

Short Report

Japanese marten, *Martes melampus melampus*, first camera-trapped in an urban residential area in Okayama City, western Japan

Hiroyuki TAKASAKI^{1*}

Abstract: A camera trap recorded a Japanese marten for the first time in an urban residential area in Okayama City, western Japan. It is an unlikely location to expect occurrence of the species.

The Japanese marten (*Martes melampus melampus*) is listed as a game animal (<https://www.env.go.jp/nature/choju/hunt/hunt2.html>; retrieved October 4, 2021) with no threatened species status in Japan (Ministry of the Environment Red List 2020, Mammals; <https://www.env.go.jp/press/files/jp/114457.pdf>; downloaded October 4, 2021). Egi et al. (2011) and Okayama Prefecture Wildlife Survey Study Group (2019) recorded the species to inhabit forest and wooded areas in many municipalities from north to south in the prefecture despite the not amply sampled data due to unsuccessful trapping and difficult direct observation. However, as expected from the long known natural habitat of this species, it unlikely appears in urban populated residential areas.

Originally, a camera trap (TREL 20J, GISupply, Inc.) was set up to monitor Japanese badgers (*Meles anakuma*) in a house backyard in Tsushima-Niino, Kita-ku, Okayama City. The place was roughly between Okayama University Tsushima Campus and Okayama Prefectural Multipurpose Grounds [see Fig. 1 in Takasaki (2022)]. The backyard (10 m × 6 m in area, a flat terrain, 5 m a.s.l.) has shrubs in the hedge and stands of four naturally grown trees with diameters over 25 cm at breast height. The camera trap has been set there since July 17, 2021, with biweekly replacement of the SD card for recording. The water tray (30 cm width, 21 cm length, 6 cm height) was set to attract animals and birds to record by the camera trap since July 29.

The camera recorded a male marten drinking from a water tray on August 30, 31, September 1, 10, and 19, 2021 (Fig. 1). The photos and video clips showed the overall shape and size of the animal as well as the proportions of its body, limbs,

and tail in comparison with the water tray led to the unflinching identification of the species. A video clip on August 31 recorded a view of scrotum on the animal to sex it to be a male. A forested area around Mt. Handayama (peak 152 m a.s.l.), Mt. Daimisen (peak 160 m a.s.l.) and the campus of Okayama University of Science, where martens have been known to inhabit (Kobayashi pers. comm., Nakamoto pers. comm.), lie about 1-2 km northwest to northeast of the backyard.

Although dry and shrunken droppings suspected of the species, difficult to clearly distinguish from those of the Siberian weasel (*Mustela sibirica coreana*) in the same Mustelidae, have been noticed in the neighborhood (unpublished data), the occurrence of this species was confirmed in this area for the first time.



Fig. 1. A male marten drinking from a shallow water tray on September 1, 2021, in a house backyard. Located in western half of Tsushima-Niino in urban Okayama City, i.e. near the area overlaid by the lettering of 'Tsushima' in "Tsushima-Niino" in Fig. 1 in Takasaki (2022).

¹ Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, Okayama University of Science, 1-1 Ridai-cho, Kita-ku, Okayama-shi, Okayama, 700-0005, Japan. 岡山理科大学理学部動物学科, 〒700-0005 岡山県岡山市北区理大町1-1.

*Correspondence: Hiroyuki TAKASAKI, Email: takasaki@zool.ous.ac.jp

References

- Egi, H., Yamada, M., Tokuda, N. & Yamamoto, M. (2011) Records and distribution of the mammals in Okayama Prefecture. *Bulletin of Okayama Prefectural Nature Conservation Center* 18: 1-35 (in Japanese).
- Okayama Prefecture Wild Fauna and Flora Survey Study Group (2019) Okayama Prefecture Wild Fauna and Flora List 2019. Nature Environment Division, Environment and Culture Department, Okayama Prefecture (in Japanese).
- Takasaki, H. (2022) A *Meles anakuma* mother and two cubs appeared in an urban Okayama City area for three months in summer 2021. *Naturalistae* 26: 1-6.

高崎浩幸:岡山市街地住宅でホンドテンをカメラトラップ初記録**要約**

岡山市の市街地住宅(岡山市北区津島新野)でホンドテンをカメラトラップで初記録した。岡山大学津島キャンパスと岡山県立総合運動公園の間に位置し、テンの生息が容易に想定できる場所ではない。

(Accepted 28 October 2021)