

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

	2025 02, 10
Affiliation/Position	Wildlife Research Center/M1
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1. Country/location of visit
Yakushima
2. Research project
Yakushima Field Science Course
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2025. 01. 31 – 2025. 02. 06. (7 days)
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Dr Hideki Sugiura, WRC, Kyoto University
5. Progress and results of your research/activity

Training Report: Yakushima Field Science Course

Aim of the Course:

The course aimed at exposing participants to the concept of field research practically and holistically involving planning, implementing and final evaluation. i.e., ideation to final data analysis.

(1) Briefing Session

Upon arrival at Yakushima Island, we had a briefing with Sugiura-sensei and Suzumura-San who provided many details about the island, the purpose of trip and some safety tips for both the field and the residency-PWS House in Nagata Town. Participants were also treated to a trip to the Yakushima Museum to observe and learn interesting facts and places on the island.



Fig.1 Model of the Yakushima Island



Figure 2: Participants enjoying the beautiful Scenery.

(2) Bird Census

A significant amount of time was spent observing birds on the island. The task entailed categorizing the mountain region of interest into three levels based on elevation – the top, middle and bottom elevation. Specific points on the path were marked using GIS software: - the waypoints 500m apart & 5 minutes of observation and census at each point. Birds calling sounds were employed in identifying varied species of birds at different elevations. Participants were also taught how to use GPS devices along with waypoint navigation on contour maps.

The birds identified from the calls were confirmed and recorded. Some birds observed include Large-billed crows, Varied Tits, Japanese Robin, pale Thrush, and Warbling White-eye, among others.

These birds were observed at different elevations with a few of them being observed at multiple elevations (e.g., Both high and low elevations). This included Varied Tit (Yamagara), Pale Thrush (Shirohara) etc.

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Fig.3 Participants observing a bird.



Fig.4 Group Photo at an elevated point

(3) Whale watching

This session involved detecting whale blow-ups and movements in the sea at specific locations with a whale expert. Participants travelled along the seaside to stop at various points to observe the activities of whales. Unfortunately, the weather remained windy and wet which made the observation activity quite difficult. At the end of the period, only a few observations were made.

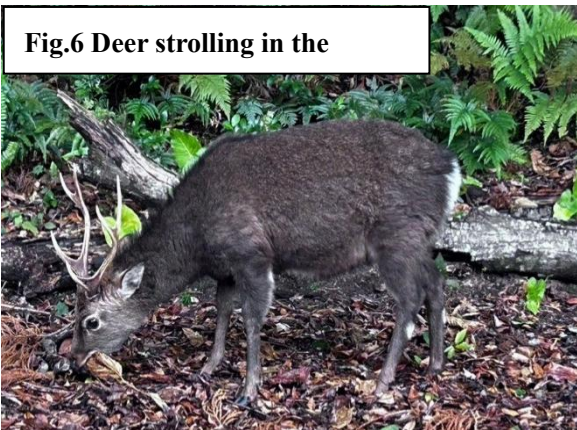
(4) Monkey and deer Observation

The activity budget also included monkey and deer observation. As part of this activity, participants walked at various locations and often stopped during car rides to observe at a recommended distance any group of monkeys they came across. A fascinating observation that was made was how the Japanese Macaques huddled together during the rainy periods to protect their young and keep each other warm.



Fig.5 Group of Japanese macaques together in the rain

Fig.6 Deer strolling in the



There were some instances where deers were observed too. During the observations, participants were reminded about the need to ensure personal safety during field research.

There was also a visit to the beach where participants collected marine samples from the

Conclusion:

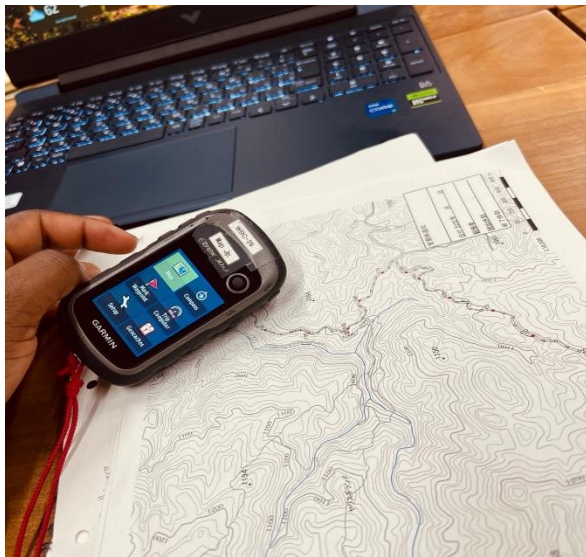
The trip exposed me to the dynamics involved in field research.

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6. Others

The overall experience was amazing, and I got the opportunity to explore the island of Yakushima and experience its beauty and culture along with my colleagues.

7. Gallery (Other photos)



Acknowledgement

- I want to extend my gratitude to Dr Hideki Sugiura and Suzumura-San for the knowledge imparted during the training.
- I want to thank the PWS team and the WRC team for making this experience a possibility.
- Also, a big thank you to my colleagues for their wonderful teamwork.