

Outdoor Observation Area

The southern wall of the first and second floors is equipped with large windows that look out into the forest. Equipped with seats and binoculars, these areas are great vantage points for viewing the birds, frogs, and (very rarely) small rodents that come to drink at the pond just outside.

Birds are the most frequent visitors—flocks of bramblings and varied tits regularly arrive to bathe in the stream and shelter in the trees. Signs near the windows are updated each month with the bird species most likely to appear. In winter, when wildlife is scarce, observers can occasionally spot the tracks of Japanese raccoon dogs (*tanuki*) or Japanese martens.

Adjacent to the viewing area are terrariums and aquariums inhabited by live specimens from Mt. Sanbe. Here, visitors can get a firsthand look at many of the fish, reptiles, and amphibians that are introduced in the museum exhibits. These animal ambassadors are replaced as new specimens are brought in, but the rotating collection includes species such as the Japanese pond turtle, Japanese toad, Japanese five-lined skink, and forest green tree frog. The aquariums keep local fish such as the weather loach and Japanese rice fish. There is also a tank of Japanese fire-bellied newts, red-and-black amphibians whose skin contains a neurotoxin that can cause a burning sensation when touched.