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Biological Expedition to Fiji **July 2021**

- **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 be going to Fiji in 2021. The tropical forests of Fiji contain some of the richest communities of flora and fauna of all the oceanic islands of the Pacific. Moreover, their unusual biogeographical history, complex topography and relative isolation has led a large number of the species found in Fiji to be endemic. Over half of all Fiji's vascular plants are endemic, many of which are confined to a single island or single site, including some of the world's most primitive plant species. Twenty-five birds occur only in Fiji and most of the reptiles, amphibians, bats, and invertebrates are unique to the islands. Because many of the species found in Fiji are restricted to only one or a few islands, they are vulnerable to human disturbance. The monitoring we will carry out will contribute to the development of a National Park and as part of the project, we will spend a week diving in Natewa Bay to establish a series of transects that will be monitored annually for fish diversity and abundance using stereo video and to examine any changes occurring in the reef structure using 3D modelling from data collected using Go Pros.

The expedition is open to Current, L6th, 5th and 4th Formers and, while 6th Form Biologists will be given priority, places may be available for non-biologists.

Dates

The proposed dates are from 8th – 26th July 2021. These dates may require slight adjustment depending on the availability of flights.

Organisation

The expedition will be run by **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 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 Vanua Levu and spend our first days at home stays in the local coastal villages. We will then trek into the hills for four nights.

Along with a series of lectures, field surveys will include the following activities:

- Forest structure and carbon surveys
- Butterfly and other invertebrate surveys
- Bird surveys
- Forest classification and mongoose impact surveys

During the second week we will complete a reef ecology course. Non-divers will be able to snorkel but those wishing to dive must ensure that they have their PADI Open Water certification.

Costs

The total cost of the trip will be in the region of £3560. 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, marine equipment, training, food and accommodation
- International flights
- Internal flights and transfers
- Park Entry fees

Vaccination costs are not included. 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 6th Form Biology and at university. 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 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 email, post or by hand by **Tue 28th January 2019**. It will not be possible to purchase flights until October 2019 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 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 Fiji 2020

Name of student: _____ Form/Year: _____

House: _____

I wish for my son/daughter to be included in the Biology Expedition to Fiji 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 studying Pre-U biology

Current 5th form aiming to study Biology in the 6th Form

Other L6th formers

Other 5th form

4th Form (Those in the 4th form will have another opportunity in 2023).

L6th Entrants in September 2019 are eligible too.