

## A lost world discovered in Papua New Guinea

A lost world of giant woolly rats, fanged frogs, grunting fish and tiny bear-like creatures has recently been discovered in Papua New Guinea. The exciting discovery was made by scientists and biologists in a remote volcanic jungle crater on the main island on the Pacific island. The scientists who came from the United States, Britain and Papua New Guinea arrived at their destination by helicopter. Stepping off it they found themselves on a mist shrouded rim of the crater of Mount Bosavi. When they climbed into the kilometre deep crater where few humans have been they soon found more than 40 previously unidentified species. They explored a pristine jungle habitat teeming with life that has evolved in total isolation since the volcano last erupted more than 200,000 years ago. The expedition which lasted five weeks discovered 16 new species of frogs which have never been seen before; at least three new fish species, a new bat breed and a giant rat, which could turn out to be the biggest rat in the world.

The discoveries are being seen as fresh evidence of the richness of the world's rainforests. The explorers hope that their finds will add weight to calls for international action to prevent the demise of similar ecosystems. They said Papua New Guinea's rainforest is being destroyed at the rate of 3.5% a year. Dr George McGavin, Head Scientist of the BBC Natural History Unit, who headed the expedition said, "It was mind blowing to be there and it is clearly time we pulled our finger out and decided these habitats are worth saving." The team of biologists included experts from London Zoo, Oxford University, the Smithsonian Institution and the BBC Natural History Unit. They found the 3km wide crater populated by spectacular birds of paradise and in the absence of big cats and monkeys, which are found in the remote jungles of the Amazon and Sumatra, the main predators are the giant monitor lizards while kangaroos have evolved to live in trees. Awesome!

New species include a fanged frog, a jungle spider that camouflages as lichen and a buff-faced pigmy parrot. Other new exotic discoveries found include a hairy caterpillar, a camouflaged gecko and black and yellow noctuid caterpillars that when they sit together they resemble a small snake

**Category: Nature / Papua New Guinea / Discovery**

**Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate**

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- the scientist's think this is a defence strategy. Also a never before seen Bosavi silky cuscus, which is a marsupial that lives up trees and feeds on fruits and leaves. Scientists also discovered a fish they called the Henamo grunter, as it makes grunting noises from its swim bladder. The explorers also unearthed an iridescent beetle in the rainforest and a common-tubed nosed bat. They also came across a striped possum that lets out a strong odour as a defence mechanism and several strange new fish.

The most surprising find however was the Bosavi rat – named after the volcano. It had no fear of humans when it was discovered in the volcanic crater. The vegetarian rat, which is 82cm long, is believed to live only in the crater. Dr George McGavin: "This rat was incredibly tame. It just sat next to me nibbling on a piece of leaf. It won't have seen a human before. The crater of Mount Bosavi really is the lost world." Steve Backshall, a climber and naturalist: "These discoveries are really significant. The world is getting a lot smaller and it is getting very hard to find places that are so far off the beaten track."

The adventure could have come straight out of Arthur Conan Doyle's 'The Lost World' which chronicled the discovery of long lost species including the dinosaur on an Amazonian plateau. Equally strange within the 1,000-metre enclosed walls was, it seems, a tree kangaroo, butterflies the size of a paperback book, stick insects the length of a human forearm and a fat-lipped tentacled fish that looked like it had swallowed an octopus. The pristine jungle location was so remote that the expedition team worked with local trackers. They first descended into the volcano in January. The group had to organise the planting of fields of sweet potato and spinach in the jungle six months in advance to provide food. Weeks were spent seeking permissions to cross land owned by local clans. Long discussions, which were held in smoky huts, had to be translated into Kasua, the local language, which is spoken by fewer than 1,000 people.

