

The Nature Handbook

A guide to observing creatures of the Nogawa River basin

There are various life forms such as fishes, birds, insects and flowers in Nogawa river and Hake-no-mori forests. These pictures describe some of the various creatures that can be seen along the watersides, underwaters and in the forests of the river basin.



Observing aquatic lives

Underwater of the river, many creatures such as Loach, Japanese Rice Fish, Carp, Amur Catfish, Lake Prawn, and Soft-shelled Turtle can be seen. In spring-fed spots of that, you can see Lefua echigonia swimming and Japanese Freshwater Crab crawling in their cold clean streams.

Observing wild birds

Common Kingfisher, Nogawa's symbol can be seen frequently by the river. Other birds such as ducks and herons also can be watched along that. In Hake-no-mori forests, Northern Goshawk and Ural Owl sometimes occur.



Observing insects

In Hake-no-mori forests, beetles, stag beetles and butterflies can be seen. You can also see various of dragonflies flying in the daytime, and Japanese fireflies glowing in the night by the river.

Observing plants

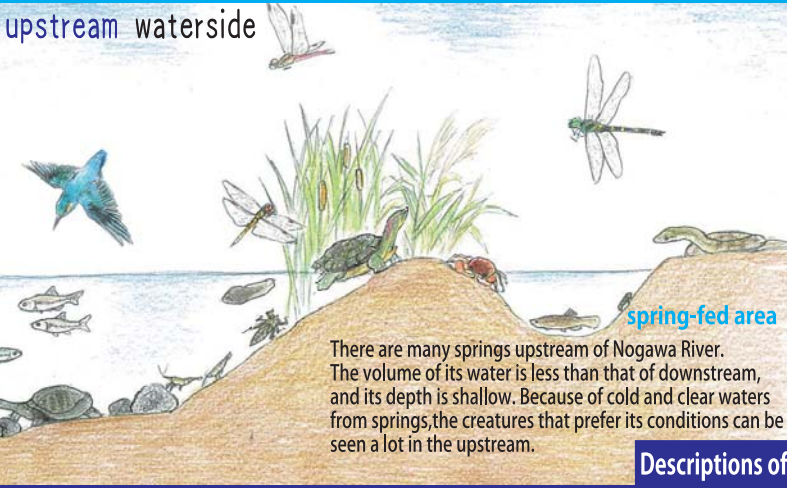
Along Nogawa River, Southern Cattail Cumbungi and Common reed grass grow wild. Branched bur reed and Japanese Sweet Flag grow around the springs. In Hake-no-mori forests, wild flowers such as Red Heart Lily and Soft Windflower grow among Sawtooth oak and other oak trees.



NB/ indicates alien species 特 indicates invasive alien species

Birds ※Resident birds live around Nogawa River all year and not migrate seasonally.		Spot-billed Duck • Resident • 60.5 cm  <p>Yellow-tipped bill. Mothers often are with chicks from May to August.</p>		Green-winged Teal • Winter visitor • 37.5 cm  <p>Smallest in the ducks. Males have maroon heads and green patches around eyes.</p>		Little Grebe • Resident • 26 cm  <p>Smaller than the ducks. Dive frequently to catch small fish and insects.</p>		Little Egret • Resident • 61 cm  <p>Black bill, yellow feet. Drive fish out of muddy bottom with feet and catch with bill.</p>	
Insects		March Bluetail • Apr. ~ Sep. • 30 ~ 35 mm  <p>Prefer the clean and gentle streams. Males' abdomens are green and glistening.</p>		Ebony Jewelwing • Jun. ~ Nov. • 57 ~ 68 mm  <p>Sections 8 and 9 of the abdomen of males are light blue. Two types of Females with two different colored bodies.</p>		Common Skimmer • May ~ Nov. • 47 ~ 61 mm  <p>Males and females have black tail tips. Females are also called "Mugiwara-Tonbo".</p>		Wandering Glider • Jun. ~ Oct. • 44 ~ 54 mm  <p>Seen around the waterside. Wide wings and reddish brown bodies.</p>	
Fish		Riverbottom fish		Japanese Striped Loach • About 10 cm  <p>Prefer muddy riverbeds. With an elongated body, 10 whiskers.</p>		Lefua echigonia • About 6 cm  <p>Prefer gravel riverbeds. Line of black dots run on both body sides. 6 whiskers and a square tail fin.</p>		Swimming fish	
Loach		Goby Minnow • About 13 cm  <p>With spots on a body and fins, 2 whiskers, and a long-sharp mouth. Prefer gravel riverbeds.</p>		Amur Catfish • 50 ~ 70 cm  <p>With a small dorsal fin, and 4 whiskers (2 of which are very long). Nocturnal.</p>		Japanese Rice Fish • About 5 cm  <p>Big eyes, and a long wide anal fin.</p>		Dark Chub • About 15 cm  <p>Similar to Pale Chub, but front edge of a dorsal fin is red. Indigo lines on both body sides.</p>	
Tamoroko • About 8 cm  <p>Blurry lines on both body sides, and 2 whiskers.</p>		Stone Moroko • About 8 cm  <p>Mouth is pointed and faces up. Noticeable black lines on both body sides.</p>							

