

## Fossil collecting experience to solve summer vacation independent study in Itoigawa UNESCO Global Geopark

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Itoigawa UNESCO Global Geopark had held many education and outreach activities before 2009, when the Itoigawa Geopark was authorized as a member of the Global Geoparks Network. In 2020, many activities had to be cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we held an education and outreach event with fossils using the grant for science museum activities from the Japanese Council of Science Museums.

The activity contains four events, using variable geology of Itoigawa Geopark, to search for fossils of Paleozoic, Mesozoic and Cenozoic in Itoigawa City, and fossil collecting experience and museum tour in Fukui Prefecture Dinosaur Museum.

This activity catered to elementary and junior high school students and their parents. To prevent new coronavirus infection, we limited the numbers of participants of each event to under 10.

The notice of the activity are, to distribute a flyer for all elementary and junior high school students, to publish the article of the participation offer of the activity in the public information paper of Itoigawa City, and to announce the participation offer in Itoigawa Geopark official Facebook. Applications were made to the Fossa Magna Museum, with applications only accepted by telephone to secure equitableness.

In the Itoigawa Geopark, Jade, Fossa Magna and many kinds of rocks on the beach are treated as main themes and used for promotion. But the fossils are treated as one of many themes.

Fossils are an interesting theme for not only children but adults, and useful for familiarization with geology. In the sign-up period for this activity, we received many calls from the morning of the first day. The number of applications exceeded our expectation. However, even with many events cancelled because of the pandemic, it is evidence of the high popularity of fossils.

Through the activity, participants look for and find fossils themselves, and received an explanation, and they may thought about ancient times when the creatures which became fossils lived. Perhaps there are children who would like to be a paleontologist. Fossil collecting of the dinosaur age was done in Ichiburi, Itoigawa City and in Fukui Prefecture, but no dinosaur fossils were found. However all of the participants found fossils of the dinosaur age, so the participants were satisfied to join the activity.

In 2020 fiscal year, we are planning an activity to make fossil replicas in March using the remainder of the grant for science museum activities from the Japanese Council of Science Museums. We would like to further promote the fossils of Itoigawa Geopark for education and outreach activities.

Keywords: Itoigawa UNESCO Global Geopark, Fossa Magna Museum, fossil collecting, education and outreach activity, geo-diversity

