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## **Biological Expedition to Guyana** **July 2019**

- **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, Madagascar, Guyana and Ecuador, the Biology Department will return to Guyana in 2019. The Guiana Shield region is little known and overlain by the largest expanse of undisturbed tropical rain forest in the world. Guyana has extremely high biodiversity with 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. Given our experiences on the 2015 expedition, this location is one of the most adventurous and exciting available and it also offers the opportunity to visit Kaieteur Falls – one of the world's greatest, most beautiful and most remote waterfalls, with the most powerful flow rate and the largest single drop.

The expedition is open to Current, L6th, 5th and 4th Formers and, while Pre-U biologists will be given priority, places may be available for non-biologists.

### **Dates**

The proposed dates are from 7<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019. These dates may require slight adjustment depending on the availability of flights.

### **Organisation**

The expedition will be run by **Operation Wallacea** ([www.opwall.com](http://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 for 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 near Surama Village 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.

Field surveys 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. Our main goal will be to conduct standardised surveys of water birds and giant otter distribution. We will camp on the banks of the river each night using hammocks and mosquito nets. This is will be a deep forest experience. The trip from Georgetown to Kaieteur Falls will take place either at the start or end of the expedition to best suit the timings of our international flights.

### Costs

The total cost of the trip will be in the region of £3120. At this early stage it is difficult to estimate costs and the total may increase. A lot depends on international flights. Costs include:

- Expedition fees from Operation Wallacea, including scientific gear, training, food and accommodation
- International flights
- Internal flights and transfers
- Park Entry fees and visas

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. Any team fundraising that takes place will be for charity and will go directly to the communities we will be working with to promote education and conservation. 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 in Pre-U biology and at university and much of what we learn will be of direct relevance to the Pre-U biology course. Mention of the expedition and commitment to fundraising on a UCAS personal statement will provide a powerful demonstration of subject interest and initiative 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 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018**. It will not be possible to purchase flights until September 2018 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 1<sup>st</sup> February at 7:30pm to give a presentation in the Science Lecture Theatre on exactly what the expedition will entail. Parents are welcome to attend.

Yours sincerely



Dr. Richard Case.

## Confirmation of Interest Form: Biology Expedition to Guyana 2019

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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 studying Pre-U biology

Current 5th form aiming to study Pre-U biology biology

Other L6th formers

Other 5th form

4<sup>th</sup> Form (Those in the 4th form will have another opportunity in 2021).

L6th Entrants in September 2018 are eligible too.