Creatures live in the water-sides of Nogawa River



Descriptions of waterside creatures

※ A name of the italic type is notation by the scientific name.

Great Egret • Resident • 90 cm <p>The black bill in summer turns to yellow in winter. Right side is a Little Egret in the picture.</p>	Grey Heron • Resident • 93 cm <p>Largest heron in Japan. Semi-nocturnal and often rest during the day.</p>	Night Heron • Resident • 57.5 cm <p>Nocturnal, stay still during the day. Fly to feeding grounds in the evening.</p>	Common Kingfisher • Resident • 17 cm <p>Called "waterside gems". Dive into the water to catch fish.</p>	Great Cormorant • Resident • 82 cm <p>Dive for fish to eat. Got soaked after diving, spread wings to dry.</p>	Common Moorhen • Resident • 32 cm <p>Yellow-green legs with long toes. Vigilant, and often hide into waterside grasses.</p>	Common Sandpiper • Resident • 20 cm <p>Wagging tail. Walk along watersides and catch aquatic insects, etc.</p>	Common Snipe • Winter visitor • 27 cm <p>Stick long bill into muddy grounds and catch insects and worms.</p>
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Lesser Emperor • May ~ Oct. • 65 ~ 84 mm <p>Males' abdomen joint are blue colors and females' are yellowish green.</p>	Golden-ringed Dragonfly • Jun. ~ Oct. • 82 ~ 114 mm <p>Largest dragonflies in Japan. The larvae live in spring waters.</p>	Autumn Darter • Jun. ~ Dec. • 32 ~ 46 mm <p>Typical red dragonflies. Move to mountains in summer and return to lowlands in autumn.</p>	Banded Darter • Jul. ~ Dec. • 30 ~ 41 mm <p>Japanese name of "Miyama" means "deep mountain", but often appear in riversides and nearby rice fields.</p>	Japanese Firefly • May ~ Jul. • 15 mm <p>Eating freshwater snails, Larvae (Pic.R) grow up in spring waters. June is a emergence season, and adults glow for breeding.</p>	Plants Amur Silver-grass • Bloom Sep. ~ Oct. • Perennial <p>No bearded seeds called "nogi" at ears tips.</p>	Common Reed Grass • Bloom Aug. ~ Sep. • Perennial <p>Growing on riverbanks. About 2 to 3 meters high.</p>	Branched Bur-reed • Bloom Jun. ~ Jul. • Perennial <p>Growing along the streams from springs of Nogawa River.</p>
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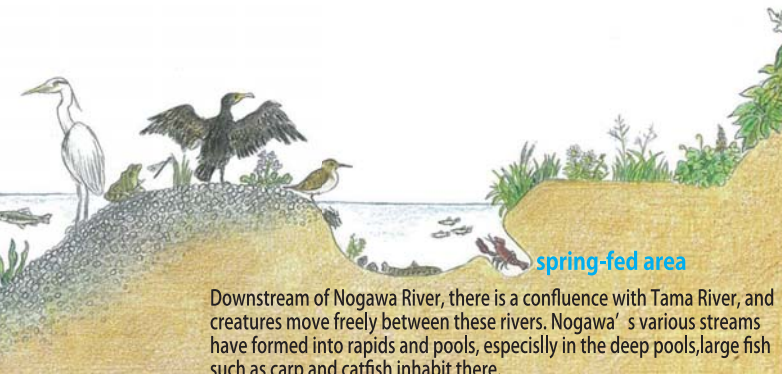
Goby • About 10 cm <p>Two dorsal fins, and a black dot on trailing edge of first dorsal fin.</p>	Floating Goby • About 8 cm <p>Black tail base, similar to Goby. No black dots on both dorsal fins.</p>	Freshwater Goby • About 6 cm <p>Common type of some Freshwater Gobys. Live in slow flowing waters.</p>
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Crustaceans Neocaridina • About 1 cm <p>Live in the submerged grasses at waters' edges.</p>	Lake Prawn • About 5 cm <p>Clear streaks. Live around the foot of large stones in river pools.</p>	Red Swamp Crayfish • About 10 cm <p>Omnivorous and resistant to dirty waters.</p>	Japanese Freshwater Crab • Shell-width 3 cm <p>Rare in Nogawa River. Main habitats are spring-fed areas.</p>
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Japanese Silver Crucian Carp • 15 ~ 40 cm <p>No whiskers. The first spine of a dorsal fin is hard.</p>	Carp • 40 ~ 80 cm <p>Prefer more stagnate and deeper waters than crucian carp habitats. 4 whiskers.</p>	Pale Chub • About 15 cm <p>Green and pink patterns on both body sides. An anal fin extends backwards.</p>
Amur Minnow • About 10 cm <p>Black lines on both body sides. Covered by mucus, body surface is slimy.</p>	Rosy Bitterling • About 6 cm <p>With red coloration around eyes. Blue lines run on both body sides.</p>	Sweetfish • 15 ~ 25 cm <p>An adipose fin between dorsal and tail fins. Eat diatoms on stones in riverbeds.</p>