**Some meanings:** Lichen = disguised as fungus; Pigmy = small; Gecko = small tropical lizard; Cuscus = these are monkeys that have large eyes, small ears, a pointed snout and a long prehensile tail; Marsupial = Any of various nonplacental mammals of the order Marsupialia, including Kangaroos, opossums, bandicoots, and wombats, found principally in Australia and the Americas. Iridescent = displaying a play of lustrous colours like those of the rainbow; Possum = Australian pouched animal. Tentacled = having tentacles. Tentacles are a narrow, flexible, unjointed part, extending from the body of certain animals, such as an octopus, jellyfish, or sea anemone. Tentacles are used for feeling, grasping, or moving. Pristine = An area found in a pure state; uncorrupted by civilization. Noctuid = a type of moth.

## EXERCISES

**1. Lost World's:** What do you know about 'Lost World's'? Do you know where any are? Are they real? Do you know any fictional ones? Go round the room swapping details.

**2. Geography: Papua New Guinea:** Where is Papua New Guinea? Where is the country near? What is its capital? Draw a map on the board then look on Google maps. Try to find Mount Bosavi. What does it tell you?

**3. Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self correct your work from page two - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

**4. Reading:** Get students to read the passage aloud. Swap readers every paragraph.

**5. Vocabulary:** Students now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

**6. The article:** Students look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?
- c) Would you like to visit this crater?

**7. Let's think!** With your partner add five animals from the article you might discover in a lost world. Then add five things you might see. Discuss together.

Five animals you might discover	Five things you might see
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**8. Let's talk! An explorer and a scientist in a pub:** In pairs. Imagine you are either an explorer or a scientist. You are both in a pub. Over a beer you get talking about an expedition one of you has just returned from in Papua New Guinea. *5-minutes.*

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**9. Let's think! Ten unusual animals:** In pairs/small groups. Think of ten unusual animals you know. Write them below. Discuss them. Which animal is the most unusual? Which is the most dangerous? Which is the friendliest? Which is the biggest? Which is the smallest?

1	6
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**10. Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

**Student A**

- 1) Name the countries.
- 2) Name the crater.
- 3) When did the volcano last erupt?
- 4) Name two of the new species found.
- 5) How many new species were discovered?

**Student B**

- 1) Name the book.
- 2) Where were the biologists from?
- 3) What were the main predators found in the crater?
- 4) What was the most surprising find?
- 5) Name the local language.

**11. Discovering a lost world:** In pairs/groups. Each person chooses to be one of the following people. You are in Papua New Guinea on a scientific expedition to discover a lost world you have heard about. Create a short story about it. Tell it to your partner/group. Try to make it interesting, funny, the challenges! Students try to interlink or interact the storylines!

1 BBC TV journalist	3 20-year-old backpacker
2 Scientist	4 Local tribesman

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to tell their stories in front of the class.

**12. Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher: **A lost world**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

**13. Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) A lost world \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Papua New Guinea \_\_\_\_\_
- c) The adventure \_\_\_\_\_
- d) The scientists \_\_\_\_\_

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## DISCUSSION

### Student A's questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Would you like to go to Papua New Guinea? Why? Why not?
- 3) When did you first hear about this new lost world?
- 4) Do you like watching nature programmes on TV?
- 5) Do you think it's right that the jungle in Papua New Guinea is being destroyed at a rate of 3.5% each year?
- 6) Are you into conservation? How?
- 7) What is the most spectacular place you have ever visited?
- 8) Do you think it was right for man to discover this lost world?
- 9) Would you have liked to have been in the expedition? Why? Why not?
- 10) Do you know anyone who has ever been to Papua New Guinea? If yes, when? How was it?

### Student B's questions

- 1) What vegetables have you planted recently?
- 2) What is the most unusual animal you have seen?
- 3) Have you read Arthur Conan Doyle's 'The Lost World'?
- 4) Would you like to go on an expedition? If yes, where?
- 5) Do you like discovering new things in life? If yes, what?
- 6) What is the biggest animal you know?
- 7) What is the smallest animal you know?
- 8) What is the most unusual animal you have seen?
- 9) Did you like this discussion?
- 10) Do you think there are any crocodiles or other dangerous reptiles in Papua New Guinea?

