

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

2019. 04. 02	
<b>Affiliation/Positio</b>	Wildlife Research Center/D2
<b>Name</b>	Mi Yeon Kim

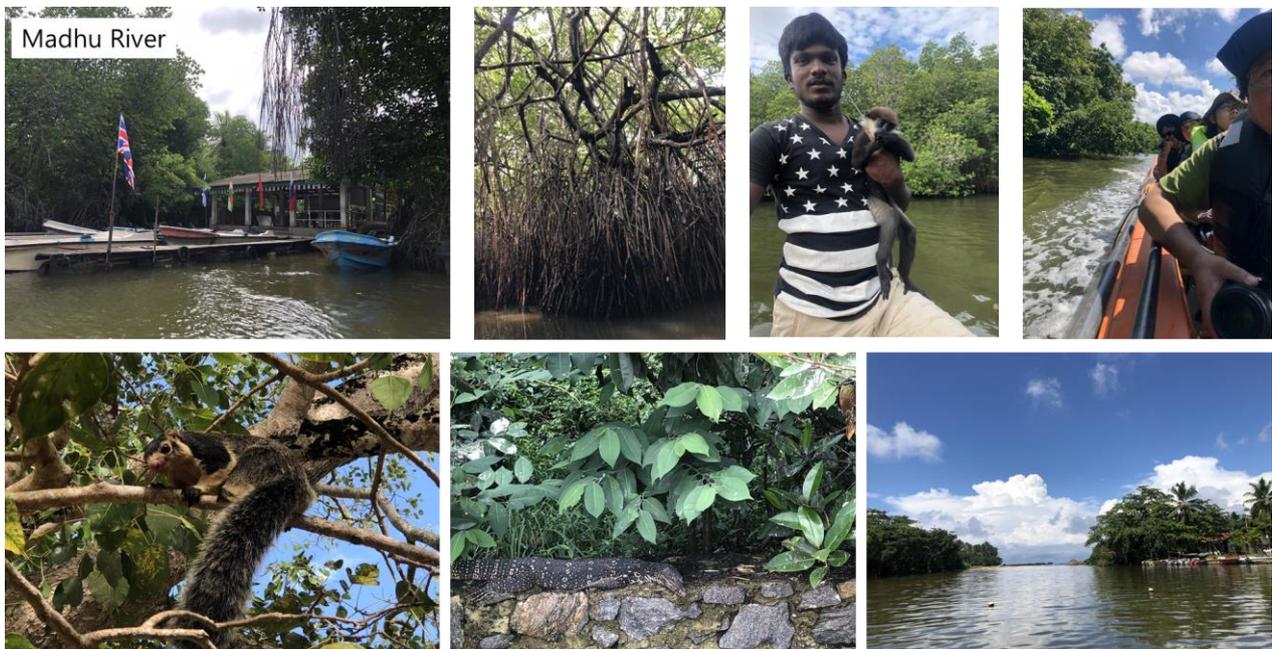
<b>1. Country/location of visit</b>
Sri Lanka
<b>2. Research project</b>
International Training Program on Terrestrial & Aquatic Wildlife and Primate Conservation
<b>3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)</b>
2018 Nov. 17 – 2018 Nov. 29 (13 days)
<b>4. Main host researcher and affiliation</b>
Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka
<b>5. Progress and results of your research/activity</b> (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>International Training Program on Terrestrial/Aquatic Wildlife and Primate Conservation in Sri Lanka were conducted between November 17 and 28. The aim of this project was to learn about the diverse animals that live within the diverse habitat in the island. Experience different field sites and practice field primate research. The experience of visiting the country through the eye of researchers in a similar field was an amazing learning experience.</p> <p><b>The schedule:</b>            11/17-18: Arrival at Colombo            11/19: Inauguration ceremony and orientation            11/20: River safari at Madhu river, Pre-historic archeological site exploration at Fa Hien Cave            11/21: Excursion in the rainforest at Sinharaja Forest Reserve            11/22: Marine ecological study and snorkeling at Rumassala Reef.            11/23: Wildlife Migratory waterbird observation at Bundala National            11/24: Excursion at Horton Plains and World’s End            11/25: Visit ancient rock fortress at Sigiriya            11/26: Primate observation at Mihintale; Closing ceremony.            11/27: Visit Megalithic burial site at Ibbankatuwa; leaving to Colombo            11/28: Free time in Colombo and flight back to Japan</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">    </div>
<p>After arriving at Colombo, Sri Lanka on 18th the students were introduced to the city by visiting the markets and temples. The next day we were also introduced to the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and attended the inauguration ceremony the next day. This was conducted with Sri Lanka traditional welcome ceremony.</p>

