Research Activity Report
Supported by "Leading Graduate Program in Primatology and Wildlife Science"

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Affiliation/Position	Wildlife Research Center/D1
Name	Cecile Sarabian

1. Country/location of visit

Japan/Japan Monkey Centre, Inuyama

2. Course

Zoo/Museum course

3. Dates

2015. 06. 15 – 2015. 06. 17 (3 days)

4. Main host researcher and affiliation

Pr. Idani (Wildlife Research Center/Japan Monkey Centre Director) and Dr. Shintaku (Japan Monkey Centre)

5. Progress and results of your 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.

With its 66 species of non-human primates including more than 1000 individuals, the Japan Monkey Centre (JMC) is an interesting place for research and animal welfare. It is the only Primate zoo in Japan that acts as a museum at the same time. Even though, I had already been twice at JMC (once as a visitor, another time as an *InterLab* course participant), this time was different because I got to know the "behind the scenes" of JMC.

The course was divided in 12 different activities over a 3 days period: 1) introductory lecture to Primatology in Japan by Pr. Idani; 2) tour of JMC to see the different facilities, enclosures and primate species; 3) lecture by Pr. Matsuzawa about the future goals of JMC; 4) JMC staff meetings; 5) assist a caretaker for half a day; 6) attend a lemur dissection; 7) lecture about animal welfare and environmental enrichment by Mr. Watanuki (vet/curator of JMC); 8) animal welfare workshop; 9) attend a veterinary practice; 10) visit the museum specimen collection; 11) lecture about the museum collection by Dr. Shintaku; and 12) prepare a museum specimen for the collection.

Objectives: 1) Get an overall representation of the different works carried at JMC; 2) Suggest how the centre could improve in terms of animal welfare and education according to what we have experienced.

Ring-tailed lemurs environmental enrichment

Wao land: ring-tailed lemurs outdoor enclosure

Ring-tailed lemurs feeding (banana, apples and pellets)

On the second day, the students were divided into pair groups to follow a caretaker with his/her daily tasks. Tokushige-san and I were assigned to the ring-tailed lemurs' enclosure: "Wao land". In this outdoor enclosure, the public can enter and approach closely free-moving ring-tailed lemurs. The aim was to come up with short-term and long-term ideas to improve the environmental enrichment of the enclosure (see below).

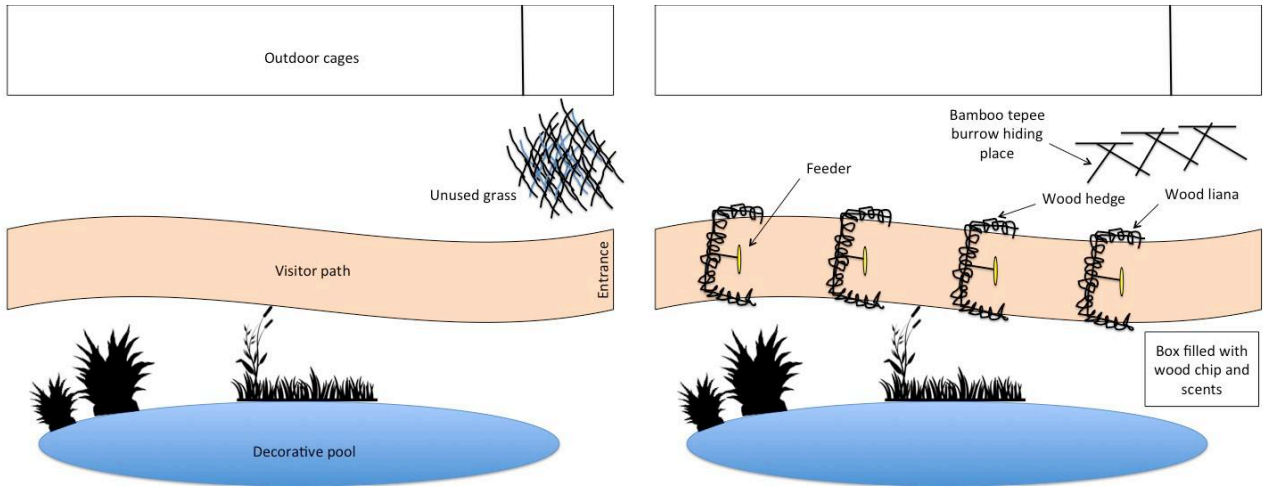

Figure 1: (Left) Wao land (ring-tailed lemur outdoor enclosure) as of June 16, 2015; and (right) Wao land enrichment suggestions.

In addition, we could also see the indoor and outdoor enclosures of the other lemur species hosted at JMC: black-and-white ruffed lemurs and common brown lemurs. Wao land was one of the already most enriched enclosure so, it was hard to think of improving it while many other enclosures would need priority for enrichment (f.e. African house and Asian house).

Hamadryas baboons enclosure as part of the "African house"

"Asian house apartments" measure about 8 m² and can host up to 20 individuals

General outcomes: Being a zoo and a museum at the same time gives JMC a double educational role and approach for the study of taxonomy and general biology, and for conservation and management needs. Since I began being interested in conservation education few years ago, every time I have been working in a zoo or visited one, I have been thinking about the take home messages that people bring back after a day at the zoo – if any. To bring up this issue, along with another PWS student attending the course, Sofi Bernstein, we organized a screening of the documentary "Zoo Revolution" followed by a discussion at PRI, on June 19th. In this film, we learn that visitors spend about 35 seconds in front of a primate enclosure and up to a minute in front of elephants, which is suggested to be too short to learn anything. People attending the session at PRI were all familiar to zoos and captive primates needs, and were kind of hesitant to express their opinion. Therefore, we look forward to our screening/discussion in Kyoto with undergraduate students who are part of a Zoo Biology class taught by Pr. Fred Bercovitch.

Suggestions: I found the overall course interesting; giving us the opportunity to approach the different kinds of works and activities conducted at JMC. I particularly enjoyed the museum specimen collection part because it was new to me and enthusiastically led by Dr. Shintaku. Regarding conservation education, it would probably be interesting to have a small research project led by students to test whether JMC makes an impact on peoples' knowledge about primates. For example, students could ask visitors general questions about primates (f.e. Where do hamadryas baboons live? A. Africa, B. Asia, C. Europe, D. Antarctica; Are they endangered? A. Yes, B. No) when they just enter the park and the same questions when they leave. If students are interested in, this could be done during the length of the course.

6. Others

Lemur autopsy

Liesbeth Frias presenting her ideas for the gorilla enclosure enrichment at the animal welfare workshop

Museum specimen: Duncan Wilson

Museum specimen preparation practice (here slow loris bones assemblage by Kotoyo Ichiyama and Sofi Bernstein)