

Pigeons

Ryukyu green pigeon / *Treron formosae* / Zuaka-aohato / ズアカアオバト

One of four members of the pigeon family found on Amami-Oshima, the Ryukyu green pigeon is endemic to Japan's southern islands, and the only pigeon known to be endemic to Japan. At one time it was thought to be a subspecies of the Taiwan green pigeon, but is now known to be a distinct species. It is large (33 to 35 centimeters long), with a rich green body and dark brown wings. In Japan it is sometimes called a “shakuhachi *hato* (pigeon),” after the Japanese bamboo flute, because of the long, mournful tone of its call. It is also known as the whistling green pigeon.

Japanese wood pigeon / *Columba janthina* / Karasubato / カラスバト

This endangered species is the largest and darkest of the pigeons found on Amami-Oshima. It is 37 to 43 centimeters long, and has a blackish head and body with hints of metallic purple and green on its head, breast, and wings. Its habitat is mainly in the broadleaf forest, where it feeds on seeds and nuts. Unlike most of the other birds on Amami-Oshima, it has been known to breed in the winter season. It is sometimes called *ushi-bato* (“cow pigeon”) in the local dialect because of its low cooing call.