



このほかにもホントウアカヒゲ(国内希 少野生動植物種、国指定天然記念物) カラスバト(国指定天然記念物)、アマミ ヤマシギ(国内希少野生動植物種、県指 定天然記念物をはじめ、約40種の野鳥(留 鳥)がやんばるの森に生息しています。

日本最大の甲虫・ヤンバルテナガコガ ネ(国内希少野生動植物種、国指定天然 記念物)が発見されたのは1983年です。 形態に原始的な特徴を残しているこの甲 虫は、約100万年前に、沖縄が中国大陸と 陸続きだった時代に渡ってきたと推測され ています。このほか天然記念物に指定さ れている昆虫にはコノハチョウ、フタオチ ョウなどがいます。これらの近縁種が台湾 にも生息しており、東南アジアに起源を ベス島に、近い仲間が生息すると言わ

やんばるの森では両生類や爬虫類もよ く見られますが、これらの中には島の成り 立ちと深い関係をもつものもいます。イ ボイモリ(県指定天然記念物)は、やんば るのほかに渡嘉敷島、徳之島、奄美大島 にも生息していますが、外国では中国南 西部とヒマラヤ東部に生息することが知 られています。このことからイボイモリは、 沖縄と中国大陸が陸続きであったことを 証明する「生きた化石」といえるものです。

すが、このうちの10種がやんばるに生息です。 しています。なかでもイシカワガエル(県 指定天然記念物)は日本でもっとも美し い大型のカエルで、やんばるの山地の渓 流に生息しています。このほかナミエガ エル、ホルストガエルも県の天然記念物 に指定されています。

やんばるの森や渓流の近くでよくみら れるリュウキュウヤマガメ(国指定天然 記念物)も古い時代に大陸から渡ってき た生き物です。

[I]固有種の宝庫ーやんばる Living Creatures in the Subtropical Broad-leaved Evergreen Forests

沖縄でもっとも恐れられている生き物 といえば毒蛇のハブでしょう。血清が開 発される以前は、多くの人が咬まれて命 を落としました。ハブも大昔に台湾や中 国から渡って来ました。

ケナガネズミとトゲネズミは、奄美大島、 徳之島、やんばるの山地森林だけに生息 する固有種で、国の天然記念物に指定さ れています。近い仲間は日本本土や台湾・ 中国では見られず、ケナガネズミはスマ トラ島、セレベス島に、トゲネズミはセレ れています。

多くの貴重な生き物がすむやんばる の森は、植物の種類も多様性に富んで います。面積的には日本本土の1000分 の1程度しかないやんばるには、帰化植 物もふくめて1250種余りの植物が自生 しています。そのうちやんばる固有種は オリヅルスミレ、コバノミヤマノボタン、 オキナワセッコクなど約20種、やんばるを 分布の北限とする植物が50種余り、南 限とするものが約20種生育しています。これ 日本国内には約40種のカエルがいま らのほとんどは絶滅の危機にある貴重な植物

オキナワセッコク Okinawa-sekkoku; Dendrobium okinawense Diolothrix Jesata カキナフトゲネズミ Kenaga-nezumi;Ryukyu long-tailed giant rat, Diolothrix Jesata Diolothrix Jesata Diolothrix Jesata Diolothrix Jesata

(1) A Treasure House of Indigenous Species

There is an expanse of pasania tree (*Castanopsis cuspidata var. sieboldii*) forest in the northern part of the main island of Okinawa. Known as Yambaru, this broadleaved evergreen forest is the home to many indigenous species.

Typical of the living creatures in Yambaru is the Noguchi-gera (Pryer's woodpecker; *Sapheopipo noguchii*). In Japanese, the bird's name is that of a collector (Noguchi). It was recorded as a new species in 1887. It was discovered that the Pryer's woodpecker is the sole specimen of its genus and species, and that it lives only in Yambaru. It has been designated a National Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and a National Specified Protected Animal of Japan.

