


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.)

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Affiliation/Position	Primate Research Institute/D1
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1. Country/location of visit
Japan/ Inuyama, Japan Monkey Centre
2. Research project
Zoo/Museum Course
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2015.06.15 - 2015.06.17 (3 days)
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Prof. Gen'ichi IDANI (WRC), Dr. Yuta SHINTAKU (JMC)
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 purpose of this course was to get practical experience in environmental education in the field of primatology/wildlife science as well as to learn to work as a curator, one of the three exit points of the PWS program.</p> <p>On the first day we had an introductory lecture by Prof. Idani about the history of Japanese primatology and Japan Monkey Centre (JMC), followed by a visit to the Centre to see the different facilities and primate species (fig. 1). The day was closed by a lecture by Prof. Matsuzawa on the history, mission and future of JMC.</p>

<p>Fig. 1. Visit to Japan Monkey Centre and lecture on the history of the place. Photo credit: Liesbeth Frias.</p>

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On the second day we had a zoo keeping practice, where we were assigned to an area of the park to experience the work of the keepers. Gomyo-san and I were assigned to the African Center, home to a family of chimpanzees, a big group of mandrills and a gorilla (fig. 2). First thing we did was taking a urine sample from a female chimpanzee for a hormone analysis follow-up. After that we fed the chimpanzee family in the outer enclosure. Since the male is very territorial and the female and infant do not approach the food when he is around, we tried to feed the male away from the others. We also watched how the keeper filled a log with honey so the male chimpanzee could try to feed from it using a stick. After the chimpanzee family was fed, we went to the inner enclosures and fed a female chimpanzee that has not yet adjusted to the group, so she is being kept apart. Next on the list was feeding the mandrills. In order to make it more interesting/challenging to them, zookeepers hide pieces of fruit and small food pellets in different places around the cage, so that they can forage for it. Lastly, we watched how the keeper tried to apply cream to the gorilla’s knuckles in order to avoid wounds.



Fig. 2. Zoo keeping practice at the chimpanzee enclosure (left); gorilla’s cage (right). Photo credit: Liesbeth Frias.

After that we attended the dissection of a ring-tailed lemur. The individual was old and had died that morning, so the procedure was aiming to clarify the cause of death and reassure that it was not contagious to other animals. After lunch, we had a small workshop on environmental enrichment, where we proposed ways of improving the areas we visited in the morning. For the chimpanzees we suggested to improve the physical habitat in the inner enclosure adding some variations in the terrain, like small hills and branches where the chimpanzees could play, but also hide. For the gorilla, we proposed cognitive enrichment. Since the cage is very small for its size and lacks novel objects that can occupy its time, we suggested including a swing, a platform and/or a big wooden ball.

On the last day we had veterinary practice, where the veterinary took care of a macaque with an injury in its hand, and later inserted a contraceptive implant under the skin of a hamadryas baboon. In the afternoon we visited the specimen collection. JMC is a unique place in the sense it is a zoo and a museum at the same time. Besides skeleton specimens, the collection also harbors taxidermy specimens and items related to folklore. After that we had a workshop on specimen preparation, where we put together the skeleton of a primate and labeled the bones. Later we had wet specimen preparation, where we transferred organs from old containers to new-labeled bags. For me this part was particularly interesting, because I have practice in human specimen preparation and preservation, but never had the chance of doing the same for other primates.

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Overall, this was a good course full of diverse activities. Spending the morning with the caretakers was a good way of getting to know the tasks and responsibilities they have on a daily basis. We were able to see how involved JMC staff is with the animals and their welfare, sharing with us what they think would be better for the animals, what can be done realistically, and recognizing the limitations. I also liked the way the museum serves as a repository of all the history of JMC and how it can aid in further research. As a suggestion for future PWS courses, please provide a schedule in advance! This does not only give us a structure of the course and help us prepare for it, but it also helps the organizers, who constantly had to answer questions about the program.



Fig. 3. Ichiyama-san and Sofi Bernstein presenting their ideas on habitat enrichment (top left); dissection practice (top middle); veterinary practice (top right); Shintaku-san showing us the wet specimen collection (bottom left); skeletal specimen preparation (bottom middle and right). Photo credit: Liesbeth Frias and Gomyo Hiroko (bottom right).

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to PWS and Prof. Matsuzawa for supporting this field course. I would also like to thank Prof. Idani and Prof. Shintaku for their support and guidance. Special thanks to JMC staff members for letting us participate in the daily activities and for helpful insights throughout the course.