

**Research Activity Report**  
**Supported by “Leading Graduate Program in Primatology and Wildlife Science”**

	2018. 12. 17
<b>Affiliation/Position</b>	Primate research Institute/D3/L5
<b>Name</b>	Josue Alejandro Pastrana

<b>1. Country/location of visit</b>	Science Seminar House, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
<b>2. Research project</b>	Field Course in Iriomote Island, Okinawa
<b>3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)</b>	2018.11.07- 2018.11.11 (5 days)
<b>4. Main host researcher and affiliation</b>	Prof. Matsuzawa- Leading Program in Primatology and Wildlife Science/Prof. Watanabe University of Ryukyu
<b>5. Progress and results of your research/activity</b> (You can attach extra pages if needed)	<p>Please insert one or more pictures (to be publicly released). Below each picture, please provide a brief description.</p> <p>Last month I attended once again the Iriomote Field Course in one of the most southern points of the Okinawa Islands. Iriomote is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest of the Yaeyama islands, with a population of around 2,500 people and with only two traffic lights in the whole island, it is a big contrast compared to Aichi prefecture where I am based in Japan. Almost all of the areas of the island are protected by the Ministry of the Environment as one of the many National Parks in Japan. It is also home to many endemic species, such as the Iriomote wild cat and the Ubundur palm trees, and it is one of the most southern islands of Japan which has a large mangrove and evergreen forest in this sub-tropical weather. The climate and green areas remind me of my home growing up in the Caribbean, especially at night, where the stars can be viewed quite easily.</p> <p>During our course, we went on a river cruise along the Urauchi River, where we stopped at the upper stream and went trekking to the Kinpiree Waterfall. During this journey, we were able to observe various plant species, such as the very impressive <i>Castanopsis sieboldii</i>, with its huge buttress roots somewhat magic like growing very tall from the surface. We could also observe many acorns of <i>Quercus miyagi</i> everywhere, that attracted many wild boars that had left their marks while foraging for them. After the hike, we had a nice lunch and a swim by the Urauchi river, we headed to the Iriomote Wildlife Conservation Center, which I had never gone to before. It was a great opportunity to learn about the different species that are very illusive to humans like birds and the Iriomote cat. We could listen to their calls, learn about the human-animal conflicts that threaten these species, see bone collections, and observe some taxidermy specimens, that would probably be too difficult to see up so close in live specimens.</p> <p>We also went to a snorkeling trip by boat, where we went a few kilometers away from the shore to compare various sites with different quality of corals. Unfortunately, the weather was not good on that day, and we had to cancel one of the sites. Nonetheless, I was able to observe 2 different sea snake species, various kinds of fish and many colorful sea corals.</p>

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One of my favorite exercises was the kayaking up the river through the mangrove forest. After a 30min kayak ride, and another 30min up the mangrove forest we arrived at one of the many waterfalls where we could get inside the waterfall and jump into the river. Unlike my first time, we returned back during low tide to the shore, which uncovered a completely different scene without the water. As we approached the shore in our boats, we could see thousands of crabs walking along the shore, almost as if the ground was moving. Our trip finished with a view of the sunset by the cliffs on the sea, with a spectacular scenery of the many reds and oranges during this magical time. Iriomote Island has many things to offer, many water activities, beautiful scenery, and an excellent place to re-connect with nature. Although it is not mentioned in any guides or is in any part of our field course, walking along the night surrounded by many fireflies under a big starry sky makes this field course an excellent opportunity.

I am grateful for the support from PWS staff and professors, as well as our hosts from the University of the Ryukyus, for making this course very special for us and showing us this magical place.



Arrival at Iriomote Island on November 7<sup>th</sup> 2018.

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Introduction guidance by our hosts professors of the University of the Ryukyus.



An endemic giant fern tree and canoeing by the river.

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Trekking by forest and Prof. Watanabe showing us a turtle by the station.



View of the waterfalls in the forest.

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On our way to the reef for snorkeling.



On our last night enjoying good local cuisine.