The Yambaru-kuina (Okinawa rail; *Rallus okinawae*), discovered in 1981, is a bird of the mud hen family that also lives only in Yambaru and has also been designated a National Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and a National Protected Animal. Though the bird can barely fly, it is said that the reason it has survived until now is that no predatory mammals, such as wildcats, have lived in the area.

In addition to these, about 40 species of wild birds also live in Yambaru. These include the Hontou-akahige (Ryukyu robin: *Erithacus komadori namiyei*), the Karasubato (Japanese wood pigeon: *Columba janthina*), and the Amami-yamashigi (Amami woodcock: *Scolopax mira*).

Japan's largest beetle, the Yambaru-tenaga-kogane (Yambaru long-armed scarab beetle: *Cheirotonus jambar*) was discovered in 1983. Primitive characteristics still remain in this beetle's form. It is thought that the beetle came from China when Okinawa was still attached to the Chinese landmass about one million years ago. The Konohachou (orange oakleaf butterfly; *Kallima inachus*) and the Futao-chou (great nawab but-

terfly; *Polyura eudamippus*) are beautiful butterflies. These two closely related species also are found in Taiwan. The origins of these butterflies are thought to lie in Southeast Asia. These birds and insects are protected animals.

Many amphibians and reptiles can be seen in the Yambaru forest. Of these, there are some that are closely related to the island's origins. The Ibo-imori (Anderson's pustuled newt; *Tylotorion andersoni*) also lives on Tokashiki Island, Tokunoshima Island, and Amamioshima Island. It is also known to live overseas in the southwestern part of China and the eastern part of the Himalayas. This "living fossil" is evidence that Okinawa and the Chinese mainland were connected in prehistoric times.

There are about 40 species of frogs in Japan, and of these, 10 species live in Yambaru. Living in mountain streams, the Ishikawa-gaeru (Ishikawa's frog; *Rana ishikawae*) is the most beautiful large frog in Japan. In addition, the Namie-gaeru (Namie's frog; *Rana namiyei*) and the Horusuto-gaeru (Holst's frog; *Rana holsti*) are also endemic and protected species.

The Ryukyu-yamagame (Ryukyu black-breasted leaf tortoise; *Geoemy japonica*), a popular animal in the Yambaru forest, is often found in the forests of mountainous areas and near mountain streams. This creature also came from Asia in ancient times.

The most feared creature in Okinawa is the poisonous snake known as the Habu (*Trimeresurus flavovilidis*). Before an antidote was discovered, many people perished after being bitten by the snake. The Habu also came from China and Taiwan in ancient times.

The Kenaga-nezumi (long-tailed giant rat; *Diplothrix legata*) and the Toge-nezumi (hard-quill-like-haired rat: *Tokudaia osi-mensisi*) are endemic species that live only

on Amamioshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, and in the mountain forests of Yambaru. They also have been designated National Protected Animals. Close relatives of these creatures are not seen on the main Japanese islands, in Taiwan, or China. Close relatives of the Kenaga-nezumi are said to live on Sumatra and in the Celebes, while close relatives of the Toge-nezumi are said to live in the Celebes.

Many valuable creatures live in Yambaru, and the plant life in the forest is also richly diverse. In area, the forest is equivalent to just 1/1000th of the land area of the main Japanese islands, but more than 1,250 plant species, including naturalized species, grow there. Of these, about 20 species are indigenous to Yambaru, including the Orizurusumire (Viola stoloniflora), the Kobanomivama-nobotan (Bredia okinawensis), and the Okinawa-sekkoku (Dendrobium okinawense). More than 50 species of plants in Yambaru are considered to be growing at the northern limit of their range. Another 20 species are found growing at their southern range limit. Many of these valuable plants are on the verge of extinction.





