

Kingfishers

Common kingfisher / *Alcedo atthis* / **Kawasemi** / カワセミ

This colorful little kingfisher (length 15 to 20 centimeters) with a long, pointed black bill is found throughout the island of Amami-Oshima. Its head and wings are a bright turquoise blue that contrasts with the splashes of white on its neck and throat and the bright orange of its chest. It is most often seen perched in trees over calm bodies of water, searching for small fish swimming close to the surface. It can also hover when necessary. When prey is spotted, the kingfisher quickly plunges into the water to catch it. Common kingfishers in colder climes will migrate, but they are resident here thanks to Amami-Oshima's subtropical temperatures.

Ruddy kingfisher / *Halcyon coromanda* / **Akashobin** / アカショウビン

This kingfisher gets its name from the rusty orange that colors most of its body, though it has varying purplish areas on its back and tail. The bird's crimson bill is large for its size, and is sometimes used to beat the shells of land snails and hermit crabs on rocks until they break. The ruddy kingfisher feeds largely on land snails, crabs, and amphibians—but oddly, not on fish. The birds prefer thick forest locations, but are also found in the windbreak trees of the Ose Coast area. They are summer residents, staying on Amami-Oshima during their breeding season between April and September. They are generally shy, solitary creatures, but are often visible.