

## **Meet Wild Flying Squirrels at Picchio's "Flying Squirrel Watching Tour"**

(Picchio Wildlife Research Center, Karuizawa, Nagano)

**Nightfall is the door to the unseen world of “Musasabi”(Japanese giant flying squirrels).**

Picchio Wildlife Research Center, established in 1992, is located in the Karuizawa Wild Bird Sanctuary, and is part of the vast realm of the Karuizawa Hoshino Area managed by Hoshino Resorts. Picchio has been hosting various eco tours that explore the fauna and flora in the area, and the “Flying Squirrel Watching Tour” is conducted since 1995 to reveal the secret nocturnal life of *Musasabi*, a species of giant flying squirrels that is native to Japan. This year the tour will be held from March 15th through November 30th, and is guided by the professional naturalists at Picchio, who have in-depth knowledge about the nature and habitat of flying squirrels. The probability of meeting up with a flying squirrel is over 90%.



### **Get to know about flying squirrels in theory and practice**

Tour participants will meet up at the lodge around sunset to join the 90 minute tour. The first half of the tour is the lecture that walks through the anatomy and habits of the flying squirrels, and of course tips will be shared to find them in the dark. Once the lecture is over, tour participants will head to one of the wooden houses the Picchio team has built for flying squirrels. A camera installed inside the nest will live stream a squirrel warming up for its night time gliding. A flying squirrel will start poking its head out of its nest to prepare for a launch, and tour participants will quietly step into the forest in a tight group to search for a flying squirrel. *Musasabi* is one of the largest species of flying squirrels in the world, and it will be an exceptional moment to witness it gliding through the air. Tour participants will receive a tour certificate proving they have witnessed a flying squirrel during the tour. **Fee** (tax included): Adult 3,300yen (junior high school age and over) / Elementary school age 2,500yen / Age limit of 4 or older.

### **About Picchio**

Picchio is a non-profit organization dedicated to sustain the ecosystem of the Karuizawa Wild Bird Sanctuary. The activities include wildlife research, nature conservation, bear management, and eco tours. Picchio won the Grand Prize of Japan's 1st Ecotourism Award (Ministry of the Environment, 2005).

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