

As of 2017, DEEPS officially partnered, for the first time ever, with Rice's Traveling Owls program. Faculty in our department will serve as hosts and guides for one or two trips each year. This year, Professor Cin-Ty Lee was the host of a cruise to the Galapagos Islands in January. In 2018, we host two more trips, a spring cruise led by Andre Droxler to the coral reefs of Belize and Mayan ruins, and a summer trip to Churchill Canada to look at arctic wildlife led by Cin-Ty Lee. Traveling Owls trips are run by highly reputable tour companies. You will be taken good care of!

We are still early in the development of our travel programs, so we are open to new ideas. We are considering an informal alumni and friends of DEEPS trip to the gem and mineral show in Quartzsite, Arizona in early January 2018, which we may combine with a trip into the Whipple Mountains metamorphic core complex.

Please contact [ctlee@rice.edu](mailto:ctlee@rice.edu) for more information, and watch our webpage at [earthscience.rice.edu](http://earthscience.rice.edu) for upcoming activities.

WONDERS OF THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS: Voyage of Discovery  
 JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 7, 2017  
 from \$5,495 per person, double occupancy  
 (limited to 15) / National Geographic Quest  
 Featuring Cin-Ty Lee, professor of geology and chair of earth sciences



Join Rice's Cin-Ty Lee, professor of geology, on this 10-day journey that will introduce you to the Galapagos Islands, a treasure trove of new discoveries. Set back and enjoy the UNESCO World Heritage site on a five-night cruise aboard the newly refitted, fast-paced and ship Santa Cruz. This unique expedition vessel includes a glass bottom view and is equipped with complimentary snorkeling gear and a fleet of Zodiacs and certified instructors.

You will visit six distinct islands to observe the exotic birds, animals and plants that inspired Charles Darwin, including species unknown elsewhere in the world. With few natural predators on the islands, the abundant wildlife is completely unafraid of human company at close quarters. You can snorkel alongside tropical parrotfish and playful sea lions and almost touch happy-bubbled iguanas. On land and in the water you will enjoy deluxe hotel accommodations in Quito, another UNESCO World Heritage site. Here, you will be able to view colonial churches and stroll the Ecuadorian town with one foot in either hemisphere.

The pre-tour option includes one night in Quito and two nights in a private residence in the Ecuadorian rainforest reserve. The six-night, post-tour option features Peru's Sacred Valley, Lima, Cusco and the "Inca city" of Machu Picchu.

**RICE ALUMNI TRAVELING OWLS**  
**Belize to Tikal: Reefs, Rivers & Ruins of The Maya World**  
 9 Days | National Geographic Quest | March 10-18, 2018



Board the new, 120-guest National Geographic Quest to explore some of the 65 species of stony coral and 500 species of fish on the Belize Barrier Reef. Snorkel or dive on colorful reefs, and kayak or paddleboard over turquoise lagoons. Then venture to the ancient Maya ruins of Tikal. See temples overgrown with tropical rain forest and explore the stories and archaeological sites of these stone ruins swathed in forest and teeming with wildlife.

**MARCH 10: DEPART U.S. / BELIZE CITY, BELIZE / EMBARK**  
 Fly to Belize. Embark National Geographic Quest. (D)

**MARCH 11: LAUGHING BIRD CAYE NATIONAL PARK OR SAPODILLA CAYES MARINE RESERVE, BELIZE**  
 Snorkel, kayak, or stand up paddleboard the crystalline waters of Laughing Bird Caye National Park or Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve. Discover the dazzling underwater of the Belize Barrier Reef, second only to the Great Barrier Reef in terms of biodiversity, while snorkeling or, if certified, scuba diving. (B,L,D)

**MARCH 12: QUIRIGUÁ & RIO DULCE, GUATEMALA**  
 See the highly detailed stone work of the Mayan ruins of Quiriguá, sculpted to glorify Maya kings. Lunch on the shores of Lake Izabal then take local boats through the beautiful limestone canyons of the Rio Dulce. (B,L,D)



**BELIZE TO TIKAL: REEFS, RIVERS & RUINS OF THE MAYA WORLD**



March 10-18, 2018  
 From \$5,490 per person, double occupancy  
 Lindblad Expeditions  
 Andre Droxler, Ph.D., Professor of DEEPS

Join us in discovering the dazzling reefs of Belize and the breath-taking Mayan ruins of Tikal on a unique land-and-sea expedition. Begin your journey aboard the newest ship in our fleet, the National Geographic Quest, you can snorkel, kayak, and stand-up paddleboard the crystalline waters of Laughing Bird Caye National Park or Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve. Then discover the vibrant ecosystem of the Belize Barrier Reef, the largest reef in the Northern Hemisphere while snorkeling among numerous species of stony coral and exotic sea life. Then venture to Tikal, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the most awe-inspiring archeological sites and urban centers of pre-Columbian Maya civilization. And while the Maya ruins are vast, you will have ample time to explore them. Hike nearby trails, or explore the little-visited Mayan ruins of Yaxha, the third largest ruin in the Maya world, all under the sure guidance of our unparalleled 10-person expedition team. You will be accompanied by an expedition leader, veteran naturalists, a Lindblad-National Geographic certified photo instructor, an undersea specialist, as well as a wellness specialist and video chronicler.

