

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.)

	2024. 05. 14
Affiliation/Position	Wildlife Research Center/M1
Name	Muhammad Nur Fitri Bin Suhaimi

1. Country/location of visit
Koushima, Miyazaki, Japan
2. Research project
Field Training in Animal Behavior and Ecology
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2024. 05. 07 – 2024. 05. 13
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Dr. Sugiura Hideki (Associate Professor, Wildlife Research Center), Mr. Suzumura Takafumi (Koshima Field Station)
5. Progress and results of your research/activity
Please insert one or more pictures (to be publicly released). Below each picture, please provide a brief description.

The purposes of this course are ① to observe wild monkeys in natural conditions safely, ② to collect data on the research topic that the students decide by themselves and report the results scientifically and ③ to understand the safety measures during fieldwork.

Schedule Outline:

5/7 Travelled to Miyazaki; Koushima from Osaka International Airport (ITM).
 Prepared camp equipment for camping in Koshima Islet, 3 days 2 nights.

5/8 Breakfast and move to the islet by boat.
 Observed macaques □
 Lunch
 Set up camp
 Hiked to the islet’s peak.
 Dinner

5/9 Breakfast
 Observe macaques ◻
 Lunch
 Explored the shore of the islet and observed mollusks.
 Dinner

5/10 Breakfast and pack up campsite.
 Observe macaques ◻
 Went back to the station by boat.
 Lunch
 Clean up the camp equipment and tents.

5/11 Breakfast
 Went to Cape Toi to observe horses □
 Lunch
 Observed horses ◻ and visited Misaki Jinja.
 Went back to the station and had dinner.

5/12 Breakfast
 Prepared for research presentation.
 Lunch

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Presented the research.
BBQ party.

5/13 Breakfast and cleaned the field station.

Visited Aoshima.

Lunch

Went to Miyazaki airport and travelled back to Kyoto.

Tuesday 5/7

We went to Osaka International Airport (Itami) early in the morning and took the flight to Miyazaki Airport. We arrived at 11 am and took the bus to Aburatsu to buy groceries for our one week stay in Koushima Field Station. At around 3.30 pm we had our first meeting and did preparation for camping on the Koujima islet for 3 days and 2 nights. We packed all the equipment. We also met with other students and researchers that were already at the field station. We had dinner together.

Wednesday 5/8

We woke up early in the morning and had breakfast while also packing onigiri for our lunch. We had to move our camping equipment and personal items to the port early because the process took some time and might affect the time it took to observe the monkeys. We arrived at the port around 9 am. We got to the islet by boat along with all the equipment. After we took our belongings off the boat and took them to the camp site, we started to observe the macaques (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Started to observe the macaques.

Provisioning feeding started around 10.15 am by Suzumura-san by giving them wheat. It was noted that these provision feeding was done maximum three times per week. We observed the “Main Group” macaques at the beach. At this time, I had to observe and find interesting topics or research questions for me to start my research on the macaques. It was more of preliminary research for me as to understand how these macaques behave especially with the presence of provision feeding. At almost 12 pm, the macaques started to move into the forest.

Once all of them moved into the forest, we stopped our observations and moved the remaining camp equipment. Since there was no water and electricity supply, we prepared several boxes of water from the field station. Around 2.30 pm, we were ready to move out again, and we hiked the Koujima islet. During the hike, Sugiura-sensei taught us how to use the GPS and compass by referring to the map we prepared prior to this trip. We reached the peak (Figure 2) and hiked back down to the beach collect some dry firewood. We had dinner that night by cooking halal chicken curry.



Figure 2: Reached at the peak of Koujima Islet.

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Thursday 5/9

I had a decent sleep the first night and we woke up to prepare breakfast. We had rice with fishcake soup and packed onigiri for lunch. We got ready and at around 9 am we started our observations of the macaques at the beach. So, at this time, I have decided the topic of my interest research which was about the male's aggression during feeding affecting the allogrooming behavior during resting time after feeding. The macaques moved into the forest quite early and after that we had our onigiri for lunch. After lunch, we explored the beach's shore to learn coastal creatures.

Friday 5/10

We woke up early to pack and clean everything at the campsite after breakfast. We brought them down at the beach and unlike the previous days, we had to firstly take the equipment and items before we started our observations of the macaques. At around 8.30 am, after we took all the stuff down at the beach, we started the observations to continue with our studies. We ended the observations at around 11 am and started to take the equipment to the boat and we went back to the field station.

After lunch, we had to clean up the camping equipment such as cleaning the dirt off sleeping bags, cleaning the cooking utensils and drying up the cover sheets under the sun. At 3.30 pm we packed all of the equipment for next year's students' use and had a meeting afterwards with Sugiura-sensei. In the meeting we were briefed about the activities in the few days after the trip in Koujima islet.

Saturday 5/11

In the morning, as planned the day prior, we moved from the field station to Cape Toi to observe the horses (Figure 3). We were also accompanied by Maeda-san and Ogawa-san, who are students that studies the behaviors of the horses at Cape Toi. They were also kind enough to share the booklets of the horses' identifications and groups there. Cape Toi was so beautiful and mesmerizing, and it is also a place for tourist attraction. Other than observing the behavior of the horses, Maeda-san also gave us the opportunity to try and fly the drone which she uses for her studies.

We had onigiri lunch at PAKALAPAKA before continuing to observe the horses there. Afterwards, we also had the chance to visit Misaki Jinja which has jaw-dropping and stunning views. It was a good opportunity to take some beautiful pictures there.



Figure 3: Observing the horses in Cape Toi.

Sunday 5/12

After breakfast, we had to prepare our presentations regarding the study that we did on the macaques on Koujima islet during our camp stay for 3 days and 2 nights previously. During this time, everyone was so busy and dedicated to preparing the slides for the presentations. We had to analyze the data that we had collected and present it in a scientific way.

After lunch, at around 2.30 pm, we started to present our findings (Figure 4). I was the first one to present and my research topic was “Does aggressions by male individuals during feeding affecting the subsequent allogrooming behavior?.” After did several brief research and reading some of the related subjects, I hypothesized that the more aggressive male will have higher tendency to received allogrooming due to appease and lower hostility by the aggressive male.

Once we finished presenting our findings, we had a BBQ party to celebrate our had work for almost 1 week at the field station conducting the Field Training in Animal Behavior and Ecology. All the other researchers and students in field station also joined the BBQ.

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Figure 4: Presenting my findings during the observations of macaques in Koujima Islet.

Monday 5/13

We had our breakfast and because it was our final day at the station, everyone worked together to clean up the station before we departed back. We made sure that everything was cleaned including the ochabeya, sleeping rooms and the toilet. We had some spare time before our flight, and we visited Aoshima. It was an interesting place indeed seeing the naturally layered rocks at the beach shore named “Onino Sentakuita”. We also tried the local famous Udon and Kakigori! After that we took a bus to Miyazaki Airport and went back to Osaka International Airport (Itami).

Conclusion

During this course I learned basic knowledge and skills of ecological and behavioral study on wild animals. I am also aware of the safety measures during the field research and mastered basic observation methods for the behavior of animals. I will never forget the experience of field training in Koujima Islet and understand the basic knowledge of collecting data on wild Japanese macaques, analyze them and present the results.

6. Others

I want to express my gratitude to Sugiura-sensei and Suzumura-san for all the knowledge given and guiding us during this course and to PWS for aiding me in making this course an ease one.