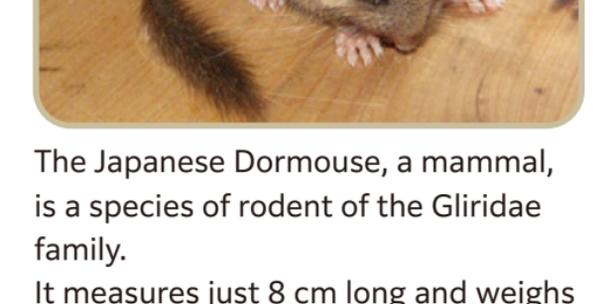




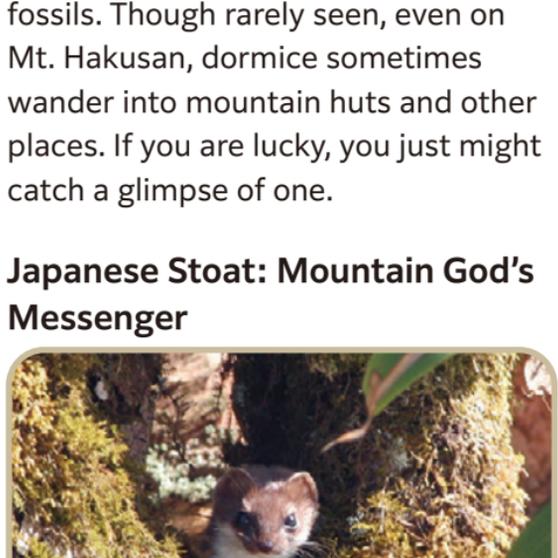
# Wildlife of Mt. Hakusan

Mt. Hakusan's rich natural environment is home to a wide variety of animals. Although they usually dwell quietly in the depths of the forest, they occasionally reveal themselves to us.



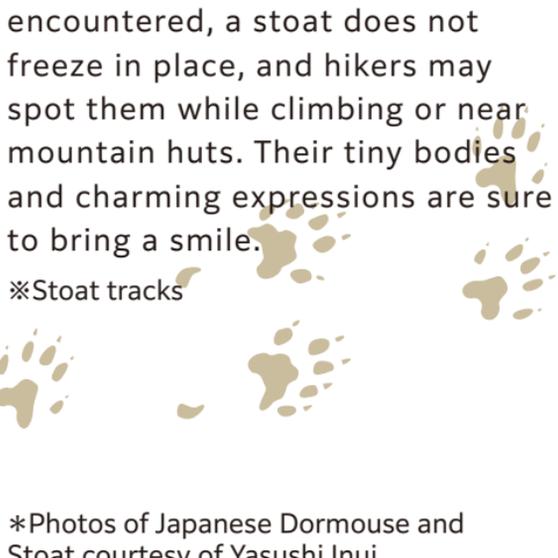
## Adorable Little Animals

### Japanese Dormouse: A Living Fossil



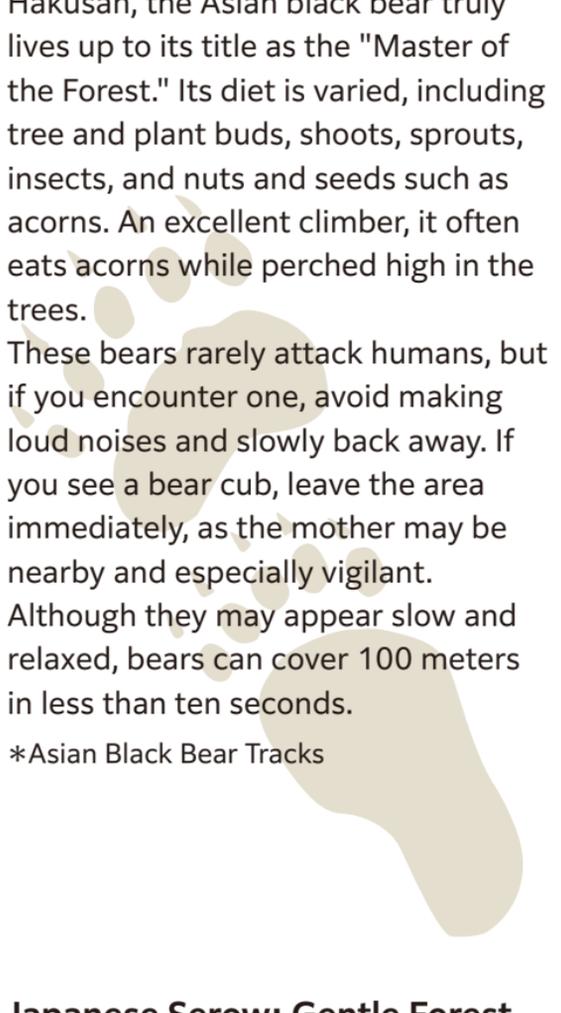
The Japanese Dormouse, a mammal, is a species of rodent of the Gliridae family. It measures just 8 cm long and weighs a mere 18 grams. Its body is round like a ball and features a single black line down its back and a bushy tail. Dormice inhabit forests, feeding on insects and nuts. So small and light, they can even run upside down along the slender tips of branches. Having lived for millions of years—long before humans appeared—they are often called living fossils. Though rarely seen, even on Mt. Hakusan, dormice sometimes wander into mountain huts and other places. If you are lucky, you just might catch a glimpse of one.

