

“You learn a lot at School or Uni but this is learning you can’t get by staying at home”

Raj, Alfred Wallace Award recipient 2017



Thanks to Premier Oil’s sponsorship of the Alfred Wallace Awards, ten students were once again able to travel to Indonesia this summer to take part in vital field work, learn environmental research skills and change their outlook on life....



Students awarded an Alfred Wallace grant use the money towards their participation on scientific research projects conducted in the Wallacea region of Indonesia. During the eight week projects, students conduct bio-diversity studies, experience the highs (and lows) of real-life environmental research and contribute to on-going scientific investigations.

The students work alongside world class scientists and the daily lectures from these experts complement the hands-on data gathering that is a core part of all the projects. Four of this year’s recipients used this amazing opportunity to gather data for their undergraduate dissertations and found the advice and guidance they received from the senior scientists and PhD researchers invaluable.

Half of the grant recipients were analysing the amazing marine ecosystems of the region, diving daily to gather data on topics such as the impact of El Nino on coral bleaching. Their land based counterparts trekked through pristine rainforest, identifying species and capturing diversity data which will be used to campaign for protection for these vulnerable areas.

But working in remote locations brings new challenges – *“at first it was a bit of a culture shock to arrive to a bucket shower and no internet!”*

Isabella, Research Assistant, 2017.

Thanks to Premier Oil, the grants mean we can nurture new scientists and give young people the chance to experience hands-on science in the field.

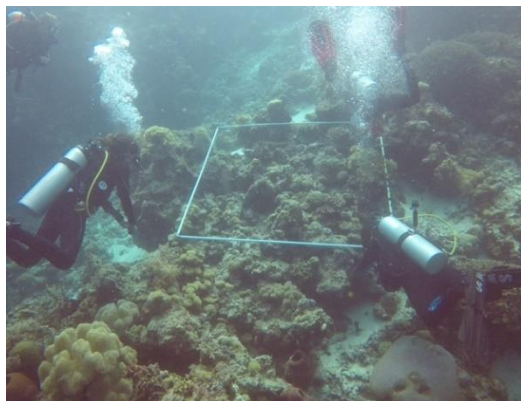
Feedback from this year’s cohort shows the impact the experience has had on future ambitions.

“Getting the chance to talk in a relaxed environment to scientists at the top of their field, and see first hand their own research, was so inspiring and gave me so many ideas about future careers and the life of a research scientist”. **Sydney, Dissertation Student, 2017**

“The grant from Premier Oil meant I could broaden my skill set as a scientist and do genuine, hands-on field research” **Olivia, Dissertation Student, 2017.**



By adding to the bio-diversity data collected previously at these sites, this year's grant recipients have contributed to an extraordinarily valuable asset. Scientists searching for ways to safeguard our natural environment need this baseline information and thanks to the longstanding involvement of the Trust in this region, there is robust, reliable data available. This greatly improves the quality of the research that can be performed.



“The analysis was a time consuming but rewarding challenge and it was a good feeling to know that you were contributing to the Trust’s long-term database”.

Isabella, Research Assistant, 2017

For each of the students, the experience has been eye-opening and transformative. Whether coping with camp conditions or the frustrations of uncooperative fish, students have learnt they are capable of more than they thought. As **Martyn**, a grant recipient working on the marine project at Hoga observed:

“Working in the field is demanding and can be stressful at times. Having to constantly change and adapt ideas to best suit the environment is really essential. We can’t change the weather, we can’t change the water conditions and we can’t make the animals behave how we like!”

Alongside their new research skills, the students have learnt teamwork, flexibility and resilience whilst experiencing new cultures and making lifelong friends. The enthusiasm and pride can be read in the reports submitted from each of this year's grant recipients.

“My expedition to Indonesia has helped me to find my passion and now I feel I am capable of anything!”

Abigail, Research Assistant, 2017



The Trust and each of this year's students would like to thank Premier Oil for their sponsorship of the Alfred Wallace Grants.



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