Shellfish Bladder Snail • About 1 cm <p>Sinistral shell. resistant to dirty waters.</p>	Thiaridial Snail • About 3 cm <p>Known as bait for Japanese Firefly larvae. Prefer relatively clean waters.</p>	Corbicula fluminea • About 2 cm <p>Resembling "Masijimi" clam in Japan (corbicula leana), but with a deep purple inner surface. Lurk in sand. Not suited to eat much.</p>
Amphibians Japanese Tree Frog • About 3 cm <p>Often lay eggs in paddy fields.</p>	Japanese Common Toad • 6 ~ 18 cm <p>Release poison from skin surface to protect from enemies.</p>	Japanese Brown Frog • About 5 cm <p>Usually live in forests, gather watersides in breeding season.</p>
American Bullfrog • 12 ~ 20 cm <p>Eat other creatures greedily. Voice is similar to cow s.</p>		

downstream waterside



Downstream of Nogawa River, there is a confluence with Tama River, and creatures move freely between these rivers. Nogawa's various streams have formed into rapids and pools, especially in the deep pools, large fish such as carp and catfish inhabit there.

Water Rail

• Winter visitor • 29 cm



Occur in waterside grassland. Very vigilant, and run into bushes immediately.

White Wagtail

• Resident • 21 cm



Call a clear voices "chi-chi-chi". Often wag tail.

Japanese Wagtail

• Resident • 21 cm



White eyebrows on a black face. Call a guttural voice "jiji-jiji".

Grey Wagtail

• Resident • 20 cm



Behave the same as White Wagtail. Underparts are yellow.

Southern Cattail Cumbungi

• Bloom Jun. ~ Jul. • Perennial



Pressing brown spiked seedpods, the seeds rush out.

Echinochloa crus-galli var. *echinata*

• Bloom Aug. ~ Oct. • Annual



Tips of ears have hairs. Growing in the watersides and wetlands.

Japanese Sweet Flag

• Bloom Apr. ~ May • Perennial



Growing in clusters in spring-fed areas of Hake forests.

Bur Cucumber

• Bloom Aug. ~ Sep. • Annual



Growing thick on riverbeds.

Japanese Mitten Crab



• Shell-width 7 cm
Feature hairy claws.

Aquatic insects

Water Strider

• About 15mm
Seem to be four legged, but have short forelimbs, total six.

Water Scorpion

• About 35mm
Catch preys with sickle-like forelimbs and suck body fluids.

Bank nymph

• About 10mm
Build nests with small stones. Prefer clean waters.

Metrocoris histrio

• About 5mm
With a pattern on a body. Move over the surface of spring-fed areas.

Agabus

• About 7mm
Using hind limbs with brush-like hairs, swim well.

Baetis nymph

• About 10mm
Eat the diatoms attached to stones under water.

Stenopsyche marmorata nymph

• About 40mm
Build nests by combining various sized stones with strings.

Reptiles

Soft-shelled Turtle

• Shell-length 20 ~ 35 cm



Feature a soft shell. Prefer muddy bottoms.

