

# Japanese Ratsnake

Ao-Daishou

## Scientific name

Elaphe climacophora

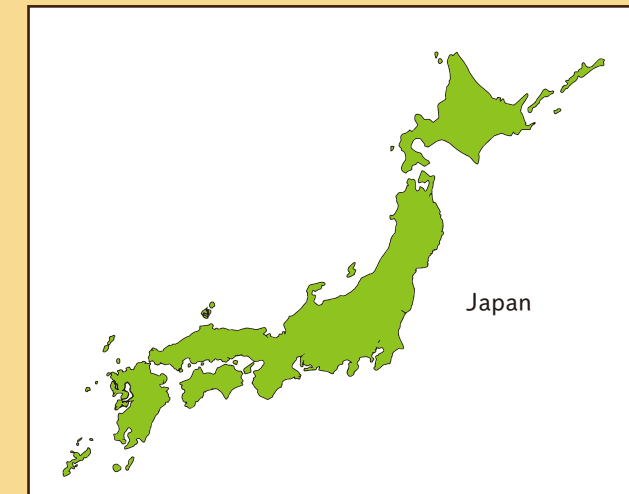
## Classification

Serpentes, Colubridae

## Distribution

Japan (Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, Kyushu.

The southern limit of the distribution is Tokara Islands, Kuchinoshima Island.



## Feeding Habits

Adult snakes eat small birds and their eggs and small mammals such as mice and rats, and the juveniles eat amphibians such as frogs, reptiles such as lizards.

## Characteristics

The total length reaches about 100-200 cm in adults. The juvenile has mottled pattern, it is completely differs from adults in the appearance. It is considered to be protected from the predators because the mottled pattern is resemble similar to Mamushi (Japanese pit viper) .

This mottled pattern disappears when it becomes adult.

## Behavior and ecology

It inhabits cultivated lands and near human houses from flatlands to low mountains. Most preferring to inhabit around human houses, and mainly eating small rodents such as mice and rats, so it is beneficial creatures for humans. They mate from May to June and lay about 4 to 17 eggs from July to August. The whitened individuals (albino) are numerously found around Iwakuni, Yamaguchi, they are called "Shiro-hebi"(it means white snakes), they are designated as a national natural monument.