

(フィールドレポート January 4. 2026)

あけましておめでとうございます。本年もニセコの雪山を安全に楽しむための、リスクアセスメントとリスクマネージメントに役に立てるよう、情報発信を行ってゆきますので、どうぞよろしくお願ひします。

年末から年始にかけて強い寒気が入り (-40°C@5,500m) 、大量の降雪に見舞われて漸く本来のニセコの冬らしい姿になってきた。



山麓標高 220m 付近の積雪は 75~80 cm (12月 29 日には暖気で 45cm まで減りましたが)

元旦 1 月 1 日には、モイワ 6 番ゲートが今シーズン初オープン！雪は深かったが、まだ足りてなく斜面の凸凹や笹や小枝が雪面には目立ち、雪面下にも何が隠れているか（灌木、岩など）不安な状態なので滑走には慎重さが求められる状況。斜面下部のクリークは完全に埋まっておらず、スノーブリッジは不安定でプローブで積雪量を測りながら、安全なブリッジを渡る。プロービングはこの時期の必須条件。滑るには気持ちの良い深さの雪は、ボトムの森の中は膝丈のラッセルが求められ、この日はファーストトラックで約 1 時間半のラッセルを強いられた。ツーリングギアも持たないスキーヤーやスノーボーダーはこの状況に遭えば、救助要請が必要な事にもなりかねないと感じた。

正月 1 月 3 日にはニセコアンヌプリの山頂ゲート 2 番 3 番がオープン。初日から約 1,000 人がゲートを出てバックカントリーフィールドを滑っている。

標高約 700m より上は積雪量も増えて、従来のコンディションに近づいてきているが、同時に雪崩に対しての用心が必要になる。一喜一憂することなく冷静な判断を！



上部は調子よくても、下部の沢底は深く法面は急斜面と複雑な地形で、沢底の雪は深いので、深みにはまれば自力で脱出できない可能性大！また沢底には水が流れている場所もあり、水蒸気で雪は底から溶けるので、雪面すぐ下は穴になっている可能性がある。各地でこのような穴に頭から落ちて死亡事故に繋がっている例が多々ある。シーズン初め地形の罠 (Terrain trap) への十分な注意は必須条件！アセスメントとマネージメントができれば、雪は素晴らしい良き、気持ちの良い滑走を楽しめてもらえる。

#### (Field Report: January 4, 2026)

Happy New Year.

Once again this year, I will continue to share information that can help with **risk assessment and risk management**, so that everyone can enjoy Niseko's snowy mountains safely. Thank you for your continued support.

From late December through the New Year period, a strong cold air mass moved in ( $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  at 5,500 m), bringing heavy snowfall. At last, Niseko is beginning to look like a proper mid-winter landscape.

At around **220 m elevation near the base**, the snow depth is **75–80 cm** (it had decreased to about 45 cm on December 29 due to a warm spell).

On **January 1 (New Year's Day)**, **Moiwa Gate No. 6** opened for the first time this season. Although the snow was deep, it was still not sufficient. Uneven slopes, bamboo grass, and small branches were clearly visible on the surface, and there is uncertainty about what lies beneath the snow (shrubs, rocks, etc.). Careful skiing and riding are therefore essential. In the lower part of the slope, creeks are not completely buried, and snow bridges remain unstable. We crossed only after probing the snowpack to measure depth and identify safe bridges. **Probing is an essential requirement at this time of year.**

While the snow depth was pleasant for skiing, in the lower forest it required knee-deep trail breaking. On this day, the first track demanded about **1.5 hours of hard trail breaking**. I strongly felt that skiers or snowboarders without touring gear could easily end up needing rescue if they encountered these conditions.

On **January 3**, the **Summit Gates No. 2 and No. 3** on Niseko Annupuri opened. From the very first day, approximately **1,000 people** exited the gates and skied the backcountry.

Above roughly **700 m elevation**, snow depth has increased and conditions are approaching what we would normally expect. At the same time, however, the **risk of avalanches** also increases. Do not get carried away by excitement—maintain calm and objective judgment.

Even if conditions are good in the upper sections, the creek bottoms below are deep, with steep sidewalls and complex terrain. Snow in the creek beds is very deep, and if you get stuck, there is a high likelihood that you will be unable to escape on your own. In addition, there are places where water is flowing beneath the snow. Steam from the water melts the snow from below, creating voids just under the surface. There have been many fatal accidents caused by people falling headfirst into such holes in similar terrain.

**Early in the season, extreme caution regarding terrain traps is absolutely essential.**

With proper assessment and management, the snow conditions are excellent, and the mountains reward us with truly enjoyable and memorable runs.