

Amphibians and Reptiles of Dewa Sanzan

Dewa Sanzan's streams and ponds provide still- and moving-water habitats for a variety of amphibious species.

Midagahara High Moor is dotted with ponds, which are fed by the icy waters of Mt. Gassan's snowmelt. These ponds are inhabited by Japanese black salamanders (*Hynobius nigrescens*). Tohoku salamanders (*Hynobius lichenatus*) are a rarer species that prefer the slow-moving waters of small creeks.

Also rare are Japanese brown frogs (*Rana japonica*), which live in the rice fields in the foothills of the mountain. These frogs come out of hibernation early, between January and March, and lay their eggs before returning to hibernation. Other frog species in the area include the montane brown frog (*Rana ornativentris*) and the Buerger's frog (*Buergeria buergeri*), which lives in clear streams and is known for its melodic sounds that closely resemble birdsong.

Forest green tree frogs (*Rhacophorus arboreus*) are commonly seen in the area's swamps and ponds. These leaf-colored frogs lay their eggs, enveloped in foam, near bodies of still water. The eggs attract Japanese fire-bellied newts (*Cynops pyrrhogaster*), which gather in large numbers before the eggs hatch to prey on the tadpoles once they emerge.

Among the area's many reptiles are numerous snake species. These include rare species, such as the Oriental odd-tooth snake (*Lycodon orientalis*) and the Asian keelback (*Hebius vibakari*), as well as more common species, including the Japanese copperhead (*Nihon mamushi*), the tiger keelback (*Rhabdophis tigrinus*), the Japanese rat snake (*Elaphe climacophora*), and the Japanese striped snake (*Elaphe quadrivirgata*). Another local reptile species is the Japanese grass lizard (*Takydromus tachydromoides*), which can sometimes be seen darting into the woodland.