

Osteology and Ecology of Otter from Pleistocene to the Present in Japan

Nobuo Naora
commented by Hideji Harunari

This paper presents the study of otters from Japan by the late Dr. NAORA (1902-1985), an excellent paleontologist, archaeologist and naturalist.

Otters lived throughout Japan until approximately sixty years ago. The otter may live in Kochi prefecture since otter droppings have been found.

The first is the description on the fossilized otter remains (Fig. 1 and Tab. 1) found from the Middle Pleistocene cave deposits in Matsugae of Fukuoka prefecture. The new species under the name of *Lutra nipponica* (NAORA, 1968) differs from the recent otters (Fig. 3 and 4) of Japan, due to its large body and very characteristic long and straight canines with vertical deep grooves in the upper jaw. This species is unique to Japan.

The second is the descriptions on the otter remains (Fig. 5-5) excavated at the Kamo Jomon site in Chiba prefecture.

Additionally, NAORA was interested in the ecology of recent otters, and observed it in detail in Ohita prefecture and Tokyo about sixty years ago. These records are very valuable today, since Japanese otters has almost become extinct.