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The orientation of the training program was conducted introducing different topics of interest for the program. The variety of topics were covered including the marine ecosystem in Sri Lanka, Primatology in Sri Lanka and more. This was a great way to open and start the training program as it gave us the basic knowledge of the places. The Inauguration ceremony was continued in the evening with the introduction of the cultural dances from different parts of Sri Lanka and the diverse food of Sri Lanka. As a person who was not familiar with the country, the first day of the program not only have extensive knowledge on the ecology and wildlife of Sri Lanka but gave me the taste of the people and the culture.



On the first day of the training program, we visited Madhu river. Sri Lanka has some of the largest and diverse mangrove forests, and we visited the Madhu River to witness the beauty. During the river safari not only did we observe diverse of wildlife that lives among the people within the great Mangrove forest and the river, but we also learned about the group of people who lived in the forest, the traditional way of shrimp fish and the ecology

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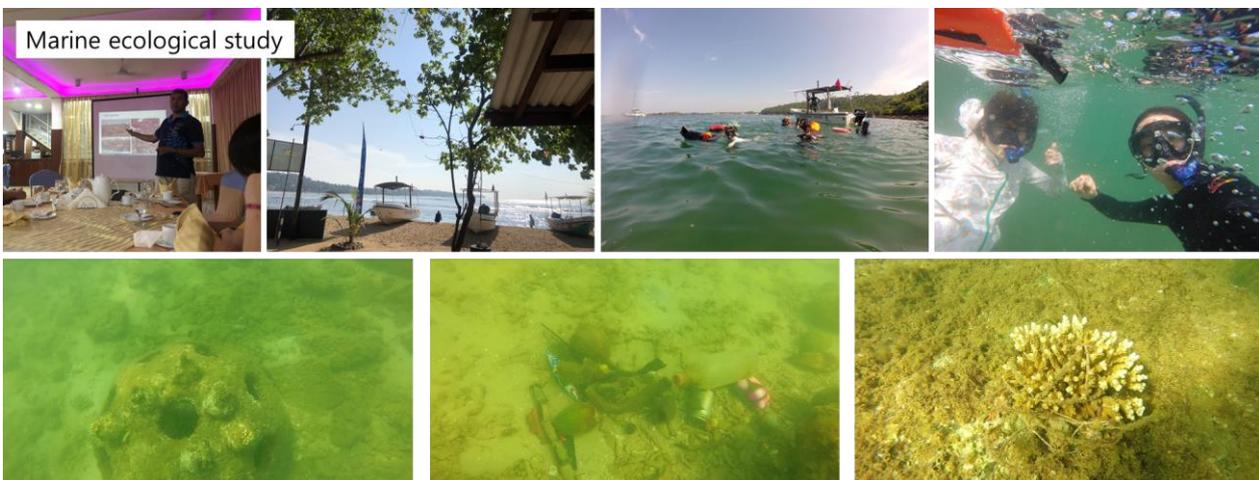
of the mangroves. One of the concerning event during the river safari was things that were geared towards the tourist. There was a man with a baby monkey who ask the tourist for a picture with the monkey for money. The use of wildlife in tourism is common throughout the world and it is on the tourist to educate themselves on wildlife use in the country to protect them.



Visiting the archeological site at Fa Hien Cave was on the second part of the day. This was one of the most important archeological sites with the discovery of the prehistoric human remains within the human burial sites. The human bone fossils are attributed to three children, a juvenile and two adults with the evidence of the secondary burials. This site also had evidence of using the cave as a place of living with the discovery of fireplaces and organic materials such as floral evidence.



Excursion in the rainforest at Sinharaja Forest Reserve was conducted the next day. Rainforest at Sinharaja Forest Reserve is a national park and it has one of the highest biodiversity in Sri Lanka. We were guided through the forest reserve with Dr. who have worked a long time at the forest. Not only were we with the best forest ecologist in the country but also a graduate student who studies the birds in the forest with a vast knowledge of the forest birds. With their help, we were able to gain a vast knowledge of the plants in the forest views much wildlife.



