

**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.)

2015.12.20

<b>Affiliation/Position</b>	Primate Research Institute/D1
<b>Name</b>	Liesbeth FRIAS

<b>1. Country/location of visit</b>
Japan/ Iriomote, Okinawa
<b>2. Research project</b>
Iriomote Island Tour
<b>3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)</b>
2015.11.26 – 2015.11.30 (5 days)
<b>4. Main host researcher and affiliation</b>
Prof. Nishida and Prof. Watanabe (University of the Ryukyus), Prof. Yumoto, Prof. Kohshima and Prof. Matsuzawa (Kyoto University)
<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>Iriomote came a bit as an unexpected trip, but unexpected can be a lot of fun. We left Nagoya on the 26<sup>th</sup> on our way to Ishigaki island, Okinawa. In three hours we switched from a mildly cold autumn in central Japan to a weather that reminded me of the rainforest. In Ishigaki we joined other members of the group and took a ferry to Iriomote, second largest island in Okinawa after Okinawa Island.</p> <p>The first day on the island we went exploring around. Iriomote is largely covered in jungles and mangrove swamps, most of them part of the Iriomote National Park. We started the day with a river cruise along the Urauchi river, the largest river in Okinawa and a hike through the jungle to the waterfalls (Fig. 1). After this we visited the Iriomote Wildlife Conservation Center, a small local museum of natural history (Fig. 2). Featuring the exhibition was the Iriomote cat, endemic to the island and critically endangered. When I told people I was visiting the island, the first thing they mentioned was “Ah, Iriomote yamaneko”, so in my head I thought this was a puma-sized cat, when in reality it’s more like the size of a house cat. I was looking forward to see it, but we were told it’s really difficult to spot, because of its rapid decline due to habitat destruction, traffic accidents and traps set for wild boars. We also visited the Forest Tree Breeding Center, in charge of tropical forest tree species breeding, through clonal propagation, control of tree shape and artificial crossing techniques. On the second day we went snorkeling at Hoshizuna beach (Fig.1), so called because of star shaped foraminifera that can be seen in the sand. Finally, on the third day we went kayaking through the mangroves along Nishida River (Fig. 3) and hiked to Sangara Falls. On the last day, the group of us heading back to Inuyama went to Ishigaki Yaima Village, a replica of a Yeayama Island-style village. There we visited a small zoo with squirrel monkeys and a boardwalk leading into the mangrove forest of Nagura River (Fig. 4).</p>

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Fig. 1. Mariyudo Falls (left) and Hoshizuna Beach (right). Photo credit: Liesbeth Frias.

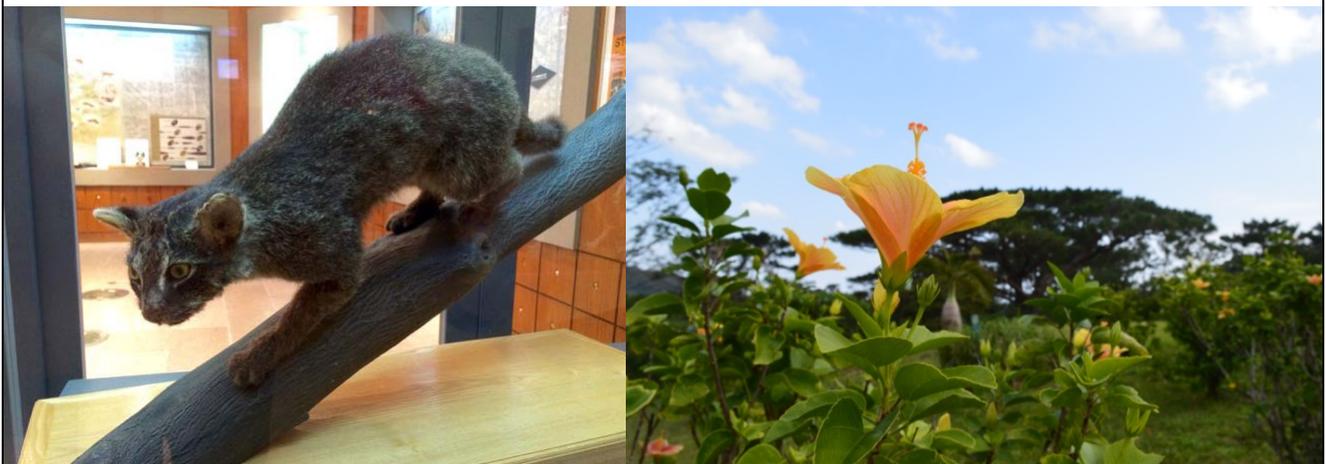


Fig. 2. Iriomote cat specimen at the Iriomote Wildlife Center (left) and exhibit forest at the Tree Breeding Center (right). Photo credit: Liesbeth Frias.



Fig. 3. Kayaking along the Nishida River. The tide was very low on the way back and we had to pull the kayak for the last 200 m. Photo credit: Liesbeth Frias (left) and Morgane Allanic (right).

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Fig. 4. Ishigaki Yaima Village. Mangrove forest (left) and squirrel monkeys (right). Photo credit: Liesbeth Frias.

#### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my gratitude to PWS and Prof. Matsuzawa for supporting this trip. Also to Prof. Nishida and Prof. Watanabe from the University of the Ryukyus for hosting us in Iriomote, to Prof. Yumoto, Prof. Kohshima, Prof. Matsuzawa for guidance and company throughout the trip, and especially to Prof. Takizawa for organizing the trip.