



JAPANESE DWARF FLYING SQUIRREL

Pteromys momonga

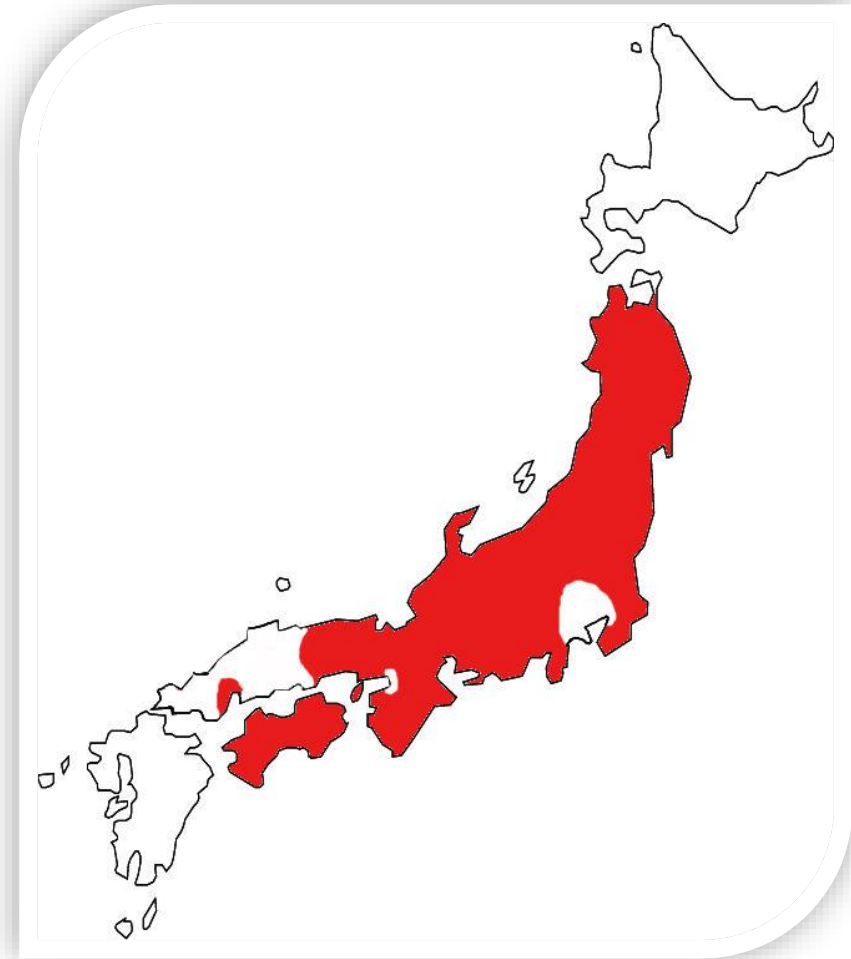
DESCRIPTION

- The Japanese Dwarf Flying Squirrel, or Ezo Flying Squirrel, is a small creature native to Japan. They are usually a length of around fourteen to twenty centimetres, and weigh around 170 grams.
- The Japanese Dwarf Flying Squirrel also has a membrane running from its wrists to its ankles, that allows it to glide around the forests, what it's famous for.
- It has a range of colours, from chocolate browns to greys, and is a rare but cute sight when trekking through Japanese forests.



HABITAT

- The Japanese Dwarf Flying Squirrel is native to Japan, and primarily lives in temperate climates, such as sub-alpine and boreal evergreen forests.
- It can usually be found scurrying around trees on Honshu and Kyushu islands.
- They are mostly arboreal, meaning above ground, and glide from tree to tree with ease.
- They are thought to have originated in Japan 18-20 million years ago.



BEHAVIOUR

- The Japanese Dwarf Flying Squirrel is nocturnal, only coming out to forage for food at dusk.
- Nests are typically shared either by breeding pairs and their young, or, not during mating season, by multiple individuals of the same sex.
- While they do not hibernate, the flying squirrel is known to occasionally sleep for several days in the Winter months.
- They live in small families, a group being known as a scurry, and seem to communicate via chattering and clicking sounds.
- Their fluffy tail also balances them when they jump, or glide, from tree to tree, acting as an air brake.



DIET



- The Japanese Dwarf Flying Squirrel is a herbivore, eating primarily nuts, but occasionally buds, tree bark, and fruits, and even less commonly, insects.
- Rather than explore to find all their food, the Japanese Dwarf Flying Squirrel is actually known to hang upside-down in trees, munching simply on whatever is within reach. For this reason, they are known as quite lazy creatures!
- When unable to reach foods even with their arms, they also have a habit of grabbing sticks and spearing fruits to chomp on.



PREDATORS



- Not much is known about the ins-and-outs of the Japanese Dwarf Flying Squirrel's life, so no specific predators have been reported. However, because they are quite a typical small mammal, their number one hunter is assumed to be the owl.
- To hide from the dangerous creatures that will eat them if they have the chance, the Flying Squirrel will hide in its tree den all day long apart from when it is required to feed.



YOUNG

- The Japanese Dwarf Flying Squirrel mates twice a year, in the months of May and July. They have a pregnancy period of four weeks. Much is unknown about the specific mating rituals of these squirrels, but it does seem that during this period the female will rest in the burrow and the male will collect food for the coming young.
- A litter will typically have up to five pups, which will start to eat solid food at six weeks. They will live with their mothers until this time, and then will be sent off to live on their own, before the next mating season.



LIFESPAN

- The lifespan of the Japanese Dwarf Flying Squirrel is from four to fifteen years. Because they are such a little-known species, they do not have an official population number, nor an estimated one, but even though they are a rare sighting in Japanese woods, the ICUN has found no major threats, so they are classified as a least concern.



- Almost done... now that you (hopefully) know what a Japanese Flying Dwarf Squirrel is, it's time for a quiz!



QUIZ!



- Question One: What country are the Dwarf Squirrels native to?
- Answer: Japan!
- Question Two: What months do the Japanese Dwarf Flying Squirrels mate?
- Answer: May and July!
- Question Three: What is a group of Japanese Flying Squirrels called?
- Answer: A scurry!



■ Thanks for listening!

