



Aspire & Achieve Together

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Executive Principal: Ms M. Gage BA (Hons), NPQH

Dear Parent/Guardian

I would like to invite you to an informational session about a potential two-week expedition to Croatia in Summer 2020 to help with biodiversity surveys run by Operation Wallacea. The presentation will be given on **Monday 28th January, 6pm in B21** and is open to **Year 11 and 12 scientists** but any student that is interested in biology, ecology and conservation is welcome to attend.



This expedition takes part in the southern part of Croatia. During glacial times the biodiversity refuges of Europe were the Iberian, Apennine and Balkan peninsulas, which have managed to conserve tropical elements of flora and fauna. The most important biodiversity elements of the present day Balkan region are the short but very large river valleys through the karst limestone areas and the biogeography of the numerous Adriatic islands. This is the setting for Operation Wallacea's expedition here, where students will be collecting data to help with the development of the most detailed biodiversity annual monitoring programme of key taxa in Croatia, as well as examining community structure and changes over time.

In their first week, the project will be based at Krka National Park. Students will have the opportunity to take part in various surveys including tortoise, terrapin and snake surveys, cave surveys (including transects monitoring cave fauna and soil sampling), bird mist net and point count surveys, butterfly Pollard counts and grasshopper surveys and otter surveys. In addition to these surveys, students will also complete a lecture series covering subjects such as Balkans wildlife ecology, apex predators and food webs, and reptile communities and niche overlap.

For the second week students will move to Silba Island, the oldest marine park in the Mediterranean. Here students can complete their PADI Open Water dive training, or if they are already qualified (or just wish to snorkel), they can take part in an Adriatic ecology course. They will also have the opportunity to participate in analysis of data from stereo video monitoring of fish populations and assisting with seagrass monitoring surveys.

The expedition cost is £1275 per student which covers all food, accommodation, transfers between sites, £1 million medical and evacuation insurance, dive training, diving and participation in the research programme. In addition, there are the costs of travel to and from the site and the travel cost for the accompanying teachers (no unaccompanied student groups are allowed) and the total estimated costs are **£2000**. Once the group is formed, professional fundraisers will train the group in how to raise some of the funds needed for such an expedition and this not only reduces the costs, but also stands out on CV's when applying for university.

You can use the expedition to gain extra UCAS points by doing an EPQ or use the experience for your extended essay project if doing the IB Diploma. In addition, students applying for UK universities automatically qualify for a University Award just by completing the expedition which can be included on their UCAS form.

I look forward to seeing you on the evening.

Miss Pothitos
m.pothitos@tsatrust.org.uk

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Please return to Ms L Wood in the Office.

I confirm that I/we will be attending the presentation on Monday 28th January, 6pm being held in B21 regarding the proposed trip to Croatia.

..... Name of Student Form Group

..... Parent'