

Animals of Aso

The unique environment of the Aso Caldera provides vital habitat for many animals. It is estimated that there are some 1,600 plants species in Aso, with about 600 of them found in the grasslands. This forms the basis of an ecosystem that attracts a wide variety of insects, butterflies, birds, and mammals.

Hares, foxes, raccoons, deer, weasels, wild boar, and badgers, all live in the Aso grasslands. About 300 species of birds have been recorded in Kumamoto Prefecture, half of them being found in the grasslands of Aso. Smaller birds such as buntings (*Emberiza cioides*), fan-tailed warblers (*Cisticola juncidis*), and Latham's snipes (*Gallinago hardwickii*) can be observed, as well as several raptors including the Japanese sparrowhawk (*Accipiter gularis*), the common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), and the short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*), which prey on small mammals in the grasslands.