**Flora and Fauna on Mt. Mitake**

Japanese serow, black bear, and *tanuki* (Japanese raccoon dog) live in the dense mizunara oak, cedar, and fir forests that cover Mt. Mitake. The forests are also home to two species of nocturnal flying squirrel. The *musasabi* giant flying squirrel can grow to 80 centimeters from the tip of its nose to the very end of its tail, while its smaller relative, the *momonga* dwarf flying squirrel is around 25 centimeters long.

Dozens of bird species inhabit the forests, and in summer, sharp-eyed bird watchers might spot the yellow-bellied narcissus flycatcher, which is about the same size as a sparrow, near mountain streams. The long-tailed rosefinch, often seen in winter, is similar in size; the males have red plumage, while the females are brown.

There are eight species of snakes on the mountain. The largest is the nonvenomous Japanese rat snake, which can grow up to two meters long. Two species are venomous: the *yamakagashi* tiger keelback and the Japanese pit viper. The Mitake Visitor Center provides information on snakes and other animals in the area.

Numerous species of flowers bloom in the area through spring and summer. Pink, fringed shortia flowers can be found in rocky areas from late April into May. Delicate purple *renge shoma* (false anemone) flower on the mountainside through the summer months.