

# Japanese Macaque ニホンザル



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**Japanese macaques** are a type of monkey native to Japan. They live in troops of 20-30 monkeys led by a dominant male. Females macaques stay in the same troop their entire life, but males leave the troop before they are adults. Male macaques spend most of their time on the ground. The dominant male is responsible for protecting the troop from

predators, such as wolves and wild dogs, and from other macaque troops. Females spend most of their time in trees. When feeding or moving location, the monkeys will call to each other to keep the troop together.

## Appearance

Japanese macaques have thick, brownish grey fur that keeps them warm during the winter. They have pink faces and bottoms. Their faces become redder when it is mating season. They have a short, stumpy tail. This helps to prevent heat loss during the cold weather. Their average height is 57cm for males and 52cm for females.

### Did you know?

They are excellent swimmers, being able to swim over half a kilometre.

### Did you know?

They are also known as snow monkeys and some troops in the Nagano mountains have been observed bathing in natural hot springs to keep warm in the winter!

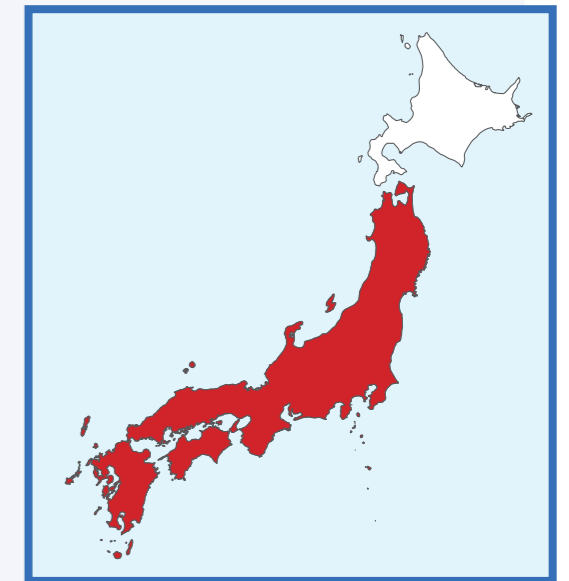
### Glossary

**Primate:** a type of mammal including all monkeys, apes, and lemurs. Humans are primates.

**Omnivore:** an animal that eats both plants and meat.

## Habitat

The Japanese macaque is found on all the main islands, except Hokkaido. They live further north than any other non-human **primate** in the world. The habitat of these monkeys varies. In the far north of Honshu they can be found in cool, temperate forests and in the south of Kyushu they live in sub-tropical forests.



## Diet

Japanese macaques are **omnivores** and are not picky eaters! They mainly eat fruits, seeds, leaves and flowers, but are also known to enjoy fungi, crabs, insects and bird eggs.

# GIANT SPIDER CRAB タカアシガニ



By Tsarli at English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0.

**Japanese giant spider crabs** may look like something from a horror film, but these massive **crustaceans**, which live an average of 100 years, aren't going to do you any harm. They may be the largest **crustacean** on Earth, but they begin life tiny; females produce around 1 million eggs that are each only 8mm across. Many

Japanese people enjoy eating the crab and they are considered a delicacy. However, it is forbidden to fish for them during their breeding season, which lasts from January to April, in order to conserve their numbers.

## Appearance

As its name suggests, this crab resembles a spider - albeit one with 10 legs! It spans almost 4 metres from the tip of one front claw to the other and has a mottled orange **carapace** covered with spines, helping it blend in with the ocean floor.

## Did you know?

Their Japanese name, takaashigani, translates as tall leg crab.

## Did you know?

They are part of a family of so-called decorator crabs that adorn their shells with sponges, anemones and other items in order to hide from predators.

## Habitat

Japanese spider crabs prefer the cold water of deep ocean, living at depths between 50m to 500m. They can be found mainly on the Pacific side of Japan, off the coast of Honshu, and have been found as far south as Taiwan. They are usually found hiding in vents and holes on the seabed in temperatures of around 10 degrees Celsius.

## Diet

Giant Spider crabs are **omnivores**. As they are slow moving, they prefer to scavenge than hunt, feeding mainly on dead fish and plant matter found on the sea floor.

