

**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.)

2019. 10, 20	
<b>Affiliation/Position</b>	Primate Research Institute/D1
<b>Name</b>	Vanessa Nadine Gris

<b>1. Country/location of visit</b>
Iriomote, Japan
<b>2. Research project</b>
Iriomote Field Course
<b>3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)</b>
2019. 10. 16 – 2019. 10. 20
<b>4. Main host researcher and affiliation</b>
Prof. Yumoto Takakazu, Prof. Kohshima Shiro and Fukushima Seiko (Kyoto University). Prof. Kajita, Prof. Watanabe, Prof. Izawa and Prof. Naiki (Ryukyus 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.
The Field Course in Iriomote was amazing. It was my first visit to Okinawa.  On the first night in the island we attended a lecture where professor Kohshima talked about his studies of different species in several regions of the globe such as insects in Patagonia and manatees in Amazon. It was an open lecture and many residents attended. It was very nice to see the interaction researchers are having with the community.  Next day we had an introductory lecture about Iriomote island and the mangroves with professor Kajita (Ryukyus University). Iriomote is the second largest island in Okinawa prefecture with 300 Km <sup>2</sup> and contains the largest mangrove area in Japan. Its access is made by ferry and the current population is 2400 people.  On the following days we had the opportunity to go to the caves of Iriomote, do kayaking in Nishida river to observe the wildlife and the mangrove and the beautiful Painasara Falls. We also did snorkeling and saw the colorful sea life of Okinawa. The group also traveled through the Urauchi river on a cruise and trekked to observe waterfalls. For the activities we received a small handbook with all information ecosystem of Iriomote Island with their specific location.  Professor Izawa from Ryukyus University gave an incredible lecture about the Iriomote cat ( <i>Prionailurus bengalensis iriomotensis</i> ), a subspecies of leopard cat endemic to the island. The current population is 100-150 individuals. It is the only carnivore mammal of the island, occupying the top of the food chain. Studies about ecology and reproductive behavior have been performed in the past years. Threats include habitat loss and fragmentation and alien species such as feral cats. However, the most important cause of death of the animals is road accident. Only in 2018, 9 individuals were killed in traffic accidents, which represents 10% of the population. Therefore, some measures were taken such as adding ads on the roads to call attention of drivers and the construction of underground passages so cats can continue their way without actually crossing the road. We visited this road passages and also some places with camera traps. Back to the laboratory we analyzed around 60 footages from the camera traps and could see 52 animals from 5 species: 34 wild boars, 10 crows, 3 emerald does, 1 crab and 4 Iriomote cats. We also visited the Iriomote Wildlife Center to gather more information about the species. The most interesting topic of this Field Course was the conservation of Iriomote cats. I got very interest in this because they are endemic to the island and are not found anywhere else (like zoos). It makes them very fragile as species and their conservation is a critical issue.

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Painasara Falls, Iriomote



*Ganoderma neojaponicum* Imaz, also known as magojakushi



Underground passage signs for Iriomote cats to avoid road accidents



Camera trap to record animals in Iriomote

## 6. Others

I would like to thank PWS for organizing and supporting this trip. Also, my thank you to Prof. Yumoto Takakazu, Prof. Kohshima Shiro for supporting and Fukushima Seiko for organizing this trip. I would like to especially thank Prof. Kajita, Prof. Watanabe, Prof. Izawa and Prof. Naiki for a great learning experience. Lastly, to my colleagues who attended the course.