

Evidence for a Nest of a Yellowjacket, *Vespula flaviceps* Smith, Being Preyed by a Japanese Marten, *Martes melampus melampus* (Wagner)

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We had an opportunity to examine a dead Japanese marten. We recognized a wasp species in a contents extracted from a stomach of it. Here we report the observation as an evidence that a nest of wasp was actually preyed on by a Japanese marten.

A dead male adult Japanese marten, *Martes melampus melampus* (Wagner), which had been certainly killed by a car, was found on the road in Ohtaki-machi, Chiba Prefecture on 13 July 1994, brought to our Museum, and dissected. Contents of its stomach were extracted, and examined.

We found dead bodies of a wasp in the contents of the stomach. It was identified as *Vespula flaviceps* Smith. We recognized at least 8 pupae (Fig. 1, A) which were pigmented, just before emergence and somewhat damaged, and 10 larvae (Fig. 1, B) which were nearly intact and most of which are at a fifth instar.

It is obvious that the marten attacked the wasp nest and preyed on brood in combs.

Nests of social wasps are considered to be attractive to carnivorous mammals and birds in general (Starr, 1985). But confidential evidences for predation by mammals are absolutely scarce, especially in Japan. Matsuura and Yamane (1984) could show only evidences for brown bear, *Ursus arctos* Linnaeus and Asiatic black bear, *U. thibetanus* (G. Cuvier) as predators for three vespine species, not including the present species, in Japan. *Vespula flaviceps* Smith usually builds a nest in soils (Matsuura and Yamane, 1984), so the marten probably dug up the nest and preyed the brood in it. We think this is a first unambiguous record of a nest of vespine wasps being preyed by a Japanese marten in Japan.

References

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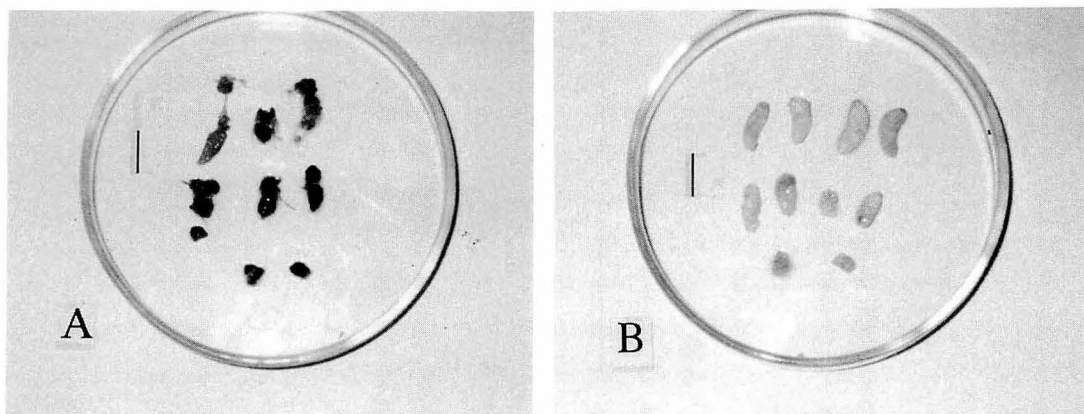


Fig. 1. Dead bodies of a yellowjacket, *Vespula flaviceps* Smith, found in the contents of the stomach of a Japanese marten, *Martes melampus melampus* (Wagner). A, pupae; B, larvae. A scale is 10 mm.

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クロスズメバチの巣がニホンテンに よって補食された証拠

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死んで解剖されたニホンテンの胃の中からクロスズ
メバチの蛹 8 頭と幼虫 10 頭が発見された。これはク
ロスズメバチの巣がニホンテンにより襲われ、巣盤に
入った蛹および幼虫が補食されたことを示す最初の明
確な記録である。