

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.)

2015.09.30

Affiliation/Position	Primate Research Institute/D1
Name	Liesbeth FRIAS

1. Country/location of visit
Malaysia/ Penang
2. Research project
4 th International Workshop of Tropical Biodiversity and Conservation
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2015.09.07-2015.09.15 (9 days)
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Dr. Sharul Anuar Mohd Sah (University Sains Malaysia)
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>This year’s International Workshop of Tropical Biodiversity and Conservation was held in Penang, Malaysia. This was the fourth international workshop, held after those in Brazil (2012), India (2013) and Tanzania (2014), with topics ranging from conservation and wildlife monitoring, genome sciences, ecology and animal behavior, to human and animal conflict.</p> <p>After the workshop we visited the Center for Marine and Coastal studies (CEMACS), located in Teluk Aling, where research is focused on biodiversity and conservation of marine ecosystems. That same day, we took the afternoon off to visit George Town, the first British settlement in Southeast Asia and a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of the many colonial Chinese-style shop houses. Street art is also a landmark of the city, where Ernest Zacharevic, Lithuanian artist, has covered the historical part of the city with paintings that incorporate the city itself.</p> <p>On the next day we embarked in a very long trip from Penang to Pahang with a stop at the Kuala Gandah Elephant Conservation Centre, an elephant sanctuary established by the Malaysian Department of Wildlife and National Parks as the base for the elephant translocation program. This program aims to locate, capture and translocate “problem elephants” from areas where human and animal habitats collide to safer habitats, like Taman Negara National Park. The center hosts orphaned elephants and trained elephants that help during translocation, and visitors have the opportunity to see them from close and engage in some activities.</p> <p>During the last days our activities were located around Taman Negara. We had a day of jungle trekking followed by a canopy walk, a night excursion in the park, a visit to the Kelah Fish Sanctuary and to Lata Berkoh, a cascade surrounded by a rocky area, ideal for a quick swim. We also visited the Kampung orang asli (aborigines village), where nomadic families move around Taman Negara and get their food from the forest.</p> <p>Overall this trip was a good experience. The conference gave me a wide perspective on what people are doing in Asia and I got the chance to meet researchers and students from the host university. Having visited Sabah, I was looking forward to an opportunity to visit the peninsula. I was impressed by the efforts made by the elephant team at Kuala Gandah. In Sri Lanka we saw that translocation is used as a last resource, being tremendously expensive and costing the lives of many animals throughout the process. But in Peninsular Malaysia translocations are targeted at single individuals instead of groups, and trained elephants are used to ease the wild elephants during this stressful process, so the procedure is very different and I would be interested to know what the success rate for translocations is.</p>

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Visit to the Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies (top), Georgetown and its famous street art (middle) and Kuala Gandah Elephant Conservation Centre (bottom). Photo credit: Liesbeth Frias.

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Visiting the Batek (top), where they showed us how to make fire and use a bamboo blowpipe for hunting. On the way to Kelah Fish Sanctuary and Lata Berkoh (middle). Trekking and canopy walk in Taman Negara (bottom). Photo credit: Liesbeth Frias.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to PWS and Prof. Matsuzawa for supporting this trip. I would also like to thank Dr. Sharul for hosting us during this visit and to Yuko Tawa, Sarahaizad Mohd Salleh, Aini Hasanah and Mohd Abdul Muin Md Akil for the wonderful organization and guidance during these days.