モテヤマネコの祖先は、琉球列島がア

ンガルヤマネコなどによって追われ、ア

ジア大陸の東縁部に移動し、その後の

地殻変動によって西表島にとり残された

と考えられています。その後、イリオモテ

重な動物です。

的にも注目されています。

この原始の森にすむ代表的な生き物 といえばイリオモテヤマネコで、国内希 少野生動植物と国の特別天然記念物 に指定されています。世界で西表島だ けに生息しているこの動物が発見され たのは、今からわずか35年前の1965年 のことです。1967年に新属新種のヤマ ネコとして発表され、動物学会では「世 紀の大発見」とまでいわれました。イリオ ジア大陸と陸続きになっていたころ、ベ

イリオモテヤマネコ Iriomite-yamaneko;Iriomote Cat, Felis iriomotensis





セマルハコガメ Semaru-hako-game; Yellow-marginated box tortoise, Cuora flavomarginata evelynae



カンムリワシ Kanmuri-washi ; Crested serpent eagle, Spilornis chella perplexus

apan's final frontier is Iriomote. Nicknamed the "Amazon of Japan", Iriomote is an island on which nature still exists in its primitive state. There is a range of mountains on Iriomote 350 to 400 meters high, including Mt. Komi and Mt. Goza. There are also several rivers, such as the Nakama and the Urauchi, in which you can go upstream several kilometers from the river's mouth by boat. The topography is complex, with a diverse natural environment.

Many endemic plant species grow here, including the Iriomote-gaya (Chikusichloa brachyanthera) and the Ryukyu-kijinoo (Plagiogyria koidzumii). There are also some endemic species common to Ishigaki Island, including the Sakishima-horagoke (Cephalomanes atrovirens) and the Yaeyama-toranoo (Polystichum yaeyamense). The Hime-yoraku-hiba(Lycopodium salvinioides), the Hime-tsuru-adan (Freycinetia willamsii), and others, are thought to live here at the northern limit of their range.

In the forests where such subtropical broad-leaved evergreens as the pasania tree, the Tabunoki (Persea thunbergii), and the Okinawa-urajiro-gashi (Quercus miyagii) grow thick, the plants are interwoven with vines, and there are such epiphytes as ferns and orchids. There are also rare plants such as the Konishi-inubiwa (Ficus variegata) with its fruit attached directly to its thick stems and trunks, and the Sakishima-suounoki (Heritiera littoralis), whose flat, plateshaped roots are said to have been used as boat rudders in the past. Meanwhile, in the primary downstream area, there is Japan's largest mangrove forest, with such plants as the Yaeyama-hirugi (Rhizophora stylosa), the O-hirugi (Bruguiera gymnorrhiza), and the Me-hirugi (Kandelia candel).

The Iriomote-yamaneko (Iriomote Cat; Felis iriomotensis) is the most well-known animal that lives in this primitive forest. It

has been designated a National Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and a National Protected Animal. This cat, which lives only on Iriomote Island, was discovered only 35 years ago, in 1965. In 1967, it was announced that it had been classified as a new genus and species, and the Zoological Society hailed it as a major discovery of the

It is theorized that the ancestor of the Iriomote Cat was driven to the eastern edge of the Asian continent by leopard cats and other animals when the Ryukyu Archipelago was still connected to the Asian landmass. It was later stranded on Iriomote due to movements of the earth's crust. Since then, the Iriomote Cat has lived on the island for more than three million years.

The external appearance of the Iriomote Cat resembles that of the Tsushima Cat (Felis bengalensis euptilura) found on Tsushima Island, as well as the Taiwan Cat found in Taiwan and the central part of China. Therefore, it had been thought to be related to the leopard cat. There are about 40 species of the cat family throughout the world today, and the Iriomote Cat is undoubtedly the one distributed over the smallest area and the most valuable in the world.

Many other wild creatures live on Iriomote Island in the same habitat as the Iriomote Cat. These include the Kishinoue-tokage(Kishinoue's lizard: Eumeces kishinouvei). the Semaru-hako-game (yellow-marginated box tortoise; Cuora flavomarginata evelynae), and the Kanmuri-washi (crested serpent eagle; Spilornis chella perplexus). Their academic value is recognized throughout the world.