

# JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

## REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/Conference Title:** Operation Wallacea Expedition to Indonesia

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**Travel Dates:** 18/05/2012-19/07/2012

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**Location:** Indonesia

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**Group member(s):** Arthur Preston

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**Aims:** Support conservation efforts, gain personal experience, study marine biology, ecology and conservation practices.

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### OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

The support from the James Rennie Grant enabled me to travel to Indonesia to help in the conservation efforts being undertaken to help support coral ecosystems by Operation Wallacea. I was there for a total of four weeks, during which I was involved in a number of different projects.

During my first week, I undertook the compulsory Coral Reef Ecology. This involved a number of highly informative lectures in the subject of marine biology/ecology, conservation practices and field skills that we needed to be able to undertake our tasks in the following weeks. These lectures were supported with practical demonstrations out on the reef where specific species and sampling methods were revealed.

During my second week I was enrolled in the research assistant pool. This enabled me to be help in a number of research projects undertaken by the many individuals on the research base. I was involved in projects that included studies into: photographic transects to determine distribution of sponges, field observations of the behaviour of cleaner wrasse, distribution of sea fans in relation to sub surface currents and impact of disturbance on branching corals. This was a unique opportunity to experience a number of study methods in such a short time period.

I had previously planned to partake in a benthic monitoring programme during my third week, however the project manager had failed to reach the research base by the second week. I then chose to undertake a second week in the research pool as I had become interested in a particular study (photographic transects to determine distribution of sponges) and wished to continue to help this study.

My fourth and final week incorporated a week aboard the research vessel the Bintang Sedang. During this week we would travel around the Wakatobi marine reserve and undertake, fish, benthic organism and coral surveys. The data of these surveys were placed online to add to a global system of coral reef monitoring systems which help identify those areas of coral reef most at risk.

The experience and knowledge I gained from this expedition will no doubt help me in my future carrier. I would like to thank the James Rennie Bequest of the support I received. It helped me in funding the expedition which would very likely not have happened had support not been received.