

A WORD ABOUT WILDLIFE

We camp in well used areas, well populated by humans. This is a safe environment for camping. But it helps to be forewarned. Please be aware of the following creature cautions.

1. Mosquitoes. Large and Hungry. Don't forget your bug spray.
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2. Crows. Likewise, Large and Hungry. Do not leave any food sitting out on a table, and do not leave bags of garbage lying around unattended. Deposit trash in sealed garbage cans provided at the site.
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3. Snakes. There are several varieties of snakes in Japan. Two are poisonous. They are easily frightened of noises and tend to avoid humans. Still, it is important to take precautions. Do not allow your children to play in, or look for firewood in, tall grasses or patches/piles of bamboo. This is where snakes live. If you see a snake, assume that it is poisonous. Do not play with it. Do not even hang around to observe it. Tell one of your leaders. Fortunately, the bites of these snakes are not fatal, but will be very, very painful.
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4. Tanuki badgers. They can be seen scouring for food near the garbage cans. The best way to avoid them turning up in your campsite is to put garbage where it belongs. Do not leave any food items outside, particularly at night (they are nocturnal animals), and do not store food in your tent. All food should be secured in tightly closed containers or better yet, in your car. If a tanuki should come into your campsite, do not accost the animal. Stay in your tent until the animal moves on. They are afraid of noises and generally avoid humans. If you go out of your tent at night, please be sure to carry your flashlight or a lantern with you, for all kinds of safety reasons, including avoiding surprise contact with wildlife such as a tanuki.
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5. Hornets. Hornets' nests sometimes are found under the eaves at the roof level of buildings. Their stings can be very very painful. Avoid the nests. Do not allow children to play near them or poke them with sticks.
6. Delightful animals. The hills of Japan are full of songbirds, including all sorts of warblers and nightingales. Owls can be heard at night from time to time. This is particularly wonderful for those who wish to hear bird calls in the early morning and at dusk. There are many kinds of butterflies, lizards and toads. Encourage your children to observe, but not to injure or kill, birds, butterflies, toads, or insects.