



Our Ref: HCR | NMO | 017

16th November 2018

Dear Parents / Carers

Operation Wallacea Scientific Expedition to Malawi in 2020

We are delighted that you and your child have shown an interest in the proposed expedition to Malawi from 14th – 27th July 2020 as we are sure that the trip will provide amazing opportunities for your child to develop independence, visit a developing country, and take part in international-quality scientific research. However, as this will require a big commitment, especially in terms of fund raising, we have included some detailed information below, which we would ask that you read through carefully before signing up.

Operation Wallacea

We have chosen to work with Operation Wallacea - <https://www.opwall.com/> - as they have vast experience of running school expeditions abroad, and a very good safety record. We also believe that they offer 'something extra' in that students are participating in scientific research, to which they will make a meaningful and lasting contribution.

Itinerary

We will fly into Lilongwe, the capital of Malawi, where we will spend five days studying how humans interact with wildlife. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a range of activities, such as carnivore monitoring using camera traps and GPS collars, bat, bird and insect surveys, vegetation surveys and a cultural exchange with the local community. There will also be a programme of evening lectures covering topics like African biodiversity and human evolution. The next six days will be spent at Nkhata bay on the shores of Lake Malawi, with the opportunity to learn to dive and achieve an internationally recognised PADI open water qualification and then take part in fish surveys in the lake. Lake Malawi has over 800 species of cichlid fish living in it, and students will be helping scientists in their quest to unravel how all of these species evolved. Students do not have to dive if they do not want to; instead of the dive course there is the option to study the lake ecology by snorkelling. Finally, we will travel to Liwonde Safari Camp, where we will undertake boat and vehicle safaris, accompanied by expert local guides.

Benefits

The opportunity to visit a developing country, interact with local people and experience a different way of life speaks for itself. In addition, students will learn self-reliance and commitment as they fundraise, prepare for and take part in the expedition. Students will have the opportunity to be involved with established research projects, and to contribute to the scientific work that is being undertaken. They will participate in an array of different research studies, including underwater studies and learn how different kinds of research are carried out; this is fantastic preparation for those students who wish to take their Science further. Finally, they will have the opportunity to go on safari and view megafauna such as elephants and hippos in their natural environment.

Accommodation

Students will stay in shared single-sex dormitory accommodation with showers available and have their meals provided. All sites have mobile phone signal, but no wifi.

Head Teacher - David Alexander BA (Hons); MSc

Eligibility

This expedition is open to all current Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12 students who are planning to still be studying at Rednock in 2020 (please do not apply if your child is in Year 11 and knows for sure that they aren't going to apply to Rednock Sixth Form). Students do not need to be studying Science, but do need an interest in Biological Science and / or conservation. The most important attribute required is a willingness to take part and 'give things a go'.

As students will be carrying out studies around and in Lake Malawi, they need to be able to swim 200m unaided and tread water for 10 minutes, by the time we go on expedition.

Equipment and Vaccinations Needed

Operation Wallacea will send out detailed kit lists closer to the date of the expedition, but generally speaking, students should not need large amounts of specialist kit. They will, however, need:

- A passport with at least 6 months validity.
- A wetsuit.
- To have visited a GP or vaccination clinic and had all of the recommended vaccinations. For Malawi, students may also be advised to take malarial prophylactics (but not Larium, as this is incompatible with diving).

Safety

Operation Wallacea have an excellent safety record, and the trip has been fully risk assessed; details can be found here - <https://www.opwall.com/resource/malawi-health-and-safety/>. Students will be accompanied by two members of Rednock staff at all times, and will undertake all of the in-country activities under the supervision of expert staff. Operation Wallacea provides comprehensive medical insurance as part of their package.

Costs

The approximate cost of the expedition is £2579. The reason that the cost is approximate is that it is currently too early to book flights, and the cost of these can vary. Operation Wallacea assure us that they will do everything possible to make sure that the final trip cost is at or below this estimate. As soon as we have finalised an expedition team, we will invite Operation Wallacea to run a fundraising meeting to get students started, and we will make sure that we support students extensively to help them raise the money.

There will be a few additional costs to consider:

- Visa - \$75 USD
- Any additional personal insurance you wish to purchase.
- A dive manual if you are doing the PADI course - £69
- Hire of dive equipment - £50
- The cost of vaccinations and anti-malarials.
- Transport to and from the airport – we will consider booking this as a group, once the flight details are finalised.

Payment schedule

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| • Deposit | £150 |
| • 2 nd Instalment: 1 st May 2019 | £601 |
| • 3 rd Instalment: 1 st October 2019 | £601 |
| • 4 th Instalment: 1 st December 2019 | £601 |
| • Balance Payment: 1 st March 2020 | £626 approximately |

Once flights have been booked, the final balance payment will be altered accordingly.

Head Teacher - David Alexander BA (Hons); MSc

Cancellation Procedure

Although we hope that everyone who signs up will be committed to going on the expedition in 2020 (due to the costs involved, it will be difficult to find replacements at late notice), we understand that there may be circumstances where cancellation is unavoidable. Operation Wallacea advise us that the following charges will apply should you have to cancel:

Period before Departure

Before 15 September 2019

15 September - 31 December 2019

1 January – 28 February 2020

1 March – 30 April 2020

1 May – start of expedition

Cancellation charge per person*

Loss of £150 deposit

£150 deposit + 25% of total package price

£150 deposit + 50% of total package price

£150 deposit + 75% of total package price

100% of total package price.

Signing Up

Operation Wallacea have 16 places available, and are holding these until early December. If your child would like to take part in the trip, please complete the attached form and return to me at school, with the deposit by **Monday 3rd December**, so that I can collate the information and send it to Operation Wallacea. If the trip is oversubscribed, we feel that the fairest way of selecting students is to draw names randomly from a hat.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely

Dr H Craig

helen.craig@rednockschool.org.uk

Mrs L Johnston

liana.johnston@rednockschool.org.uk

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Operation Wallacea Scientific Expedition to Malawi in 2020

Student's Name: _____ Year Group: _____ Tutor Group: _____

I would like my child to take part in the Operation Wallacea expedition to Malawi from 14th – 27th July. I understand that the final cost will be around £2579 and will be due in instalments.

I understand that if the trip is oversubscribed, names will be drawn from a hat, and if my child is not chosen, the deposit will be refunded.

Student's School Email Address: _____

Parent's Name: _____ Parent's Phone Number: _____

Parent's Email Address: _____

- I enclose a cheque for the deposit of £150
- I wish to pay the £150 deposit by Parent Pay

Completed slip and deposit to be received by Monday 3rd December – thank you

Head Teacher - David Alexander BA (Hons); MSc