### Japanese Stoat: Mountain God's Messenger



The Japanese stoat is a small mammal in the Mustelidae family. Measuring only about 20 cm in length, its round face, small ears, and large eyes make it an exceptionally adorable creature. However, stoats are carnivorous and highly aggressive. While they primarily feed on mice and other small animals, they will also hunt rabbits and birds larger than themselves. Believed to be the Mountain God's messenger, stoats have long been both feared and revered by devout forest dwellers. When encountered, a stoat does not freeze in place, and hikers may spot them while climbing or near mountain huts. Their tiny bodies and charming expressions are sure to bring a smile.

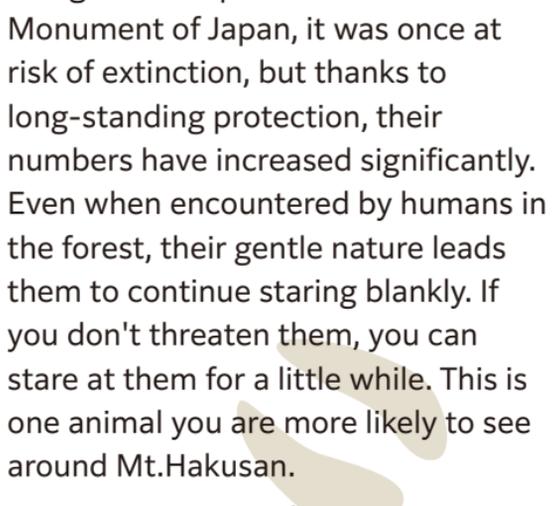
※Stoat tracks



\*Photos of Japanese Dormouse and Stoat courtesy of Yasushi Inui

## Large Mammals Roaming the Forest

### Asian Black Bear: Master of the Forest



As the largest animal inhabiting Mt. Hakusan, the Asian black bear truly lives up to its title as the "Master of the Forest." Its diet is varied, including tree and plant buds, shoots, sprouts, insects, and nuts and seeds such as acorns. An excellent climber, it often eats acorns while perched high in the trees. These bears rarely attack humans, but if you encounter one, avoid making loud noises and slowly back away. If you see a bear cub, leave the area immediately, as the mother may be nearby and especially vigilant. Although they may appear slow and relaxed, bears can cover 100 meters in less than ten seconds.

\*Asian Black Bear Tracks



### Japanese Serow: Gentle Forest Dweller



The Japanese serow is a large mammal of the Bovidae family. It lives in forests, feeding on grass and leaves. During the winter, when food is scarce, it also eats tree bark. Designated a Special Natural Monument of Japan, it was once at risk of extinction, but thanks to long-standing protection, their numbers have increased significantly. Even when encountered by humans in the forest, their gentle nature leads them to continue staring blankly. If you don't threaten them, you can stare at them for a little while. This is one animal you are more likely to see around Mt. Hakusan.

\*Japanese Serow Tracks

### Japanese Macaque: Mischievous Rascal



The Japanese macaque is a large primate that inhabits the forests at the foot of Mt. Hakusan. Living in social groups, they forage as they move through the forest, eating everything from nuts and buds to insects and small animals. Their agile leaps among the branches evoke the playful image of a mischievous rascal. Many groups of Japanese macaques live at the foot of Mt. Hakusan, and sometimes they can be seen on the side of the road. They often appear along the path behind Ishikawa Prefecture's Chugu Museum or at the Bunao Mountain Observation Building.

\*Japanese Macaque Tracks



Chubu Regional Environment Office, Ministry of the Environment/Association for Conservation of Circum-Hakusan Area

