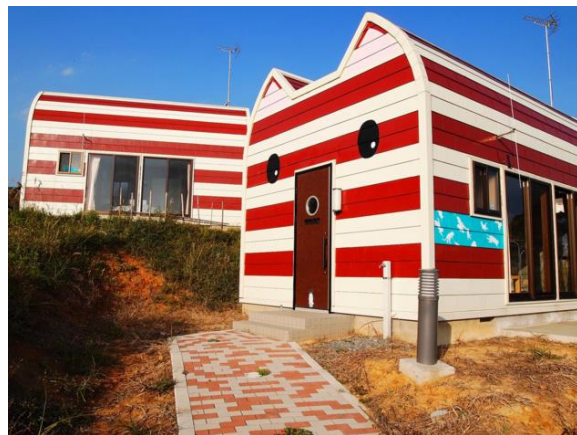




Landmark #30  
Tashirojima  
Japan



Tashirojima is a small island in Ishinomaki, Miyagi, Japan. It lies in the Pacific Ocean off the Oshika Peninsula, to the west of Ajishima, and has a very small population (around **100 people**, compared to around 1000 people in the 1950s). It has become known as Cat Island due to the **large stray cat population** that thrives as a result of the local belief that feeding cats will bring wealth and good fortune.

In Japan's late Edo Period, much of the islanders raised **silk-worms** for their textiles, and therefore kept cats to chase the mice away from them. Over time, this cat population began to grow immensely while the human population dwindled down; as of today (2017), **the cat population outnumbers humans 6 to 1**.

However, the residents and thousands of tourists who flock to Tashirojima every year do not mind being outnumbered by their feline friends. In Japanese culture, the cat is thought to be a lucky animal bringing money and **good fortune** to all who cross their path. This belief accounts for the presence of a small **cat shrine**, known as Neko-jinja, in the middle of the island. The island is also known as **Manga Island**, as manga artist **Shotaro Ishinomori** (1938-1998) planned to move to the island. There are manga-themed lodges on the island, in the shape of cats, obviously.

Click on the Pictures for two **VIDEOS** on Tashirojima and other animal hotspots