

PRESS RELEASE



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STUDENTS RETURN FROM JOINT AFRICAN VISIT

A group of Yeovil College and Strode College students have given a presentation on their recent three-week field trip to Southern Africa.

27 students from the two colleges went on the trip, which is the latest in a string of exotic annual adventures designed to give students first hand experience of unusual environments. They travelled to four different countries; South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Zambia.



The students visited the marine habitats around Seal Island off Cape Town, where they watched great white sharks feed on seals. They climbed Table Mountain, where they saw wildlife including lizards, mongooses, snakes and rock hyraxes and also travelled by raft for 7.5km of the Orange River on the border between South Africa and Namibia. When they returned to dry land they visited Fish River Canyon, the second largest in the world. The dunes of the Namib Desert were also included in trip where the students learned about water rich

plants and animal tracking from bushmen.

The Okavango Delta in Botswana is the world's largest inland delta and was in flood when the students arrived. They took a three-hour journey in mokoro canoes made from the sausage tree, before taking part in a walking safari. This gave them the opportunity to see larger creatures including zebra, wildebeest, warthogs and ostrich. The students also took a scenic flight over the Delta, observing hippopotamus, buffalo and giraffe.

The students' journey also included a visit to Chobe National Park, the third largest park in Botswana. It has the highest population of elephants in Africa and the students saw not only these magnificent creatures, but also lions, hyena, baboons, vultures and Marabou stork.



The adventure finally ended with a visit to the World's tallest waterfall, Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River.

During the visit, the students also gained cultural experiences, including a visit to Robben Island where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated, haggling at local markets and traditional singing and dancing. They also completed project work throughout the journey, helping them research and interpret their experiences as they happened. Prizes for the best projects were given out as part of the presentation.

Gregg Raven (18) of Yeovil said *"I've been lucky enough to go on two trips now, last year's visit to Vietnam and the Philippines and this year's visit to Southern Africa. I really enjoyed the great white shark spotting and seeing the lionesses in Chobe National Park. They were amazing sights and not something you get to see every day! I definitely want to go back to Africa after I've finished university."* Gregg is currently taking a year out before going to Bournemouth University next year.



Charlie Harrison (17) of Yeovil said *"The shark day was amazing! I was so scared and so worried about being in the boat, but it was an absolutely amazing sight to see. The Okavango Delta was also a highlight."*

Charlotte Smith (17) of East Coker said *"It was a really pretty sight to see the amazing landscapes. Also, the company made it a good trip. I've made so many friends and I will stay in contact with them. The trip was great for me as a biologist because it's helped me to understand more about different habitats."*



Alan Morris, Head of Biology at Yeovil College co-organised the trip with Margaret Baker, Deputy Head of the A Level team at Strode College, Fiona Deacon, Head of Biology at Strode College and IT Specialist Rob Deacon. Alan said *"The students sign up to these trips with certain expectations. More often than not their experience is based upon what happens when they are on holiday with their parents. With trips like this, they are suddenly out of their comfort zone, getting up early, eating different food and experiencing different environments. They've learnt a lot as a result of this trip; not just about biology but about themselves and each other, and can now look at things in a different way. Seeing things through the students' eyes is the most amazing experience a lecturer can have."*



James Hampton, Principal of Yeovil College, was also at the presentation. He said *"This is a great example of how two colleges can work together successfully to give students the very best of learning opportunities. I want to say thank-you to all the staff involved and congratulations to the students for their presentation."*

Planning for next year's trip to Belize is already underway.

For more information on Science courses available at Yeovil College and Strode College can be found at www.yeovil.ac.uk or www.strode-college.ac.uk.

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Notes to Editors

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