

Research Activity Report
Supported by “Leading Graduate Program in Primatology and Wildlife Science”

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Affiliation/Position	Wildlife Research Center/D2
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1. Country/location of visit
Field course in Iriomote-Island, Hosted by Ryukyus University Research Center at Iriomote-Island
2. Research project
Field course in Iromote-Island
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2018 Nov. 7 – 2018 Nov. 11
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Prof. Matsuzawa Tetsuro, Prof. Kohshima Shiro, and Prof. Fukushima by PWS
5. Progress and results of your research/activity (You can attach extra pages if needed)
Please insert one or more pictures (to be publicly released). Below each picture, please provide a brief description.
<p>PWS Field Course in Iriomote-Island</p> <p>Japan has a high ecosystem diversity ranging from subarctic forested to sub-tropical islands. This provides a unique opportunity for ecologist and ethologist to study wildlife and evolution. Iriomote island field course was designed to introduce a subtropical ecosystem.</p> <p>As a student interested in the marine habitat, it was my first time to witness the mangrove forest first hand and learn about the different characteristics of the river layers and the root structural difference between the species was very informative.</p> <p>I am also very interested in the conservation of marine habitat and education for the general public as a tool to achieve protection. As a national park protected by the Japanese government, experiencing and learning about the balance between tourism, research and conservation was an excellent lesson for especially people like myself who is interested in providing a platform for such practice for marine animals in Korea.</p> <p>[11/07] Arriving at Iriomote- Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the most significant things emphasized by the host when we first arrived was the method of separating the garbage. Every garbage item created had its place, and we were asked to meticulously divide and categorize the trash as we were not taking the garbage out of the island like the other tourist visiting the island. Like most of the human-created waste, plastic ends up in the ocean and nature harming the wildlife. As the as trash production exponentially expands this practice was an example of a conservation effort that could be implemented to protect the wild and reduce the trash emission. <p>[11/08] Excursion lead by Prof. Kajita and Prof. Naiki</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Urauchi-River cruise and trekking to the waterfall: Group of the students traveled through the Urauchi-River on the cruise and trekked on the riverside up to the waterfall with Prof. Kajita and Prof. Naiki. The two experts taught the students about the different plant species and the history of the forest. We learned how to distinguish between the primary and other forest types by identifying dominant tree species and undergrowth which make up this forest. A helpful guide for this part of the trip was a small handbook with all information ecosystem of Iriomote Island. This book pointed out things to look for on the island. - Visiting Iriomote Wildlife Conservation Center: I was looking forward to learning about the Iriomote cat on the island as a fan. The wildlife conservation center in Iriomote Island presented a history of iriomote cat and the statues of current conservation effort of the animal. The effort put into not only understand the ecology of the animal but to protect the animal was terrific. Also, the data in the wall about the iriomote cat was updated to the recent date, that showed the current works of protecting it, and it was an excellent example for a working conservation center. <p>[11/09] Excursion lead by Prof. Watanabe</p>

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- River kayaking in Nishida-River: The kayaking in the Nishida River was a particularly fun experience to learn about the Nishida-River and the mangrove. Learning from the field is always more exciting, and the kayaking lesson was remarkable. For example, dipping our body into the river to feel the different water temperature on the top and bottom of the river, experiencing the depth of the water as the water curves, and touching the muddy river floor between our toes was an excellent lesson. This followed with an actual explanation such as directly measuring the salinity of the top and bottom layer of the river and cutting the root of different species of mangrove and touching to see the different ways (Image A, B, and C) it evolved to survive on salt water was a memorable lesson.
- Trekking to Sangara waterfall: Going up to the waterfall we were able to see endemic wildlife and experience the drone. Also at the sunset watch, we got to look at and get information on the new drone model. The professor also talked about the way he is using the drone in the future which will include 3D scanning of the mangrove forest to monitor changes throughout the years. This was interesting information as I am also working with drones to draw an underwater map.

[11/10] Excursion lead by Prof. Naruse

- Coral reefs: The introduction lecture to the coral reef was simple, yet informative. Underwater observation of the sea was amazing, and it was one of the live coral reefs I saw. However, it was sad to see so many dead and bleached corals.
- As a group, we explored the research facility ground near the research center in search of the Iriomote cat. We didn't see any traces of the cat, but we saw much wildlife including frog, and bugs (Image F, and G).

[11/11] Departure back to Japan



6. Others

I want to thank the PWS office for organizing and supporting this trip. Also, I want to show my gratitude to Prof. Tetsuro Matsuzawa, and Prof. Kohshima Shiro for supporting and Fukushima Seiko for organizing this trip. I would like to especially thank Prof. Naruse, Prof. Watanabe, Prof. Kajita and Prof. Naiki for giving us a fantastic learning experience, and the students at the research station for helping to make this possible. Lastly, to the students who attended the course with me, thank you for being a great sport during the trip.