

Birds

Bird watchers will find the park a habitat for migratory and nonmigratory species, including:

Japanese Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*)

The Japanese rock ptarmigan (its Japanese name *raicho* means “thunder bird”) is a heavy-bodied ground feeder about the size of a small chicken that is found in alpine areas of dwarf Siberian pine. It is noted for its pure-white coloring during the winter. Its survival at high altitudes made it a symbol of the mountain deities, and for most of Japanese history *raicho* were not hunted. Despite being a beloved bird, it is now on the endangered list. Since the birds are accustomed to humans, hikers spot them quite frequently.

Alpine Accentor (*Prunella collaris*)

With its streaked brown back, gray head and reddish-brown spotted breast, the alpine accentor (*iwahibari* in Japanese) is found in mountain areas with little vegetation. It can be found at elevations of over 2,000 meters but usually winters at lower altitudes, and is known for its beautiful song, warbled while in flight.

Spotted Nutcracker (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*)

The spotted nutcracker, or *hoshi-garasu*, is a member of the crow family and feeds on insects, nuts, and pine cones. It is found in coniferous mountain forests and has an excellent memory, remembering hundreds of locations where it has buried food. Its distinct white-spotted pattern is elegant and eye-catching.

Mammals

The park is home to many creatures great and small, protected through conservation and awareness programs.

Japanese Least Weasel (*Mustela itatsi*)

Called *okojo* in Japanese, this is one of the smaller members of the genus *Mustela*.

While it looks adorable when standing on its hind legs, this furry creature is carnivorous and hunts small mammals and birds, like the rock ptarmigan.

Japanese Serow (*Capricornis crispus*)

Though its Japanese name, *kamoshika*, includes *shika*, which means deer, the Japanese serow is an even-toed bovine, a kind of goat-antelope. While not in danger of extinction, it is considered a symbol of Nagano and Toyama prefectures, and is therefore

a protected species.

Asian Black Bear (*Ursus thibetanus*)

The Asian black bear, or *kuma*, is medium-sized and largely herbivorous, though it will feed on small mammals, birds, and insects. It sports a distinctive white patch in the shape of a crescent moon on its chest. Adults have an average weight of 135 kilograms but can reach 200 kilograms.

Japanese Macaque (*Macaca fuscata*)

The Japanese macaque or “snow monkey” can be found in many areas of the park, particularly in Kamikochi and at other high altitudes in the Northern Alps. Their diet includes leaves, bamboo shoots, insects, and nuts. Visitors from abroad are often surprised to find monkeys, which are more commonly associated with tropical areas, in such a cold, harsh habitat.