Chinese Pond Turtle

• Shell-length 18 ~ 25 cm



Cause of bad smell, called in Japan "Kusa-game" means "smelly turtle".

Red-eared Slider

• Shell-length 12 ~ 30 cm



Often sunbathe on stones.

Around the



Birds

Bull-headed Shrike

• Resident • 20 cm



Fierce despite little-bird appearance. Catch animals such as lizards and insects, etc.

Oriental Turtle Dove

• Resident • 33 cm



Call a voice "de-de-poppo". Always act alone or two.

Jungle Crow

• Resident • 56.5 cm



Call a clear voice "kaah-kaah". Often make a mess of garbage areas for food.

Carrion Crow

• Resident • 50 cm



Calling a harsh voice "gaa-gaa", bow head at the same time.

Black-faced Bunting

• Winter visitor • 16 cm



Often act alone in bushes. Appear at the edges of bushes or on tree branches in early spring.

Hawfinch

• Winter visitor • 18 cm



Short tail and thick beak. Crack hard seeds and eat the inside with powerful beak.

Barn Swallow

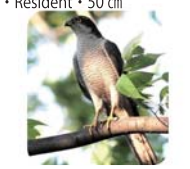
• Summer visitor • 17 cm



It is said that if Swallows fly at low altitude, it will rain. Often make nests on eaves of houses.

Northern Goshawk

• Resident • 50 cm



Roosting on the trees near rivers or in large parks, hunt small or medium-sized birds, sometimes prey large-sized.

Reptiles

Japanese Grass Lizard

• 15 ~ 20 cm



Often bask in the sun on river dikes.

Insects

Large Cuckoo Wasp

• Jun. ~ Oct. • 12 ~ 20 mm



Beautiful blue-green and purple colored. Lay eggs in the nests of other wasps.

Indian Fritillary

• Apr. ~ Dec. • 30 ~ 40 mm



Females have black forewings. Larvae feed on violets.

Small Copper

• Jun. ~ Sep. • 15 ~ 18 mm



Larvae feed on leaves of Japanese Dock. Adults fly just like leaping up among grasses.

Japanese Rat Snake

• 1 ~ 2m



Japanese largest snake. No poison, but thoughtless grabbing causes being bitten.

Common Grass Yellow

• Mar. ~ Nov. • 20 ~ 25 mm



Overwinter in adult state. Since begin to act in early spring, noticeable in solitary fields.

Anthocharis scolymus

• Mar. ~ May • 20 ~ 30 mm



Camouflage patterns on under side of wings. Males' forewings have yellow tips.

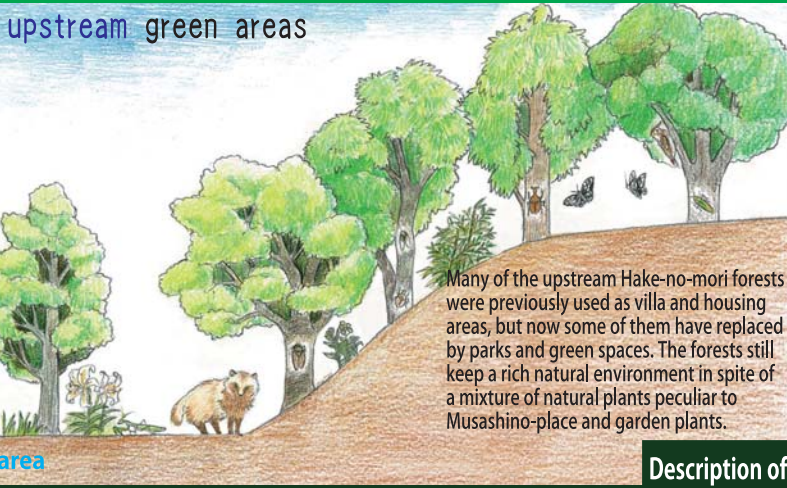
Chinese Bushbrown

• May ~ Sep. • 20 ~ 26 mm



Larvae feed on grasses and sedges, and adults gather in tree saps.

Creatures live in the green areas of Nogawa River



Description of green area creatures

Azure-winged Magpie
• Resident • 37 cm



A type of crow. With a long tail, a black head and beautiful blue wings.

Brown-eared Bulbul
• Resident • 27.5 cm



Call a big voice "piyo-piyo". Often appear among the trees alongside streets.

