



Biological Research; Bahamas Iguanas

May Term 2017

May 10-May 31

Application Deadline: Oct. 15, 2016

Course description. This tropical biology experience will allow six students to be an integral part of a team doing field research on a population of endangered iguanas (from planning to data collection to data analysis, to report preparation). This study represents the longest continuous field study of any lizard in the world (our 38th year). We will also spend time identifying invertebrates in tide-pools and snorkeling on coral reefs for fishes and invertebrates. Prerequisites include Biological Diversity and EcoBio. Students will be evaluated on attendance and participation at orientation meetings during spring semester, field participation in May, on the content of their lab/field journals, and on their work preparing our final report. Final reports from recent trips are available by following the links at www.earlham.edu/~johni. Participants MUST be in good physical condition, and able to swim.

Background: This site is important because it is the only place in the world where these iguanas occur, and it has been my long-term study site since 1980 (involving 140 different students and 8 faculty over that time). Since the semester system does not allow us to do field biology on campus during the time of year during which most local field biological activity occurs (May to early June), we in Biology must do field work with students during May Term. We typically offer at least two field opportunities each May Term (seeking a mix of plant and animal, and temperate and tropical experiences). This is our tropical/animal program this year, and the only other May Term to be offered by Biology in 2017 is Jose Ignacio's Health Care program in Peru. As in 2015, our group will combine with a group of 6 students and one faculty member (Geoff Smith EC '90) from Denison University. All costs will be divided between the two student groups.

Faculty: John Iverson, Biology Research Professor. John is a biologist who investigates reptile ecology and systematics, particularly turtles and iguanas. Nearly every year since 1978, he has led research teams of students as he conducts continuing research on turtles (in Nebraska) and iguanas (in the Bahamas). This work has led to 53 peer-reviewed published papers with 30 different student co-authors.

Other staff: In addition to the owners of the boat (husband and wife, Bruce Dunham and Sheila Young; see attached), Captain Ron White of Good Fortune Charters out of Beaufort, North Carolina (trained marine biologist who leads biology-focused charters on his own boat each summer) will also join us. Bruce Dunham is a former Navy SEAL and is a trained EMT. We will be in VHF radio and cell phone contact with the outside world at all times, and BASRA (Bahamas Air and Sea Rescue) has its headquarters in Nassau (40 miles NW of our field site). We will also be working with the Bahamas National Trust and the Bahamas Environment, Science, and Technology Commission both before (e.g., for permits) and during the trip. Dr. Geoff Smith (EC '90, now at Denison University) and Lynne Yamaguchi Pieper (EC '85, now at the University of Illinois at Chicago), both participants on several previous trips and collaborators on several published papers on these iguanas, will also join us.

Accommodations: While on campus (three days at beginning of program; three days at the end), students will stay in college housing (or their own housing). Housing arrangements will be made through the campus housing coordinator. While in the Bahamas, we will live on the sailing vessel Beacon. We will eat and sleep on board, but spend about 11 hours a day on the islands themselves. Boat charter reservations have already been made.

May Term Site and Dates

May Term Site: EC campus before and after 10 day field trip to the Bahamas.

Itinerary:

15 September: Biology Colloquium informational meeting about Program

1 October 2016: John's individual application due to him (separate form from that of CGE)

10 October: participant selection

15 October: accepted participants must submit separate application to CGE

early November: first orientation meeting

early December: second meeting (especially to provide info for them to take to parents over break, but also to provide general background material to read over break)

Second semester 2015: ca. three meetings as well as attendance required at a Colloquium covering the long-term results of our studies.

mid April: Students will be provided with additional background reading material on iguanas to be read before May Term

6 May 2015: Earlham graduation

10-12 May: Classroom days (all day), reviewing the biology of iguanas and field techniques in field biology, and preparing for field work.

13 May: Early A.M.: Fly to Nassau, board boat; sightseeing in Nassau; sail to Allen Cays

14 May: begin field work

14-22 May: Field work in the Exumas

22 May: Return to Nassau; visit straw markets and other tourist shops

23 May: Midday flight to Dayton and return to Richmond

24-29 May: Data analysis and report preparation

Cost

The course fee is \$1200.00. This includes all housing and all travel costs. Students cover their own food while on campus, and will be charged a non-refundable fee of \$385.00. Earlham tuition fees apply if applicable

Applications

CGE applications are available on-line at <https://wildmanscience.wufoo.com/forms/ipo-may-term-application> or in the Center for Global Education in LBC 131. The CGE application deadline is October 15, 2016. In addition to this application, John Iverson has his own separate application (due 1 October).

May Term Policies: <http://earlham.edu/academics/off-campus-study/program-policies/for-may-terms/>

For More Information contact John Iverson (johni@earlham.edu or 765-983-1405)

PROGRAM PLANS SUBJECT TO CHANGE