

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/Conference Title: Operation Wallacea Honduras Expedition 2009

Travel Dates: 10/Jun/2009 to 04/Aug/2009.....

Location: Honduras, National Cosuco Parque and Cayos Cothinos Island.....

Group Member(s): Agnieszka Piatkowska.....

Aims: Monitoring biodiversity at Cosuco National Parque as a research assistant.....

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

During my voluntary work I learned a lot about ecology and biodiversity of tropical rain forest. I worked alongside the academic teams investigating the abundance and diversity of the herpetofauna (reptiles and amphibians), birds, freshwater and terrestrial invertebrates, bats and small mammals in the park. I also gained experience of activities such as installing and emptying dung beetle traps, helping with light trapping of moths, sweep netting and fruit trapping for butterflies, completing point counts for birds, setting and emptying small mammal traps, assisting with mist net surveys for birds and bats, and setting and emptying pitfall traps for herpetofauna. Additionally I continue to assist with investigation of genetic diversity of key taxonomic groups by collecting a range of samples from plant and animals and extracting the DNA in our on-site laboratory. While Cayos Cothinos I completed the PADI open water diver and advanced diver training courses as they were essential for marine surveys I participated. I also completed a Caribbean coral reef ecology course. The objective of this course was to provide an understanding of marine survey techniques and develop identification skills of major marine taxa. I attended a series of lectures pertaining to coral reef ecology, taxonomy, survey techniques and successful management of reef systems.

That was valuable experience for me because as student of Developmental and Cell Biology I haven't studied this branch of Biology at all and I am happy I had opportunity to expand my knowledge in this field.