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Biological Expedition to Guyana **July 2015**

- **Students involved in a real biodiversity monitoring programme**
- **Opportunity to work in remote locations with expert scientists**
- **Travel in the Developing World**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

After very successful expeditions to Indonesia in 2011 and Madagascar in 2013, the Biology Department will take a group of A-level students to Guyana in 2015. Guyana has one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the world. There are 1,168 vertebrate species and 1,600 bird species as well as one of the richest mammalian fauna assemblages of any comparably sized area in the world. The Guiana Shield region is little known and overlain by the largest expanse of undisturbed tropical rain forest in the world.

Dates

The proposed dates are from 12th July – 30th July 2015. These dates may require adjustment depending on the availability of flights.

Organisation

The expedition will be run by an organisation called **Operation Wallacea** (www.opwall.com). Operation Wallacea have been successfully running schools' conservation expeditions since 1995, aiming to identify areas worthy of protection and to provide hard data on the efficacy of conservation management programmes. The projects are run in conjunction with more than 150 academics from international universities. Surveys undertaken by student groups have contributed to international research, resulting in the publication of hundreds of research papers and the discovery of 30 new vertebrate species. Furthermore, in some remote areas, species thought to be extinct have been re-discovered.

Itinerary

The expedition runs for 2 weeks. We will fly into Georgetown and make our way to the Iwokrama River Lodge and Research Centre. Our first two days will involve an introduction to the Guiana Shield forests and jungle skills training. We will then move out to one of the field camps where accommodation will be hammocks in the forest. For the rest of the first week we will learn about biodiversity monitoring techniques and help with field surveys.

This will include the following activities:

- Mist net sampling for birds
- Scan search sampling for herpetofauna
- Large mammal and bird transect Surveys
- Mist netting for bats
- Pit-fall sampling, light trapping and scan sampling for invertebrates
- Spotlight surveys for amphibians and reptiles

During the second week we will complete a five day boat survey along the Burro-Burro River from the village of Surama through the centre of the Iwokrama Forest. Our main goal will be to conduct standardised surveys of water birds and giant otter distribution. We will camp wild on the banks of the river each night using hammocks with bashas and mosquito nets. This will be a deep forest experience.

Having five weeks travelling through the Guyanas in 1995, I am keen to get the team to Kaieteur Falls at the end of the expedition. The 250m height and the flow rate of 663m³/s make them the most powerful falls in the World and the totally unspoilt location not far from Mount Roraima near the Venezuelan and Brazilian borders is truly spectacular. There are many day tours by air from Georgetown available but the expense of maintaining watertight H&S by employing doctors and guides may be prohibitive. I'll do my best!

Costs

The total cost of the trip (excluding a tour to Kaieteur Falls and vaccinations) will be in the region of £2800. This includes:

- £1185 for the expedition including scientific gear, training, food and accommodation
- £1000 (approx.) for flights from the UK to Georgetown
- £250 for internal travel

We will obviously do everything we can to keep the cost of the trip to a minimum without compromising the safety of the students going on the expedition. By launching the trip early, expedition members will have a considerable period of time in which to raise funds. Individual enterprise and commitment in raising sponsorship is the way forwards as those who work hardest benefit the most. In previous years, some members have managed to raise the full amount. There are significant cancellation charges so those who sign up must be committed to raising money or have parental sponsorship.

Benefits

Participants will be challenged and inspired and will build a strong knowledge of ecological techniques and biology that will set them apart at university. Mention of the expedition and commitment to fundraising on a UCAS personal statement will provide a powerful demonstration of subject interest sought by university admissions officers. The expedition will contribute directly to conservation in an area that has been identified as a global priority for conservation. Furthermore, it will provide an opportunity to gain an insight into life in the Developing World which will be of huge value to any young person

Commitment

If you would like your son or daughter to participate in this expedition, please complete the enclosed form and return it by post or by hand by **Monday 27th January 2014**. The team will be finalised as soon as possible after this so that fund-raising can begin. It will not be possible to purchase flights until September 2014 and only then will it be possible to provide you with more exact information about the final cost of the expedition.

For all those interested, a representative from Operation Wallacea will visit on Thursday 23rd January to give a presentation on exactly what the expedition will entail. This will take place in the SLT at 7:15pm. Parents are welcome to attend.

Yours sincerely



Dr. Richard Case.

Confirmation Form: Biology Expedition to Guyana 2015

Name of student: _____ Form/Year: _____

House: _____

I wish for my son/daughter to be included in the Biology Expedition to Guyana and I will underwrite any failure of my son/daughter to raise the funds required. I understand that the expedition will require a high level of physical fitness and good health. Given the nature of the expedition, they must also be able to demonstrate that they can behave maturely and demonstrate a high-level of self-discipline.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Future expedition correspondence will be by email. Please print your email address/addresses carefully below.

Email: _____

Finally, please understand that there are 20 places available and I cannot at this stage guarantee places. Priority will be given in the following order and a selection process may have to be used:

Current L6th form aiming to study biology at university

Current L6th form aiming to study A2 biology

Other L6th formers

Current 5th form aiming to study A Level biology

Other 5th form

4th Form

Those in the 4th form will have another opportunity in 2017.