

Plants, Animals, and Birds of Jododaira

Jododaira's diverse environments are home to numerous plant, animal, and bird species. Wildflowers bloom in the wetlands and along the pond shores from spring to fall, and virgin forests of deciduous and coniferous trees cover the landscape. Many migratory birds gather here in the summer months, and native mammals such as macaque monkeys and black bears inhabit the area's remote woodlands.

Plants of Jododaira

The wetlands, ponds, and forests of Jododaira are habitats for subalpine mosses, wildflowers, and deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs.

The forests are mainly composed of subalpine conifers. The Azuma *goyomatsu* white pine (*Pinus parviflora*) is a subspecies native to the Azuma mountain range. It is commonly used for bonsai. Maries' fir (*Abies mariesii*) is a hardy evergreen native to the mountains of northern Honshu. In the Jododaira area, many Maries' firs are bare on the west side, with branches growing eastward, forming a flag-like shape caused by strong westerly winds during the winter.

One of the most prominent deciduous trees in the area is Erman's birch (*Betula ermanii*), recognizable by its delicate copper-colored bark and heart-shaped leaves that turn a golden-yellow in fall.

During the rainy season (mid-June to late July), Jododaira's wetlands are dotted with the snow-like tufts of tussock cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) and the pink bell-shaped flowers of fringed galax (*Schizocodon soldanelloides*). Small white-petaled Aleutian avens (*Geum pentapetalum*) also bloom during this season. The carnivorous round-leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia* L.) thrives in the wetlands' acidic soil, capturing insects with its sticky tendrils throughout July and August. Native alpine flowers like the purple trumpet-shaped *ezorindo* (*Gentiana triflora* var. *japonica*) bloom from late summer to early fall.

The Nemoto rhododendron (*rhododendron brachycarpum* f. *nemotoanum*) is a rare native evergreen shrub that blossoms with clusters of light-pink flowers. Visitors may be able to spot these elusive blooms around Okenuma Pond or Usagidaira in July. The

plant was discovered in the Azuma mountain range in 1903 and is a subspecies of the Hakusan rhododendron (*rhododendron brachycarpum*).

Animals of Jododaira

Jododaira is the habitat of an array of native animals such as the *yamane* dormouse, martens, weasels, stoats, and wild rabbits. Larger native species include the red fox, serow, macaque, and black bear.

Birds of Jododaira

Many birds make the forests, wetlands, and ponds of Jododaira their home during the summer months. They come to breed, nest, and feed on the area's plentiful insects, grubs, seeds, grasses, and flowers.

The spotted nutcracker and the Asian house martin, a small subspecies of swallow, are often seen around Jododaira. The spotted nutcracker lives in the area year-round and is distinguished by its chocolate-brown plumage speckled with white dots. Waterfowl such as mallard ducks and Eastern spot-billed ducks populate the area's ponds and wetlands in summer. It is common to hear the songs of the Japanese robin, Eurasian bullfinch, Siberian bluechat, and jungle nightjar, but it is rare to see the birds.