Gray Starling
• Resident • 24 cm



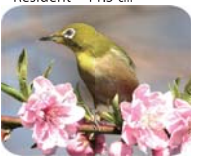
In autumn and winter, often make big flocks and fly to roosts.

Great Tit
• Resident • 14.5 cm



Look like wearing a tie, from throat to belly. Males have thicker ties than females'.

Japanese White-eye
• Resident • 11.5 cm



Noticeable white eye-ring. Suck nectar from blossoms such as Japanese apricot.

Oriental Greenfinch
• Resident • 14.5 cm



Flock to feed on rapeseeds, etc. While flying, the yellow parts of wings stand out.

Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker
• Resident • 15 cm



Smallest Japanese woodpecker. Peck into dead trees and make nests.

Japanese Green Woodpecker
• Resident • 29 cm



Large woodpecker endemic to Japan. Peck into live trees and make nests.

Kestrel
• Resident • 30 cm



Often Hovering in the sky to look for preys on the grounds.

Ural Owl
• Resident • 50 cm



Hunt mice after dark. Making full use of keen hearing, hunt preys in darkness.

Plants

Kudzu
• Bloom Aug. ~ Sep. • Perennial



Starch is extracted from roots. Vines can be used as materials for making baskets, and so on.

Carolina Horsenettle
• Bloom Jun. ~ Oct. • Perennial



Many sharp thorns and poisonous whole body. Harmful grass.

Rose Evening Primrose
• Bloom May ~ Sep. • Perennial



Japanese name "Yugesho" is named after blooming in the evening.

Narrow-leaved Vetch
• Bloom Mar. ~ Jun. • Biennial



Vine plant. Green beans (seeds) turn to black after getting ripe.

Corydalis Incisa
• Bloom Apr. ~ Jun. • Winter annual



Grow in shade places. Poisonous plant.

Ladies' Tresses
• Bloom Apr. ~ Sep. • Perennial



Grow in moist sunny places.

Short-tailed Blue
• Apr. ~ Oct. • 11 ~ 14 mm



With protrusions like a swallow tail on rearwings. Prefer legume grasslands.

Hestina Persimilis Japonica
• May ~ Aug. • 35 ~ 42 mm



Larvae eat leaves of Chinese Hackberry. Overwinter under fallen leaves in larva state.

Chinese Peacock
• Apr. ~ Sep. • 45 ~ 70 mm



Beautiful turquoise colored upper-rearwings. In spring, visit azalea flowers, etc.

Oriental Longheaded Locust
• Aug. ~ Nov. • 50 ~ 80 mm



Japanese largest grasshopper. Often live in true grasses-lands.

Japanese Giant Mantis
• Aug. ~ Nov. • 70 ~ 95 mm



Often live in high grassy ground. Two colored body types, green or brown.

Large Brown Cicada
• Jul. ~ Sep. • 53 ~ 60 mm



Brown mottled patterns on wings. Buzz a sound "ji-ji-ji-ji".

Meimuna opalifera
• Jul. ~ Oct. • 40 ~ 47 mm



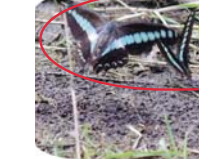
Adults appear from July. Emerging more head for autumn, buzzings increase at the same time.

Jewel Beetle
• Jun. ~ Sep. • 25 ~ 40 mm



For brilliant color, Likened to gem. Occur rarely in Hake-no-mori forests.

Common Bluebottle
• Apr. ~ Oct. • 45 ~ 55 mm



After sudden shower in summer days, air temperature rises, and swallowtails come to suck water.

Asian Swallowtail
• Apr. ~ Oct. • 53 ~ 60 mm



Old World Swallowtail
• Apr. ~ Oct. • 40 ~ 65 mm



Smaller Longheaded Locust
• Aug. ~ Dec. • 20 ~ 40 mm



A female often carries smaller one on back, not a juvenile but a male.

Rice Grasshopper
• Aug. ~ Nov. • 33 ~ 44 mm



Live in rice-field areas. Black lines on both body sides.

Emma Field Cricket
• Aug. ~ Nov. • 26 ~ 34 mm



Japanese largest cricket. Rubbing wings together, make a sound "koro-koro".

