

The Heard Island Project

Discovering Life in the Extremes

OVERVIEW

The Heard Island Project is a multi-disciplinary scientific expedition to a very remote sub-Antarctic island in the Southern Ocean, combined with an open-source model of organization, development, and support.

The expedition is scheduled for Nov.-Dec, 2015. It will include a team of more than 25, roughly one-half environmental scientists searching for unknown life and one-half communications specialists.

Projects include the first traverse of the live 9000-ft. volcano Big Ben; extensive studies of glaciers and vents on the flanks of the volcano; documentation of plastic and other debris; collection of microscopic animals to study climate changes and cryptobiosis; detection and study of topographically-generated vortex winds; aerial imaging of wildlife; and measurement of vortex winds produced by the local topography.

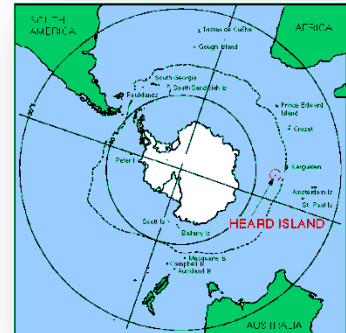
A conspicuous feature of the expedition will be its real-time presence on a multiplicity of websites, enabling direct interaction with scientists, students, and the public. An unusual aspect of the Project is that it is being carried out under an open-source model of collaborative development. It is expected that through this open-source process more than 1 million persons will be virtual participants in the Project.

PERSONNEL

The Project was created by Dr. Robert Schmieder, a multi-disciplinary physicist-explorer, who has organized and led major expeditions to very remote sites for 30 years. Working with Schmieder is a core team of highly experienced mountaineers, biologists, and radio operators and engineers, most of whom have participated in or led numerous previous expeditions. The project is being overseen by the Australian Antarctic Division, which issues the landing permit. Honorary Radio Expedition Leader is Nobel-prize winner Joseph Taylor. Honorary Expedition Leader is Jean-Michel Cousteau. The expedition is dedicated to the 14 men who carried out the first research expedition to Heard Island, in 1947.

BENEFITS

The expedition will be seen live worldwide through its satellite link. The connection will enable planners, scientists, and the general public to interact with the team on the island. Additional visibility will be enabled through the tens of thousands of contacts made by radio amateurs. Onsite, the team will accomplish a number of records, particularly the search for, and almost certain discovery, of previously unknown species of plants and animals. Scientific results will be published in appropriate journals, and general descriptions will be released to news agencies, online sites, and the popular press.



RESOURCES

The Project budget is US\$800k, of which 3/4 is the cost of the transportation by the vessel. The expedition will use the ice-strengthened 91 m vessel Akademik Shokalskiy, used for research in the Southern Ocean, sailing from Fremantle, Australia. Equipment, facilities, materials, and supplies comprise about 1/4 of the budget. The Project is soliciting sponsorship from companies, foundations, clubs, and individuals. The rewards of sponsorship are elaborated in a separate document ("Information for Sponsors").

AUDIENCE AND MARKET

The Project will reach the following *behavioral* groups: Well-educated, socially aware, active in supporting causes, energetic, travel-active, peaceful, nonmilitant, and joins groups. The Project will appeal to the following *motivational* groups: Save the World advocates, adventure-seekers, social media foragers, cool kids and tech nerds, scientists, and program managers. These groups constitute a target audience of perhaps 1 million people.

Experience on previous projects created and led by Dr. Schmieder has demonstrated the extraordinary value of implementing real-time interactive communications for expeditions. In 2005 he implemented real-time display of radio log data on the Kure Atoll expedition. When the operation began, there were more than 17,000 persons hitting the website, which eventually sustained 43 million hits.

The Project offers sponsors multiple channels for product exposure, integrated advertising, customer resource management, brand identification, and engagement through participation in the Project. Sponsorship opportunities are described in a document available from the Expedition Leader. Extensive documentation is available on the expedition website: www.heardisland.org.

SUMMARY

The central goal of the Heard Island Project is to discover unknown species in order to complete the description of the biodiversity of this isolated island, as primary input for models of the effects of global climate change. The strategy is to combine a strong scientific program of worldwide interest with the powerful capabilities of social networking and communications, to make a significant contribution to the preservation and rational management of Earth's natural resources and to the education of the next generation of her custodians. Through the portals of real-time communications, including amateur radio and real-time interactive websites and social media, the number of virtual participants and customers for information, products and services will be increased far beyond the actual expedition team, providing benefits that far exceed the actual cost of the Project.

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