

Special Natural Monument : Japanese Giant Salamander, “*Hanzaki*”

Classification : Amphibian. Giant Salamander

Species Name : Giant Salamander (Hanzaki)

Scientific Name : *Andrias japonicus*

English Name : *Japanese Giant Salamander*

Designated : Nationally Protected Species

Ministry of the Environment Red List :

Grade 2 Endangered Species (rare species)

Okayama Prefectural Red List : Grade 1 Endangered Species



The Japanese Giant Salamander (Hanzaki) is an amphibian (similar to frogs and newts), and lives predominantly in clear streams in the mountainous regions of the Chugoku and Kinki regions of Japan.

It is known as the “Chugoku Giant Salamander”, and as the largest species of salamander in the world.

They are also known as “living fossils”, thanks to a close resemblance in looks to the giant salamanders of roughly 350 million years ago, and skeletal resemblances to fossils from 23 million years ago.

The Giant Salamander has high value in terms of scientific discovery, and as it is one of the representative animals of Japan, it was designated a Nationally Important Species in 1952, and thus is protected through various laws, such as the protection of cultural treasures law.

The north of Maniwa City, which includes Yubara, has been nationally designated an important breeding ground for the Giant Salamander, and does not only protect the giant salamanders themselves, but also their habitat.

