

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.)

2017. 12, 25	
Affiliation/Position	Primate Research Institute/M1
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1. Country/location of visit
Iriomote Island, Japan
2. Research project
PWS Iriomote course
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2017. Nov. 11 – 2017. Nov. 15 (5 days)
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Ryukyu University, Prof. Kajita
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>I joined the PWS Iriomote course on Iriomote Island, Okinawa prefecture. Iriomote Island is called the “Galapagos Islands of Asia” because there are many endemic species. Most of the island has been designated a National Park of Japan. On this course I got the chance to observe the nature specific to Iriomote Island.</p> <p>Schedule 11th Nov Outbound trip from Inuyama to Iriomote island 12th Nov Walking around mangrove forest in Funaura-Bay, river kayaking and the Urauchikawa jungle cruise 13th Nov Lecture on coral reef organisms, observation of a specimen and underwater observation snorkeling 14th Nov Lecture on Iriomote wild cats and visit to Iriomote Wildlife Conservation Center (IWCC) 15th Nov Return trip</p> <p>Unfortunately, rained a great deal during our stay on Iriomote Island. Therefore, we had to rearrange our schedule. However, I was able to appreciate the ecology of Iriomote island.</p> <p>I had not observed mangrove forest before in detail. In biology classes at high school, I learned only vocabulary: “Ohirugi, Mehirugi and Yaeyamahirugi”. During this course, I had a opportunity to observe these species directly and learned that these three species have very different morphological features, for example their root are, buttress, knee and prop roots, respectively. It was a very good opportunity for me to benefit from “real-world” knowledge.</p>

We walked through mangrove forest (Photo by Dr. Kitano)

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Through boat cruises, snorkeling and visiting the IWCC, I learned about the environment unique to Iriomote Island and the crisis it is facing. At the lectures on Iriomote wild cats, I learned that researchers are trying very hard to conserve the Iriomote wild cats. Conservation is not easy, for example, even though they made barricades supported by the government, to keep Iriomote wild cats from straying onto the road, Iriomote wild cats jumped over the barricades. Citizens of Iriomote also contribute to efforts to save the Iriomote wild cat, for example, there is an eyewitness report board for Iriomote wild cats at the IWCC. Even though it is difficult to increase the number of Iriomote wild cats quickly, the fact that the Japanese Government academia and members of the public are collaborating in conservation efforts means that the future of Iriomote wild cats is promising.



Camera trap in the forest



A stuffed Iriomote wild cat at the IWCC



Crested serpent eagle

I had many opportunities to see a variety of wild animals during this course

6. Others

My sincere thanks to Prof. Kajita, Prof. Matsuzawa, Prof. Kojima, Prof. Fukushima, Prof. Kawakami and members of the Tropical Biosphere Research Center, University of the Ryukyus. This course was supported financially by PWS. I am also grateful to Ms. Sakai and Ms. Akiyama, PWS staff.