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On the 22nd, students went for the marine ecological study and snorkeling around Reef. The lecture given by Dr. Kamal Ranatunga was a great introduction to the Rumassala Reef and current situation of the reefs in Sri Lanka. It was devastating to learn many coral reefs in Sri Lanka is facing a similar fate with many other reefs outside of Sri Lanka. Many have gone through bleaching and have died in mass numbers. We were able to witness a very small section of the current situation of Sri Lanka marine ecosystem through snorkeling. It was sad not only see the lack of corals and marine life underwater but the existence of marine trash was hard to see. However, it was also nice to see the efforts that are being put by the scientist by putting coral farms underwater despite the success rate.

Dr. Pruthuviraj Fernando gave an evening lecture on human-elephant conflict. The human-elephant conflict is close to most of our heart as people who work with the animals in the wild come across with anthropogenic conflict at one or more points during the research. Understanding the wild animal is one of the most important factors in decisions to navigate through the conflict and work towards the long-term conservation of the wild animals that researchers study.



Safari at Bundala National Park began very early in the morning of the 23rd to catch a better glimpse of the wild birds and animals. Various wild animals were in the park including elephants, peacock, langur, and macaques. It was my first time to closely observe such wide various animals and it was one of the most memorable experiences from the trip.

The interesting aspect of the Bundala National Park was not only the variety of animals which reside in the park but also the range of ecotype this park holds. The part extended wide and far enough to hold small ponds for the animals but also dessert area with beaches and ocean cliffs.



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On the 24th, the excursion at Horton Plains was guided with Prof. Sisira Ediriweera and his graduate student. Throughout the long hike to World’s End, both guides identified interesting plants and flowers, and this made the hike educational. Also, the previous lecture of history and current situation of Horton Plains. Therefore it was interesting to witness dead trees among the forest and migration of tree into the plains that are leading to degradation of the current population of the plains.



On the next day, we visited ancient rock fortress at Sigiriya. The UNESCO World Heritage Site, Sigiriya is an ancient rock fortress created by King Kasyapa. The massive palace at the top of the massive column of rock was amazing. We got to see was beautifully decorated side rocks including the mirror wall and frescos. These sites were important to understanding the life which past ancient people lived in the short time that these were occupied as a kingdom. One of the mysteries in this palace is the water garden and water still flows from the bottom to top of the palace to this day. This was a great learning experience on the rich ancient history of Sri Lanka.



On the 26th, Prof. Charmalie Nahallage joined us in this part of the trip to guide the lead the primate observation at Mihintale. One of the graduate students who helped us throughout the trip was conducting his research at this site and gave us an introduction to the site and the primate population of this site. The focal sampling was conducted as a field practice. After the field practice, we also climbed up to the mountain peak that is known to be a place which Buddhist monk Mahinda and King Devanampiyatissa had a meeting and has an important meaning to the Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

The closing ceremony was conducted with Dean and vice chancellor of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The participant students from Kyoto University gave a short presentation

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about the international training program in pairs and each student received the certificate for completing the program. This was a great time for students to reminisce on the busy days that came before in Sri Lanka.

Next day, megalithic burial site at Ibbankatuwas was visited on the way to Colombo. The megalithic burial site is still under excavation. Actually seeing the excavation site and looking at the clay pots used for the burial site once again highlighted the rich history of the country.

Visiting Sri Lanka was one of the best experiences in the year 2018. The vast variety of ecosystem and animals we witnessed in the country was one of the most memorable parts of the training program. However, I believe the best part of the training program was the people who guided us throughout the training program. The professors and the graduate students who helped us on each different field sites with their vast knowledge of the wild animals and the ecology of the field. These people and their expertise made the whole experience educational, meaningful and successful.



**6. Others**

I would like to show my gratitude towards Prof. Michael Huffman, Professor Takakazu Yumoto, Prof. Hiroyuki Tanaka, Prof. Charmalie Nahallage, Prof. Hemanthi Ranasinghe, Prof. Prasad Jayaweera and Dr. Kamal Ranatunge for arranging the training program and guiding us through. Also, as much as importantly, I would like to thank Atheeq, Raveendra, Charith, and Tharaka for ‘babysitting’ us throughout the trip.