

**Research Activity Report**  
**Supported by “Leading Graduate Program in Primatology and Wildlife Science”**  
 (Please be sure to submit this report after the trip that supported by PWS.)

	2019. 10, 25
<b>Affiliation/Position</b>	Wildlife Research Center/D1
<b>Name</b>	James Brooks

<b>1. Country/location of visit</b>
Iriomote, Okinawa, Japan
<b>2. Research project</b>
Iriomote Field Science Course
<b>3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)</b>
2019.10.16-2019.10.20
<b>4. Main host researcher and affiliation</b>
Dr. Tadashi Kajita, University of the Ryukyus
<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>During this visit, I was able to learn about ecology in subtropical forests, such as the importance of mangroves and unique diet of the Iriomote cat, as well as gain field experiences such as trekking, kayaking, and using camera traps. We spent the first night learning about the mangrove forests and their role in carbon storage, in particular how their soil composition is able to retain huge amounts of carbon compared with terrestrial forests. The next day we started by trekking into limestone caves, and saw cave-dwelling animals like cave centipedes and spiders. We had practice climbing through narrow caves with water. In the afternoon we had the opportunity to kayak through the mangroves and trek to a waterfall. On the way we saw mudskippers and saw burrows of mantis shrimp, where we learned about their strategy of “environmental engineering,” gradually reducing mangroves by spreading dirt outward to create more habitat. We saw several local plant species including large ferns and ficus trees. The next day we continued trekking and saw another waterfall after a short boat trip, and in the afternoon snorkeled in the ocean and saw many colourful fish, corals, and a few clams. The final day we had a lecture about the Iriomote cat where we learned its unique diet including many fish and more frogs than any other cat, which habitats it prefers, including wetlands, mountains, and even residential areas, and its main threats to conservation, primarily human influence, and cars in particular. We then went to some wetlands and saw the camera traps they have set up, and looked for Iriomote cat scat. We found one scat, and brought it and the cameras’ SD cards back to the station. On the SD card we found several boar and birds, and even a few videos of the Iriomote cat exploring the camera. We then went to the conservation center to learn more, and stopped at an underpass to see how the conservation efforts are taking shape. Overall it was an incredible trip where I got to observe new environments and species, learn about conservation challenges in subtropical island settings, and get practice and experience with skills like using camera traps and kayaking.</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Mountainous forests in Iriomote</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Forests bordering the mangroves, inhabited by many mudskippers and mantis shrimp</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Waterfall viewpoint on our trek</p> </div> </div>
<p><b>*Please have your mentor check your report before submitting it to [report@wildlife-science.org].</b></p>

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**6. Others**

Thank you to Dr. Kajita, Dr. Watanabe, Dr. Naiki, Dr. Izawa, and all the staff at Iriomote station for hosting us and teaching us about their work, as well as Kohshima-sensei, Yumoto-sensei, and Fukushima-san for their guidance and help throughout.