

**Morphological study and taxonomic revision  
of the genus *Nipponocercyon*  
(Coleoptera: Hydrophilidae: Sphaeridiinae)**

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**Abstract.** External morphology and male genitalia of the endemic Japanese genus *Nipponocercyon* Satô, 1963 are examined and the taxonomy of the genus revised based on specimens from nine localities at the islands of Kyushu, Shikoku and Honshu. All examined specimens are found to belong to the same species, *N. shibatai* Satô, 1963, which shows a considerable intraspecific geographic variability in the shape of the preepisternal elevation of the mesothorax, interstitial microsculpture of the mentum, pronotum and elytra and the morphology of the basal portion of the elytra. Two new synonyms of *N. shibatai* are proposed, *N. shibatai oyananum* Nakane, 1968, syn. nov. and *N. monticola* Nakane, 1968, syn. nov. Important diagnostic characters of the genus as well as the intraspecific variability of the above characters are illustrated in line drawings and SEM photographs. Geographic patterns of the variability are discussed.

**Keywords.** Megasternini, *Nipponocercyon*, morphology, taxonomy, intraspecific variability, synonymy, endemics, distribution, islands, Japan, Palaearctic Region

### Introduction

The Japanese endemic megasternine genus *Nipponocercyon* Satô, 1963 was described on the basis of three specimens collected in the leaf litter in the Osaka Prefecture (Japan) by SATÔ (1963), who provided a rather detailed description of the species along with good drawings. Later, NAKANE (1968, 1977) described two additional taxa, *N. shibatai oyananum* Nakane, 1968 and *N. monticola* Nakane, 1968, both based on short series collected in the Nagano and Kanagawa Prefectures, respectively. However, NAKANE'S (1968) descriptions were very brief