

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.)

	2015. 12, 1
Affiliation/Position	Wildlife Research Center/D1
Name	Miho Saito

1. Country/location of visit
Iriomote Island, Japan
2. Research project
Excursion of Iriomote island
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2015. 11. 26 – 2015. 11. 30 (5days)
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Professors of Ryukyu University and Prof. Yumoto, Prof. Koshima, Prof. Matsuzawa and Asst. prof. Takizawa
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>Our main purpose of this trip is to understand the subtropical ecosystem in Iriomote island.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Trekking</u> <p>We took a boat from the river mouth of Urauchi river. The boat went through the mangrove forest. After 30 min ride, we did trekking to see a water fall; Mariyudyu and Kanpire. It was my first time to observe mangrove forest, so it was a nice experience to know the family <i>Rhizophoraceae</i> which consists mangrove forest. Additionally, it was interesting to see many roots could be observed when water surface level becomes low but which was hidden in the water when the water surface level become high. Once the water surface level becomes low, many roots could be observed on the ground and that scene was kind of funny. After water surface level became low, I could see many small crabs, shells and dikkop on the ground and I could know that the mangrove forest is a suitable place for these small things and need to conserve this forest to protect these small creatures and of course this unique forest itself. On the road to go to the water fall, I could watch a big shoot of fern, unique epidemis of <i>Cyathea lepifera</i>. I have never observed these plants in the main land of Japan, so it was a nice experience to come here to see them.</p> <div style="text-align: right; margin-right: 50px;">  </div> <p style="text-align: right; margin-right: 50px;">Fig.1. Mangrove forest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Visit Iriomote wildcat conservation center and Forest tree breeding center</u> <p>I didn't have much information about Iriomote wild cat before visiting conservation center, so I was surprised to know that only 100 individuals remain in the wild. From the explanation of that center, many of the identified individuals died because of traffic accident. I couldn't get a detail information form the exhibition about if they try to use telemetry to understand the home range and the area where they prefer to use. It might be good to use such method to expand our knowledge about this endangered species. Additionally, it was unclear how they are going to conserve them from the traffic accident or how do they try to breed them. It might be good to search about these topics by myself.</p> <p>At the Forest tree breeding center, they mainly breed <i>Acacia</i> and <i>Eucalyptus</i> but <i>Acacia</i> can not grow high because of typhoon. Even the famous building material; mahogany and teak can not grow straight up as the explanation from the staff. At a later date, Prof. Watanabe showed us a video of typhoon in Iriomote and the strength of wind and rain were stronger than what usually I met in the main island of Japan. In the main island of Japan, even sometimes I go out thought the typhoon, but it is completely impossible in Iriomote, so to consider how to deal with typhoon is a necessary issue when living in this island. There were mango trees in the breeding center, however, the trunk was quit thinner and less leaves which I observed in Tanzania. I even couldn't recognize that this is the same mango tree. So I was wondering if this difference comes from the effect of typhoon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Snorkeling</u> <p>I could see many small/big fishes, colorful actinia just few meters away from the beach. A staff of Ryukyu university said that usually the ocean is clearer in the winter than the summer. So it was a good experience to dive into the ocean</p>

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to see the ecosystem of subtropical ocean even cold wind was blowing. Additionally, the beach was consisted by many shells of foraminifer. I was wondering how many years have passed to form current amount of shell of foraminifer.

■ Kayaking and trekking

Fortunately, the weather was fine and we could enjoy kayaking on the beautiful forest. But it was my first time to do kayaking, I got a blister on each hands. Prof. Watanabe showed us an aerial root of mangrove forest which I was interested in on the first day. It is interesting that a part which is above water surface level is hard compared with a part which is under the level of water surface. Then I was wondering what is the reason to let them form their roots in different level of hardness depends on the water surface level. We did trekking after kayaking. On the way to the water fall, I could see many huge ferns and plant vines, I felt a forest in Iriomote looks similar to the one of Borneo but not the one of main land Japan. One thing which is good in Iriomote forest compared with Borneo forest was there is rarely happen to be bitten by leech, but in Borneo it was every time when I went into the forest.



Fig.2. The scene of kayaking



Fig.3. A shoot of *Kandelia obovata*

6. Others

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the PWS program for supporting this course. Many thanks to professors and staffs from Ryukyu university for guiding this course. Prof. Matsuzawa, Prof. Yumoto, Prof. Koshima and Asst. prof. Takizawa were acknowledged.