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MORPHOLOGICAL OBSERVATION OF FETUSES AND OVARIES
IN WILD EZO SIKA DEER (*Cervus nippon yezoensis* Heude)

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The present study was carried out to examine the development of fetuses and structures of the ovaries in wild female Ezo Sika deer captured in Ashoro, Onbetsu and Shari, Hokkaido, Japan from July 1988 to August 1990 and in February and April 1992.

Of 49 mature females (estimated age of over 20 months) examined in February and April, 47 (95.9%) were pregnant. The fetuses obtained from pregnant deer in February (estimated at 4 months of pregnancy) had no hair, and their average body weight and length were 544.7g and 33.4cm, respectively. Two of the fetuses were significantly smaller in size with normal development. The presence of these small fetuses suggested that the Ezo Sika deer has a longer breeding season than believed. For 23 fetuses obtained from pregnant deer in April (estimated at 6 months of pregnancy), the average body weight was 2123.7g, and body length was 57.7cm. Twenty-one (91.3%) of them showed body hair.

Accessory corpora lutea were observed in 31 (81.6%) of 38 pregnant females. The pigmented scars were classified histologically into retrograde corpora lutea and atretic follicles. The retrograde corpora lutea were identified histologically even without visible pigmented scars.

From the present study, the average body weight and length of fetuses at 4 and 6 months of pregnancy in Ezo Sika deer were clarified. The effectiveness of histological examination to identify the retrograde corpus luteum was confirmed.