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.)

	2015.07.29
Affiliation/Position	PRI/D1
Name	Duncan Andrew Wilson

1. Country/location of visit

Kyoto University Sasagamine Hutte and Mt. Hiuchi (Niigata Prefecture, Japan).

2. Research project

Sasagamine Field Science Course

3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)

2015. 07.23 – 2015.07.26 (4 days)

4. Main host researcher and affiliation

Professor. Shiro Koshima (Kyoto University) and Professor. Shigeru Sugiyama (Shizuoka University).

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.

The aim of the course was to learn survival skills as the basis for future fieldwork. Activities included wildlife observation and climbing Mt. Hiuchi in Niigata Prefecture.

Day 1 (23rd): Arrived at Kyoto University Hutte in Sasagamine at 2.30pm.
Day 2 (24th): Explored wildlife in the surrounding area, prepared for climbing Mt. Huichi.
Day 3 (25th): Climbed Mt. Hiuchi between 5.15am – 3.45pm.
Day 4 (26th): Departed the Hutte at 11.30am.

Day 2 - Prof. Sugiyama showed us various fauna and flora immediately surrounding the Hutte. He also showed us some videos of animals he had previously spotted around the hutte, including foxes, badgers and raccoon dogs. Although it was a cloudy day, I got sunburnt. Apparently, 80% of the Sun's UV rays can pass through the clouds, and so I learnt the importance of covering up, even on overcast days. After this, we learnt how to tie various survival knots, including a 'fisherman's eye', 'killick hitch' and 'lark's head'. Survival knots can be used for various purposes including rescuing yourself and other people from dangerous situations. Several students practiced moving up and down the hutte balcony using only survival knots and ropes (i.e. no professional equipment). In the evening we learnt map reading skills (e.g. using contour lines to judge steepness) and planned our route up to the summit of Mt. Hiuchi, including scheduled toilet and drink breaks. We were also instructed to drink plenty of water before bed to ensure we were fully hydrated at the start of the climb the next day.

Day 3 - In order to ensure we could safely return before dark we left the Hutte at 5.15am. Leaving at this time also meant that we could climb a significant portion of the mountain during the coolest part of the day. Prof. Sugiyama (front) and Mr. Yamomoto (behind) lead the group to ensure nobody went too far ahead or was left behind. Although I had put on sunscreen before starting the climb, most of this was lost through sweating during the climb. Therefore, during the later half of the climb, when we were more exposed to the sun, I put on a thin long-sleeved rain coat and used the hood. Although this did protect me from UV exposure, it was very hot inside and so I became dehydrated quite quickly. Fortunately I drank plenty of water during the climb, but in retrospect I should have worn a coat or long-sleeved shirt made of more breathable material. It took about five hours to reach the summit, where we had our lunch. Climbing down the mountain I could feel the strain on my knees and ankles, and I had to concentrate to prevent myself from slipping. At this point I really appreciated the importance of good quality hiking boots with ankle support, which PWS kindly purchased for me before the climb. We arrived back at the hutte at about 3.45pm. Almost all members had got sunburt during the climb, and a number of students, including myself, reported having a headache which may have been due to heat exhaustion. However, after a BBQ and an early night we had all recovered by the following day.

Day 4 - Before departure Prof. Koshima showed us how tent lining (i.e. without stakes, etc.) can have various applications for survival (e.g. when tied between two trees) including as protection from the elements, to collect rain water, and as a poncho.

In conclusion, I found this survival course very rewarding. Although I have been on many long walks and moderate climbs as a teenager, this was a good refresher course in how to prepare for and complete a climb successfully and safely. I now feel better prepared for my Mt. Fuji climb next month, and for any fieldwork I do in the future. I would like to thank all the staff for their efforts to ensure this was a safe and enjoyable experience.

6. Others

Day 2: Wildlife observation with Prof. Sugiyama (Photo credit: Ms. Reiko Takizawa).

Day 2: A thistle - not only found in Scotland!

Day 2: Tying survival knots at the Hutte with Mr. Yamamoto (Photo credit: Ms. Reiko Takizawa).

Day 3: PWS students and staff at the base of Mt. Hiuchi.

Day 3: Snow!

Day 3: 'Tengu no niwa' (Long-nosed goblin's garden)

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Day 3: Great scenery.

Day 3: Japanese Alps in the distance.

Day 3: Made it! Summit of Mt. Hiuchi (2,420m).

(Photo credit: Ms. Reiko Takizawa)

Day 4: Survival applications of an inner tent with Prof. Koshima (Photo credit: Ms. Reiko Takizawa).