

## Dangerous Wildlife

Some of the plants and animals on Mt. Sanbe can be harmful to humans, and learning how to recognize and avoid them is important. The most common dangerous species are stinging bees and hornets, and the largest of these is the Japanese giant hornet, shown here beside the wasp nest. Adult hornets can reach over 4 centimeters in length and inject an unusually large amount of venom with their stings, which cause extreme pain and can result in hospitalization. The same case contains other stinging insects: (clockwise) a yellow hornet, a species of wasp called *Vespula flaviceps*, a trio of honeybees, an Asian paper wasp, and a lesser paper wasp. The nest was made by a third species of resident paper wasp, *Polistes jokahamae*. The second glass case contains species that resemble stinging insects but are actually harmless.

Mt. Sanbe is home to two venomous snake species, the Japanese pit viper, or *mamushi*, and the tiger keelback. *Mamushi* are quite dangerous, and being bitten usually necessitates a week or more of hospitalization. Their bites can even be fatal, but only in roughly 2 of every 1,000 cases. The tiger keelback, though also venomous, typically flees or displays their red-colored poison glands in warning when encountered by humans. Only 29 people have been bitten by tiger keelbacks in the last 100 years.

Certain plants should also be avoided. Touching the leaves of the Asian poison ivy vine (*Toxicodendron orientale*) or the Chinese lacquer tree (*Toxicodendron vernicifluum*) can result in severe skin irritation and a blistering rash. Even so, the lacquer tree's toxic sap is used to make traditional Japanese lacquerware.

Mt. Sanbe's forest also contains a species of poisonous mushroom: the panther cap (*Amanita pantherina*). Brown-capped with white, scaly spots, it appears in the woodlands in summer and autumn. Consuming it can result in hallucinations, sickness, and even death.