**Rice University Traveling Owls Present:**  
**Polar Bears & Beluga Whales**  
 JULY 23, 2018 – JULY 29, 2018  
 \$3,995\* + \$995 Internal Airfare



With beluga whales filling the bay and polar bears roaming the shoreline, summer is the perfect time to visit Churchill to experience this amazing wildlife spectacle.

**Program Highlights!**

- Begin in Winnipeg with a private reception and three-course welcome dinner at Assiniboine Park Zoo along with a presentation on polar bears.
- In Churchill, stay at the iconic Lacey Bear Lodge, hand-built by local pioneer Wally Davidson from boreal forest timbers and stone.
- Explore Churchill's waterfront area including panoramic visits to the sites of Miss Piggy Plane Crash, Polar Bear "Jail," and Cape Merry.
- Enjoy a 6-Hour Hudson Bay area tour, on board a custom-designed viewing boat to observe polar bears, beluga whales, seals, a multitude of birds, and much more.
- Embark on Zodiacs to see and experience pods of friendly beluga whales up close, and watch the shoreline for other wildlife.
- Take a Summer Tundra Tour on the Arctic Cruiser to observe wildlife, vegetation and enjoy a walk on the tundra, something only possible during summer months when polar bears are elsewhere.
- Hear tales of arctic racing and experience dog sledding for yourself on boreal forest trails.
- What's included: 6 nights hotel and lodge accommodations; 6 breakfasts, 4 lunches, and 2 dinners including a special welcome reception and dinner plus a farewell reception; all excursion transportation and entry fees; full guiding services and specialized presentations by an Orbridge Expedition Leader, and all gratuities.

**Your Itinerary!**  
NOTE: Only dates and activities will be determined by weather, availability of crew members, and other seasonal matters. For more info see the service and/or contract.

- Day 1: Arrive Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada / Assiniboine Park Zoo
- Day 2: Winnipeg / Churchill / Cultural and Heritage Tour
- Day 3: Churchill / Boat Tour / Prince of Wales Fort / Dog Sledding
- Day 4: Churchill / Hudson Bay Coastal Tour
- Day 5: Churchill / Arctic Cruiser Experience / Eskimo Museum
- Day 6: Churchill / Winnipeg
- Day 7: Depart Winnipeg

**RICE ALUMNI TRAVELING OWLS**

\*Special group rate, limited offer, subject to change. Rate is per person based on double occupancy except where noted as Single. In U.S. dollars. Single availability limited. Airfare not included. Group airfare for the charter flight between Winnipeg and Churchill is charged additionally at \$995 per person. (Excludes taxes and charges)

**POLAR BEARS & BELUGA WHALES**

July 23-29, 2018  
 From \$3,995 per person, double occupancy  
 Orbridge  
 Cin-Ty Lee, Ph.D. Professor of DEEPS



Join us on this unique excursion north to discover the beauty and wilderness of Churchill, Manitoba. Known as the "Polar Bear Capital of the World," this small town on the banks of the Hudson Bay is a summer home for these majestic animals, who spend the warmer seasons on the local shores before returning to the pack ice of the North Pole when it forms in early winter. In summer, this area is also home to more than 60,000 beluga whales and a fascinating variety of other wildlife. Come and witness this outstanding intersection of cold climate creatures that can only be found here in the Canadian north, and meet the local people who call it home. Pioneering spirits, welcoming smiles and abundant fresh air make this an amazing getaway from the bustle of everyday life.

For more information about these trips, and to view a complete 2018 Traveling Owls catalog please visit [www.alumni.rice.edu/travelingowls](http://www.alumni.rice.edu/travelingowls)





*Magnificent Frigate Bird  
Galapagos Island  
Photo by Cin-Ty Lee*

DEEPS are now traveling with our alums! It started with the “Birding with Pete Vail” series two years ago. Many of you probably didn’t know that Pete Vail is quite the birder, so we are now conducting two Vail birding trips a year; a fall “Hawk Watching” trip to Smith Point, and a spring “Migration” trip at High Island. These trips are designed so that both beginners and veterans of all ages and mobility are welcome. Some come for the birds, some come for the camaraderie and reunion. On our last trip to High Island, we were graced with fantastic views of nesting roseate spoonbills and egrets at the High Island rookery, along with great Texas barbecue!

Professor Andre Droxler has begun taking friends and alums out to central Texas to tour 500 million year old stromatolites. The exposures are arguably some of the best preserved bioherms in the world, initially only accessible by kayak on exposures along the Llano river, and in the last five years, through the generous allowance of private land owners. - C.T. Lee



*Lower left: Dorothy Ballentine, John Sneider, and Cin-Ty Lee on Floreana Island in the Galapagos, January, 2017*



*Above: High Island rookery in April, 2017. Left to right, Pete Vail, Kevin Biddle, Bob Mitchum, Cin-Ty Lee.*

*Below: Hawkwatching at Smith Point, October, 2016. Left to right, Cin-Ty Lee, Kurt Rudolph, Ann Mitchum, Pete Vail, Malcolm Ross, Kevin Biddle, and Bob Mitchum.*



*Cambrian bioherms along the Llano River. Alumni pictured are Kevin Biddle, Katherine Biddle, Mitch Harris, Kurt Rudolph.*