

**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.)

	2016. 07, 04
<b>Affiliation/Position</b>	Wildlife Research Center/M1
<b>Name</b>	Anna KAWAKITA

<b>1. Country/location of visit</b>
Rausu-cho, Menashi-gun, Hokkaido
<b>2. Research project</b>
Study on killer whales
<b>3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)</b>
2016. 06. 29 – 2016. 07. 04 (6days)
<b>4. Main host researcher and affiliation</b>
HAMANASU CRUISE, Dr. YAMAMOTO, Mr. SAINO, Mr. HAMAMATSU, Ms. SUGITA
<b>5. Progress and results of your research/activity</b> (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>Schedule</p> <p>29<sup>th</sup> June: Osaka airport-&gt; Haneda airport-&gt;Nemuro Nakashibetsu airport-&gt; Nakashibetus Bus Terminal-&gt; Rausu</p> <p>30<sup>th</sup> June to 3<sup>rd</sup> July: Killer whale field research (5:00-16:00)</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> July: Rausu-&gt; Nakashibetshu Bus Terminal-&gt; Nemuro Nakashibetsu airport-&gt; Haneda airport-&gt; Osaka airport</p> <p>In order to observe killer whales, we went to Rausu-cho and boarded a HAMANASU CRUISE for 4 days. The leader of this tour was Dr. YAMAMOTO who has been involved in the killer whale investigation since 2010. She is a researcher on vocalizations of killer whales. Since it was my first time conducting observations at sea, I was nervous at first whether I would get seasick or not, but I enjoyed without it.</p> <p>Basically, the sex of killer whale is identified from its shape of dorsal fin; a male has a large and sharp dorsal fin (2m at most), a female has a curved smaller one. Individual identification is based on the cracks or scratches of dorsal fin and the shape of saddle patch. Once killer whales swim 3-5 minutes deeply, then they repeat shallow swims with breath. We observed breach, spy-hop, tail slap, pectoral slap, blow, swimming side by side, playing with kelp and so on. Some of their voices were also heard.</p> <p>Studies on killer whales were started in 1970 at the eastern part of the North Pacific Ocean, based on the individual identification as the primatology was. Killer whales are divided into two types: residents and transients. Residents eat fish, gathering together (6-50 individuals in a pod, which is like a large family). They often utter voices to communicate with each other. On the other hand, transients eat sea mammals, living with only 2 or 3 members. They don't use the vocal communication so much in order not to let preys know their existence. These two types are largely different in behaviors and social structure. This is the reason why some researchers have been discussing whether they should be classified into two species. It is said that the transients are maybe seen in Rausu, but we observed many killer whales at once (40 individuals in a pod). An investigation also shows that 11 individuals in a pod on average are seen in Raus. There have been a few studies on killer whales, and most of them were conducted at the eastern part of the North Pacific Ocean. We don't know about them around Hokkaido.</p>

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A few days before we started boarding, telemeters were attached on three killer whales. So I expect it to be clarified where they came from and whether they are transients or not.



**6. Others**

I really appreciate a PWS support. Yamamoto-san, thank you for your planning and conducting this tour.