



Study on Pleistocene Fossil Cats (Carnivora, Felidae) From a Limestone Cave in Kenting, Southern Taiwan, East Asia

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The limestone cave, Lobster Cave, located in the Kenting National Park of southern Taiwan, is yielding numerous Pleistocene mammalian fossils buried within the continental deposits. In this study, fossil molars of clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) recovered from the same horizon in the cave, were examined.

Three isolated felid molars; p3, p4 and m1, having a series of progressive increase in size, were believed as belonged to the same individual. Traditional linear measurement and two-dimensional geometric morphometric analysis for the occlusal surface outlines have been conducted on the fossil molars; comparisons were also done with the extant clouded leopard.

Results obtained have shown that the cave fossil clouded leopard is closer to the extant clouded leopard in molar characters; but, are slightly larger than the extant ones in their size. Nevertheless, even the clouded leopard in Taiwan was regarded as to have been extinct and its past existence has still been in doubt, the current study revealed that the clouded leopards have inhabited in Taiwan since Pleistocene, and has a larger body size than that of the recent one.