

Project Update: February 2012

Forthcoming Expedition

The good news is that yesterday Taio Shipping gave us a date for a ship to the northern atolls: it's always a rarity up here. Anyway the ship should arrive at Tongareva Atoll next week sometime, it's going to a couple of atolls on the way; I have a berth booked onboard, so I'll probably get to Rarotonga mid-March 2012.

Our expedition is due to sail from Rarotonga on Saturday 31st March 2012 onboard Southern Cross we expect to arrive at Palmerston on 2nd April. We'll depart from the atoll on 28th April; and should get back to Rarotonga on 30th April or 1st May.

We have received official permission from Palmerston Island Council for our visit, and also from the Principal of Palmerston Lucky School: so we are able to work with the pupils there. It will be the Easter vacation during our trip, but we should get some contact time with the children; perhaps not as much as we'd like, but we'll do our best.

The GPS units turned out to be a bit more expensive than we'd planned: mainly because we need a different set of maps (Polynesian BlueChart) from those installed as standard. So I've decided to just buy one unit instead of two (I wanted good quality and reliability): that'll keep us about in budget. I think we've saved a bit on the radios, so I expect that all will balance nicely. I'll include everything in the final report.

We've got a couple of extra people joining the expedition: they were very keen to come. So the arrangement with them is that they'll pay their own fares on the yacht and their food and accommodation at Palmerston; even though they'll be part of our field-team. Again, I'll make all of this very clear in the final accounts: showing clearly what is set against the Rufford grant and anything that is outside of it.

So we are now in the final preparations phase: assembling all of the supplies, checking the gear; finalising any administrative needs etc. I'll let you know when we are ready to sail; and then we'll send you some photos and PR material once we deploy -~ should be a great adventure! I've been to Palmerston a couple of times before, but this will be the first proper sea turtle survey there. I think that we'll all be very pleased.