Asian Lady Beetle
• Mar. ~ Nov. • 4.7 ~ 8.2 mm



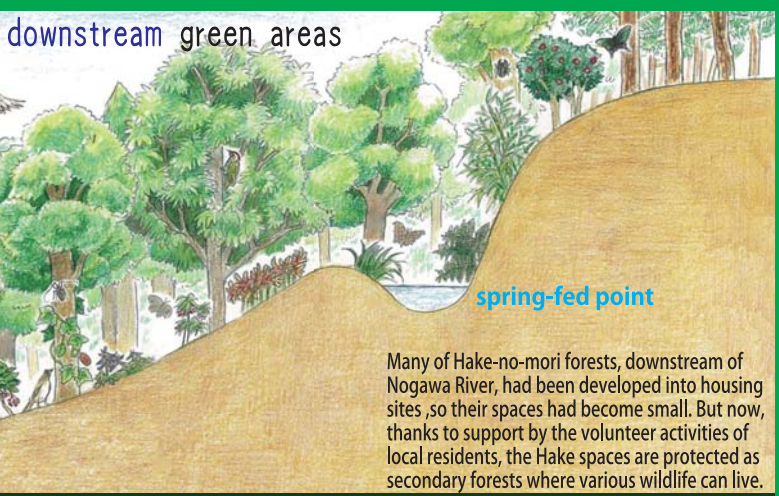
Overwinter in adult state. Patches on back vary in size, in color or in number individually.

Seven-spotted Lady Beetle
• Mar. ~ Nov. • 5.0 ~ 8.6 mm



7 spots on back. Natural enemy of Aphid.

Common Bluebottle (left side), Asian Swallowtail (center), Old World Swallowtail (right corner).



Many of Hake-no-mori forests, downstream of Nogawa River, had been developed into housing sites, so their spaces had become small. But now, thanks to support by the volunteer activities of local residents, the Hake spaces are protected as secondary forests where various wildlife can live.

<p>Long-tailed Tit • Resident • 13.5 cm</p>  <p>Appear in parks with many trees. Flock together, except during breeding season.</p>	<p>Pale Thrush • Winter visitor • 24 cm</p>  <p>Underparts pale brown. Hopping around on the grounds, catch insects and nuts.</p>	<p>Dusky Thrush • Winter visitor • 24 cm</p>  <p>While walking on grass, constantly stop and make a gesture like throwing out chest.</p>	<p>Japanese Bush Warbler • Resident • 15.5 cm</p>  <p>Sing a voice "ho-ho ke-kyo". Appear in bushes such as a bamboo thicket.</p>
<p>Golden Orchid • Bloom Apr. ~ Jun. • Perennial</p>  <p>Grow in forested areas. 3 to 10 flowers in bloom.</p>	<p>Red Heart Lily • Bloom Aug. • Perennial</p>  <p>Poisonous plant. Grow on the sunny places in forest floors.</p>	<p>Golden-rayed Lily • Bloom Jul. ~ Aug. • Perennial</p>  <p>Gorgeous beauty looks, and called the "King of Lilies".</p>	<p>Soft Windflower • Bloom Apr. ~ May • Perennial</p>  <p>Japanese name "Nirinsou" means two flowers, but sometimes not have two.</p>
<p>Yellow-spotted Longicorn Beetle • May ~ Nov. • 14 ~ 30 mm</p>  <p>Long antennae on head and light yellow spots on back.</p>	<p>Crown Stink Bug • Jun. ~ Aug. • 17 ~ 20 mm</p>  <p>Beautiful adult. Suck nectar from nuts or fruits, including Jolcham Oak, and Japanese Snowbell.</p>	<p>Exechesops leucopis • Jun. ~ Aug. • 3.5 ~ 5.5 mm</p>  <p>Also called "Ushi-zura-higenaga" weevil, means cow-face like. Swarm on the fruits of Japanese Snowbell.</p>	<p>Land Snails <i>Euhadra peliomphala</i> • Apr. ~ Nov. • Shell-diameter about 19 mm</p>  <p>Dextral shell. Most have clear lines on shells.</p>
<p>Beetle • Jun. ~ Aug. • 32 ~ 53 mm</p>  <p>Come to Sawtooth Oak and other oak trees for sap at night.</p>	<p>Little Stag Beetle • May ~ Sep. • 17 ~ 54 mm</p>  <p>Hide in foot of trees and in soil during the day. Begin to act after dark.</p>	<p>Sawtooth Stag Beetle • Jun. ~ Sep. • 39 ~ 71 mm</p>  <p>Feature big long mandibles. Often rest high in trees.</p>	<p>Mammals Japanese Raccoon Dog • 40 ~ 50 cm</p>  <p>Mainly active at night. Omnivore and eat just about anything.</p>