## Glossary

**Crustacean:** a type of animal, most of which live in water, that has a hard outer shell and many legs, such as crabs, lobsters and shrimps.

**Carapace:** a hard upper shell.

**Omnivore:** an animal that eats both plants and meat.





# HOKKAIDO BROWN BEAR エゾヒグマ



By bryan... - Flickr, CC BY 2.0.

## Hokkaido brown bear

are large bears which are native to Japan. They are also known as Ussuri brown bears or Ezo brown bears. There are also black bears in Japan which are found on Honshu and Shikoku, but these brown bears are much larger. Although most bears tend to be shy and avoid people, these bears have been known

to attack humans if panicked. The brown bears are worshipped by the Ainu, the **indigenous** people from northern Japan.

## Appearance

They have an **elongated** skull and the bears usually weigh between 200-400kg, however they can weigh even more! The males can be twice as heavy as the females. They have long, sharp claws that can inflict severe wounds and which the bears use to dig up roots and **tubers** to eat.

## Did you know?

They are mainly solitary animals and can wander up to 50 miles a day.

## Did you know?

There is evidence to suggest that Hokkaido brown bears are moving towards a herbivorous, or vegetarian, diet as a result of human development.

## Glossary

**Indigenous:** people existing in a land from the earliest times.

**Elongated:** having a shape much longer than it is wide.

**Tuber:** thick part of a plant's underground stem.

**Omnivore:** an animal that eats both plants and meat.

## Habitat

Hokkaido brown bears are, as their name suggests, found in Japan's northern island of Hokkaido. Their habitat includes forests, mountainous regions and coastal areas. During the winter they den in excavated burrows and rocky outcrops or sometimes they will build nests on the ground.



## Diet

Hokkaido brown bears are **omnivores** and their diet includes fish, berries, nuts, insects and occasionally small mammals.

# TANUKI タヌキ



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tricked and forgetful. Tanuki even appear in the Nihon Shoki, the second oldest book of Japanese history, where two of the animals transform into humans and sing songs.

## Appearance

Tanuki are small animals, measuring around 45 -65cm in length. They have a thick fur coat, that is usually grey, brown or black in colour, although very rarely white tanuki have been spotted. Tanuki have a distinctive face with a white **muzzle** and brown eyes. They also have a large, bushy tail.

**Tanuki**, or Japanese raccoon dogs, are a member of the dog family, related to wolves and foxes. They are mainly nocturnal, but are sometimes active during the daytime. In Japanese folklore they are thought to be supernatural with the ability to shape shift. They are said to be mischievous and playful, although sometimes easily-

## Did you know?

Statues of tanuki are placed at the entrance to shops and restaurants to bring good luck.

## Did you know?

Tanuki are skilled swimmers. In the forests and marshlands they happily dive under water to hunt and forage for food.

## Glossary

**Muzzle:** the mouth and nose of an animal.

**Omnivore:** an animal that eats both plants and meat.

## Habitat

Tanuki are found throughout Japan, from Hokkaido in the north to Kyushu in the south. They like to live in moist meadows, shores of rivers and lakes, and mixed forests in lowlands and mountain valleys (up to 2,000 metres in altitude).



## Diet

Tanuki are **omnivores**. Their diet includes fruit, nuts, insects, small mammals, frogs, eggs and fish. They can even eat poisonous toads, as they produce lots of saliva that dilutes the poison.



# JAPANESE GIANT SALAMANDER オオサンショウウオ



By Salamandra2021, CC BY-SA 4.0.

**Japanese giant salamander** are **endemic** to Japan. They are native to northern Kyushu, western Honshu and Shikoku. These mysterious amphibians are considered living fossils as their biology has changed little in over 25 million years. Thought to live up to 100 years old, they are the world's second largest **amphibian** after the Chinese giant salamander.

## Appearance

The Japanese giant salamander can grow to a length of 1.5m and a weight of 25kg. The heaviest specimen on record is in Tottori Prefectural Museum and weighs 44.3kg. It has brown and black mottled skin that provides camouflage against the bottoms of streams and rivers. It has tiny eyes with no eyelids and poor eye sight.

