

Affiliation/Position	Primate Research Institute/D1/L3
Name	Josue Alejandro Pastrana

1. Country/location of visit
Choshikei Saru No Kuni, Shodoshima, Kagawa Japan
2. Research project
“Land of Monkeys at Choshikei, Shodoshima, Japan. A potential field site for my doctoral studies in the near future.”
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2017. 07. 05 - 2017. 07. 07 (3 days)
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Dr. Watanabe, former Professor, Primate Research Center, Kyoto University, Dr. Hongo, Post doc, PRI
5. Progress and results of your research/activity



Prof. Watanaba and staff with alpha male.



Female with collar.

During the first week of July, I had the opportunity to visit Shodoshima Japan along with colleagues from the Primate Research Institute and the Wildlife Research Center of Kyoto University. We were very lucky to be guided by the now retired Prof. Watanabe that has done research with many primates in Japan and across many Asian countries, including studies at the Land of Monkeys in Shodoshima where we observed the monkeys for two days. There are close to 400 Japanese macaques roaming around the park, these animals are divided into two groups. Group A, the higher ranking group that usually lives closer to the feed provisioning area, and the smaller lower ranking Group B, out in the outskirts of the mountain. There are monkey shows twice per day as well as 2 visitor-feeding areas. Near the park there is also an observation deck with a great view of the island from the top of the mountain and a waterfall close to the entrance.

The main purpose for my visit was that as I am finishing my current project with captive Japanese macaques, I wanted to see the potential of doing a research project in the monkey Park at Shodoshima. I took this opportunity to see where the current main two groups are distributed, discuss the logistics of collecting hormonal and behavioral data with the local staff, as well as sharing thoughts and ideas with Dr Watanabe and Dr. Hongo. The groups are famous for doing a large cluster during winter months and I would like to understand if animals involved in these large clusters called “saru-dango” have benefits of reducing stress. Moreover, these very large clusters are only seen in this monkey population, and there are some genetic traits that are associated with higher tolerance, which I also plan to investigate. I concluded in the preliminary observation that collecting behavioral and hormonal samples for purposes of my studies are possible, except collecting urine samples will only be possible for Group A since it has an area of concrete where urine can be collected. I also met a colleague who works for an organization to understand the movements of animals in monkey parks all over the country by tagging some individuals with telemetry collars with GPS capabilities. I was able to see one of the females with this collar and



Staff with alpha male.



Younger male in top of mountain.



View from the top of Monkey ark Shodoshima

contacted to let him know that one animals still have one collar on. I think it could be great if I can collaborate and use movement information, on top of my behavioral and hormonal data. I was able to get some good suggestions and guidance from both the local staff as well as from my colleagues who accompanied me during this trip.

Unfortunately, there was some bad weather on our first day; however, we were able to make the most of it by visiting some of the most famous and beautiful local tourism spots the island has to offer. It is famous for a local soy sauce production that goes back many years and which has its own unique flavor. We were able to see how soy sauce is made in the same traditional way which has been done for hundreds of years. We also went to see the rice paddies which unlike most of the flat rice paddies seen in Japan, these are group in a vertical way conforming to the natural landscape of the island. During our stay we were also able to see many birds such as cormorants fishing in the bay, hawks flying on the peaks of the mountains, wild piglets running across the rice fields, and many beautiful view points of the high mountains of Shodoshima.

I am very grateful for the support of PWS staff and professors who gave us the permission for this short trip, and I am thankful to my colleagues that went for their help with suggestions and logistics of doing a potential project in this site. I hope that with all I learned during this trip, I am able to conduct research there and be successful in answering my questions.