



## Slick simian outsmarts 150 riot police, 7 traps

Yomiuri Shimbun

Shimosuwamachi residents were questioning which was the smarter Saturday when a simian serial attacker eluded 150 riot police dispatched to capture it.

The monkey attacked 23 women in the town early last week, and girls there have taken to wearing long pants in case it strikes again.

Authorities set up patrols to nab the monkey, believed to be a Japanese macaque, and about 20 officials patrolled areas in the town on Saturday. But despite the beefed-up security, which included the emergency dispatch Thursday of riot police officers, the monkey was still at large Saturday evening.

With the dragnet a failure, residents have been quick to compare the intelligence of the police officers and town officials with that of the monkey. For its part, the municipal government claims it is hard-pressed to prevent further attacks by the monkey.

The suspected macaque, an imposing 70 centimeters tall, first came to attention in October, when it was seen stealing food from households. On Monday and Tuesday, however, it attacked 23 women, most aged over 50. It bit the legs of at least seven of the women.

On Thursday, the police set a trap to ensnare the monkey in a net normally used to hold deer, but the monkey did not show up. The police then set six more traps, baited with apples, throughout the town.

Meanwhile, the police have asked girls at a middle school in the area to wear pants to minimize possible damage if the monkey attacks them.

All students at the school have been told to carry an umbrella even on fine days and use it to scare off the monkey, if it approaches them.

Asked why the monkey targeted women, Shigeyuki Izumiyama, head of a division in the Wild Life Management Office in Shiojiri in the prefecture that studies highland species, said, "I think you can tell from the way it attacked these women that it pounces on people for fun."

Michael Huffman, associate professor of Kyoto University's Primate Research Institute in Inuyama, Aichi Prefecture, said he did not believe the monkey attacked women for sexual reasons, but because it thought they did not look as strong as it was.



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