


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. 10. 21	
Affiliation/Position	Wildlife Research Center/M1
Name	Muhammad Nur Fitri Suhaimi

1. Country/location of visit
Japan, Kumamoto
2. Research project
Animal Welfare Course
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2024. 10. 15 – 2024. 10. 18 (4 days)
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Professor Hirata Satoshi (Professor, Wildlife Research Center, Kyoto University)
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>The course on animal welfare in captivity at the Wildlife Research Center, Kumamoto Sanctuary was an essential field course to better understand the importance and guidelines of animal management in captivity that combined theoretical knowledge with hands-on training. Over four intensive days, we delved into the critical aspect of enhancing animal welfare through various enrichment techniques and behavioral observation methods.</p> <p><u>2024/10/15 - Tuesday</u></p> <p>On the first day, our journey began with a trip to Kumamoto, where we were greeted by Professor Hirata, who provided us with a comprehensive overview of the sanctuary’s facilities. We explored the enclosures, notably B1 and B5, and even visited the chimpanzee and bonobo hospital, where researchers conduct routine medical check-ups. It was fascinating to see the anesthetic equipment used for these procedures, which underscored the sanctuary’s commitment to animal health. Later that afternoon, we observed Professor Hirata preparing a nutritious mix of fruits and protein pellets for the chimps. Watching him perform a noninvasive electrocardiogram as a demonstration on Natsuki, one of the resident chimps, gave me a deeper understanding of the importance of monitoring animal health in captivity and the trust built between the chimps and Prof Hirata.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p>Figure 1: Prof Hirata performing ECG on Natsuki while feeding her apple slices as treats.</p> <p><u>2024/10/16 - Wednesday</u></p> <p>Day two was all about implementing enrichment activities designed to stimulate the natural behaviors of the animals. In the early morning, we scattered food items like mandarin oranges and bell peppers in hidden spots around the chimp enclosure. This exercise aimed to engage their foraging instincts, closely mirroring what they would do in the wild.</p>

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Later, we collaborated to assemble hammocks for the bonobos, discussing how to ensure their safety and comfort. We had to assemble three hammocks using used fire hoses that were prepared for us prior by the staff. After successfully installing the hammocks in the bonobos’ night rooms, we turned our attention to the crows. We used recycled PET bottles and bamboo to create enrichment devices that encouraged the crows to interact with their environment. Drilling holes in the bottles to conceal beef jerky inside was a fun challenge and setting them up in the crow house was rewarding, knowing it would promote mental stimulation for these intelligent birds.



Figure 4: Assembling hammocks from used fire hoses.



Figure 2: Preparing enrichment equipment for the crows.



Figure 3: Installing bamboo perches in the crow house.

2024/10/17 - Thursday

On the third day, we continued our enrichment efforts with the chimpanzees, again scattering their breakfast in hidden places. This routine became more than just a task; it felt like a vital contribution to their well-being. After the feeding, we had the opportunity to observe the staff perform a medical check-up on one of the resident chimps, named Sai. It was fascinating and lucky of us to witness as they skillfully drew blood, checked her heart rate, and used ultrasound machine to examine her organs, especially her liver. They even conducted an X-ray, showcasing the thorough care that goes into monitoring the health of the chimpanzees and bonobos.



Figure 5: Observing the staff diligently monitoring Sai.

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In the afternoon, we returned to the crow house, where we tackled the challenge of building a slide from wood and a plastic roof sheet. Calculating measurements and designing the slide required teamwork and creativity, reflecting the problem-solving skills essential for animal care. To further enhance their environment, we brought soil into the crow house, allowing the birds to forage for insects hidden within, which mirrored their natural behavior.



Figure 6: The slide has been decorated.



Figure 7: Meticulously installing the slide inside the crow house.

2024/10/18 - Friday

By the fourth day, we gathered to summarize our findings and discuss the impact of our enrichment activities. This reflection was crucial in understanding how our practical training connected to the broader historical context of animal welfare. The knowledge we gained about behavioral observation and cognitive science research methods emphasized the importance of evaluating enrichment strategies scientifically.

Overall, this course was not only an immersive educational experience but also a profound reminder of the responsibility we hold towards animals in captivity. The combination of lectures, practical training, and meaningful discussions fostered a deep appreciation for the complexities of animal welfare and the vital role of enrichment in enhancing the lives of captive animals. As we traveled back to Kyoto, the Aimal Welfare course has equipped me with valuable insights that I would carry forward in my future path in regards in animal care and welfare.

6. Others

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to several key individuals and organizations that made this course possible:

- 1) I want to extend my sincere appreciation to PWS for their generous support and funding of our trip from Kyoto to Kumamoto.
- 2) I am especially grateful to Professor Hirata Satoshi for meticulously planning, coordinating and conducting this course. His insightful knowledge and guidance enriched our learning experience and inspired us to think critically about our role in animal care.
- 3) A special thanks goes to the researchers at KS, particularly Itahara, who led us through the crow enrichment activities. I also want to acknowledge Spoon, Nakamura-san, and all the staff at the sanctuary for their unwavering support for us during the course.
- 4) Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation for my fellow M1 friends – Honoka, Haruka, Liu Liu and Mayu. Together, we tackled challenges and celebrated successes. I appreciate the cooperative efforts among us, and I will cherish the bond that we created forever.

