

## Obituary

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### Memories of Dr. Morizumi Nakamura (1914–1998)

On 19 January 1998, Dr. Morizumi Nakamura, a native Tokyoite, born in Komagome, Tokyo, on 1 September 1914, passed away peacefully. In 1990 he was first hospitalized for cerebral infarction. Hospitalized again from February 1997 for similar treatment, he eventually succumbed to pneumonia.

Dr. Nakamura edited vols. 1 to 20 of *Japanese Journal of Ichthyology*, from 1950 to 1973. He served as President of the Ichthyological Society of Japan from 1976 to 1978 and from 1982 to 1984. From 1990 he was an honorary member of that society. From 1959, until his retirement in 1969, he served as the Director of the Fish Section in the National Science Museum, Tokyo. Dr. Nakamura was a leading specialist in the taxonomy, ecology and life history of freshwater fishes, especially Cyprinidae, publishing more than 300 accounts on freshwater fishes.

As a boy, Morizumi Nakamura had a deep fascination for fish and subsequently entered the Imperial Fisheries Institute (now Tokyo University of Fisheries). Whilst in his third year at the Institute, he wrote his first paper, *Tide-pool fishes found around the Kominato Training Station* (Yoshokukai-shi, 4(10), 1934), under the guidance of Dr. Kiyomatsu Matsubara, then a teaching assistant. Thereafter he wrote no more papers on marine fishes.

In 1936, upon graduating from the Institute, he took up a position with the Shiga Prefectural Fisheries Experimental Station under the recommendation of Dr. Yaichiro Okada and in 1942, transferred to the Research Institute for Natural Resources (merged with the National Science Museum in 1969). He began his studies on the life histories of cyprinid fishes at this time but unfortunately all his data plus specimens which he had been collecting for some nine years were lost in a fire caused by aerial attacks carried out shortly before the end of World War II.

Starting again from scratch, he accumulated life history data of 53 species/subspecies of Japanese cyprinid fishes. This culminated with his being conferred with the degree of Dr. Agr. from Kyushu Uni-



Dr. Morizumi Nakamura in 1979.

versity (1960) under the guidance of Dr. Keitaro Uchida. Nine years later, he published his doctoral dissertation as a book, *Cyprinid fishes of Japan: studies on the life history of cyprinid fishes of Japan* (Research Institute for Natural Resources, Tokyo, 1969), for which he was subsequently (1974) awarded the Japan Agriculture Prize for excellence. In all, he wrote some forty papers on cyprinid life history studies, traveling all over Japan to collect data. Not having the use of sophisticated underwater equipment, and being hampered by transportation limitations, Dr. Nakamura was nevertheless able to successfully collect a wealth of data, much to the admiration of his colleagues.

In 1963 Dr. Nakamura published the first picture book of live freshwater fishes in Japan, *Keys to the freshwater fishes of Japan fully illustrated in color* (Hokuryukan, Tokyo, 1963). He also co-authored some fifty books, including textbooks and encyclopedias, and wrote more than 200 articles for magazines related to science, nature and the protection of the natural environment. These attest to his unflagging zeal toward the protection of freshwater fishes and his belief in the need for public enlightenment in such matters.

Dr. Nakamura was involved in the investigation of

the Tone River, prior to the construction of a dam along its lower course, seeking to determine the likely effects of such on the river fish fauna. Some twenty submissions resulted from this and other, similar, investigations, all being critical of the proposed river development programs. Referring to a dam construction project for the lower Nagara River, he opposed it, stating "The river should be preserved for ayu, an amphidromous fish."

All of the specimens collected by Dr. Nakamura from all over Japan, some 1.2 million fresh and brackishwater fishes representing 241 species/subspecies, are now deposited in the National Science Museum. These are currently listed in a database computerized by Drs. Keiichi Matsuura and Ryoichi Arai, and have been documented in a five volume catalog (*Catalog of the freshwater fish collection in the National Science Museum (Natural History Institute), Tokyo: fish specimens deposited in the Former Research Institute for Natural Resources (Shigenkagaku Kenkyusho), pts 1-5*, National Science Museum, Tokyo, 1992-1996). The specimens remain accessible to the public and scientific community.

In 1964, Dr. Nakamura had the honor of being elected as a member of the Freshwater Fish Section of the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) (headed by Dr. Robert Rush Miller). He was the only scientist from Japan to have been awarded this honor at that time. He was responsible for the inclusion of "miyakotanago" (*Tanakia tanago*), "ayumodoki" (*Leptobotia curta*) and "nekogigi" (*Coreobagrus ichikawai*) in the "Red

Data Book" (IUCN, 1969), and also strived to have these species and "itansenpara" (*Acheilognathus longipinnis*) designated as domestic precious natural products (in 1974 and 1977). From 1977, he served on the Committee of Basic Investigation for Natural Environment Protection under the sponsorship of the Environment Agency and from 1986, was the chairman of the Brackish and Freshwater Fish Section of the Wildlife Protection Planning Committee. In 1991 he took part in the compilation of the Japanese edition of the "Red Data Book" (Natural Environment Research Center, Tokyo, 1991: compiled by the Environment Agency).

Although never seeking public attention, Dr. Nakamura nevertheless was a tireless worker for public good, devoting much time to serving on governmental and prefectural inland water, water quality and environmental pollution committees. More than just an authority on freshwater fishes, he was an adviser on matters of river management and inland water aquaculture, as well as being an advocate of wildlife protection. His sudden death was a great loss for the Ichthyological Society of Japan.

Dr. Nakamura was expert at sketching fish larvae, although he always considered himself inferior to Dr. Keitaro Uchida, who once referred to the both of them as "fish maniacs." With the passing away of a "fish maniac" such as Dr. Morizumi Nakamura, an era in Japanese Ichthyology has ended.

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## Editorial Notes & Announcements

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### International Conference on the Loaches of the Genus *Cobitis* (and Related Genera)

A forum for all aspects of biology of loaches such as systematics, genetics, distribution, ecology, and conservation will be held from May 31 to June 3, 1999 at the Institute of Vertebrate Biology, Brno, Czech Republic. If you wish to be added to the mail-

ing list for future announcements, please contact with the following persons: Kenji Saitoh, Tohoku National Fisheries Research Institute Hachinohe Branch, Same-machi, Hachinohe 031-0841, Japan (e-mail: <ksaitoh@myg.affrc.go.jp>, TEL: +81-178-33-1500, FAX: +81-178-34-1357); Petr Ráb, Laboratory of Fish Genetics, Institute of Animal Physiology and Genetics, 277 21 Liběchov, Czech Republic (e-mail: <rab@site.cas.cz>, TEL: +420-206-697-024, FAX: +420-206-697-186); Stanislav Lusk, Department of Ichthyology, Institute of Vertebrate Biology, Kvetná 5,