## Glossary

**Endemic:** meaning that a plant or animal lives only in a particular location.

**Amphibian:** an animal that lives in water and on land.

**Aquatic:** living in water.

**Metamorphosis:** the process of transformation from an immature form to an adult form.

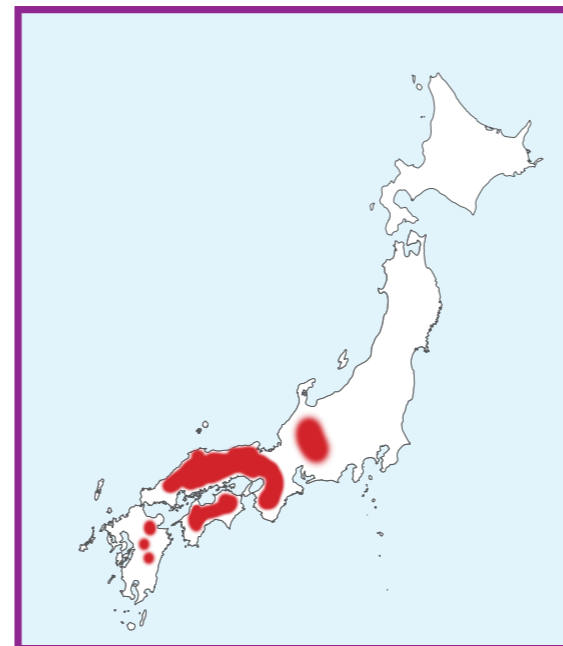
**Carnivore:** an animal that eats meat or other animals.

## Did you know?

Their nickname is the pepper fish because they produce a milky substance that smells like Japanese pepper when threatened.

## Habitat

The Japanese giant salamander lives in rivers and streams with clear, cool water. Because they are so large and lack gills, they are confined to flowing water where oxygen is plentiful. They are mainly **aquatic**, preferring to stay in their watery habitat even after **metamorphosis** and breathing above the surface without venturing out onto land. The males build long, horizontal burrows, called dens, in the river bed in which the females lay their eggs.



## Diet

These amphibians are **carnivores**, with a diet of freshwater crab, fish, frogs and insects. Their slow metabolism allows them to survive without consuming food for weeks at a time.

## Did you know?

They are able to absorb oxygen from water directly into their skin.

# RED-CROWNED CRANE タンチョウヅル



By Klub Boks from Pexels.

Also known as the Japanese crane, the **red-crowned crane** is the world's second rarest crane and is a symbol of good luck and longevity in Japan. Standing at a height of around 160cm, their life expectancy in the wild is 25 years - although **captive** cranes have been known to live as long as 60 years. The birds hold an important role in Japanese culture and have appeared in many artworks throughout history.

## Appearance

The young birds have a combination of white, brown or grey **plumage** with a light brown head. As they become adults they develop a red patch on forehead (which gives them their name), a black band stretching from beak to front of the neck, white **plumage**, and black feathers visible when their wings are at full stretch.

### Did you know?

The orizuru, or origami crane, made to wish for good fortune and peace, is a representation of this bird.

### Did you know?

These birds love to dance! Males dance to attract a mate and pairs dance together to strengthen their bond.

### Glossary

**Captive:** animals under human control or care.

**Plumage:** a bird's feathers.

**Migrate:** move or travel to another place according to the season.

**Omnivore:** an animal that eats plants and meat.

## Habitat

Red-crowned cranes are well-adapted to cold temperatures and live in parts of East Asia and Russia. Some red-crowned cranes **migrate** to breed in the spring and summer, however the Japanese population stays in Japan all year round. They live in the fields, coastal areas, marshes, and freshwater wetlands of Hokkaido. They are at threat due to habitat loss caused by human development and climate change.



## Diet

These birds are **omnivores**, eating a diet that includes fish, frogs, small mammals, insects and plants that grow in marshes and swamps.



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## Appearance

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### Glossary

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## Habitat

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## Diet

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