

Tashiro Pond and Wetland

Tashiro Pond is one of Kamikōchi's most picturesque spots, located approximately midway on the hiking trail between Kappa Bridge and Taishō Pond. What it lacks in size is made up for by the wild splendor of the surrounding marsh, where many of the valley's birds and flowering plants can be spotted. In good weather, its clear waters reflect nearby Mt. Ropyaku and Mt. Kasumizawa.

The pond is fed by rainwater absorbed on the surrounding peaks and carried downhill as groundwater. The water carries considerable sediment, which settles in the pond and is slowly reducing its size. In 1915 the pond was 5 meters deep, but today it is much shallower. Aquatic plants, which die and settle on the pond bed, are also helping to turn Tashiro from a simple pond to a thriving wetland.

In the summer months, the area around the pond abounds with unusual plants. Look for the golden flowers of a daylily known as *zenteika*, and for the reddish-orange sprays of Japanese azalea (*rengetsutsuji*).

Among the many birds found here are the Japanese robin (*komadori*), red-flanked bluetail (*ruribitaki*), great spotted woodpecker (*akagera*), and narcissus flycatcher (*kibitaki*). Japanese macaques often wander down from the slopes above and can be spotted foraging on plants along the hiking trails.

In autumn, the needles of Japanese larch trees around the pond turn brilliant gold, making Tashiro Pond a popular spot for photographers. The best time to view the autumn foliage is near the end of October. In winter, the most determined photographers set out at dawn, hiking along the snowy trail to capture frost-covered trees lit by the sun and reflected in the water like glistening crystal pillars.