

## **Cestodes of the Korean Peninsula: Past Discoveries and Future Challenges**

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The Korean Peninsula, located on the eastern side of the Asian continent, occupies a critical position both geographically and ecologically. Positioned between Japan, China, and Russia, it was at the center of the Cold War, and some regions remain inaccessible due to ongoing geopolitical issues. The Peninsula is home to diverse environments, from the expansive tidal flats of the Yellow Sea, to the deep waters of the East Sea, and the mountainous terrain created by the Baekdu Mountain Range. Despite its compact size, these diverse environments foster a richness of biological diversity.

Investigations into the cestodes (tapeworms) of the Korean Peninsula only began in earnest at the beginning of the 20th century, with the majority

of studies focusing on parasitic species harmful to humans. As of 2022, based on the National Biological Species List, 125 species of mammals, 550 species of birds, 32 species of reptiles, 28 species of amphibians, and 1337 species of fish have been recorded on the Korean Peninsula. However, in stark contrast to this host diversity, only 38 species of cestodes have been reported. The lack of research collaboration with North Korea further complicates the picture, leaving the cestode fauna of the Peninsula understudied.

In here, I will discuss the history of cestode research on the Korean Peninsula, an overview of the current fauna and taxonomic studies, and the potential for future research in this area.