## SPEAKING

Let's play a game! I went to a zoo...

*Allow 10 minutes*

Form a circle or go round the room in a clockwise direction.

### **"I went to a Zoo and I saw a ..."**

The idea of the game is that each person has to remember what was previously said. Then add one more animal/bird of your own. The list will therefore get longer and longer.

When a student cannot remember the order or cannot think of an animal/bird they are 'eliminated'!

The winner is the one at the end not eliminated!

The teacher can moderate the session.

## GAP FILL: READING

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

### A lost world discovered in Papua New Guinea

A lost (1)\_\_\_\_\_ of giant woolly rats, fanged frogs, grunting fish and tiny bear-like creatures has recently been discovered in Papua New Guinea. The exciting discovery was made by scientists and biologists in a (2)\_\_\_\_\_ volcanic jungle crater on the main island on the Pacific island. The scientists who came from the United States, Britain and Papua New Guinea arrived at their destination by (3)\_\_\_\_\_. Stepping off it they found themselves on a (4)\_\_\_\_\_ shrouded (5)\_\_\_\_\_ of the (6)\_\_\_\_\_ of Mount Bosavi. When they climbed into the kilometre deep crater where few humans have been they soon found more than 40 previously unidentified species. They explored a (7)\_\_\_\_\_ jungle habitat teeming with life that has evolved in total (8)\_\_\_\_\_ since the volcano last erupted more than 200,000 years ago. The expedition which lasted five weeks discovered 16 new species of frogs which have never been seen before; at least three new fish species, a new bat breed and a giant rat, which could turn out to be the biggest rat in the world.

The discoveries are being seen as fresh evidence of the (1)\_\_\_\_\_ of the world's (2)\_\_\_\_\_. The explorers hope that their finds will add weight to calls for international action to prevent the demise of similar ecosystems. They said Papua New Guinea's rainforest is being destroyed at the rate of 3.5% a year. Dr George McGavin, Head Scientist of the BBC Natural History Unit, who headed the expedition said, "It was mind blowing to be there and it is clearly time we pulled our finger out and decided these (3)\_\_\_\_\_ are worth saving." The team of biologists included experts from London Zoo, Oxford University, the Smithsonian Institution and the BBC Natural History Unit. They found the 3km wide crater populated by (4)\_\_\_\_\_ birds of paradise and in the (5)\_\_\_\_\_ of big cats and monkeys, which are found in the remote (6)\_\_\_\_\_ of the Amazon and Sumatra, the main (7)\_\_\_\_\_ are the giant monitor lizards while (8)\_\_\_\_\_ have evolved to live in trees!

*helicopter*

*pristine*

*isolation*

*crater*

*remote*

*rim*

*mist*

*world*

*richness*

*rainforests*

*absence*

*jungles*

*habitats*

*kangaroos*

*spectacular*

*predators*

## GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

### A lost world discovered in Papua New Guinea

A lost world of giant woolly rats, fanged frogs, grunting fish and tiny bear-like creatures has recently been discovered in Papua New Guinea. The exciting discovery was made by scientists and biologists in a remote volcanic jungle crater on the main island on the Pacific island. The scientists who came (1)\_\_\_ the United States, Britain and Papua New Guinea arrived at (2)\_\_\_ destination by helicopter. Stepping off it they found themselves on a mist shrouded rim of the crater of Mount Bosavi. (3)\_\_\_ they climbed into the kilometre deep crater (4)\_\_\_ few humans have been (5)\_\_\_ soon found (6)\_\_\_ than 40 previously unidentified species. They explored a pristine jungle habitat teeming with life that has evolved in total isolation since the volcano last erupted more than 200,000 years ago. The expedition which lasted five weeks discovered 16 new species of frogs which have never been seen before; at least three new fish species, a new bat breed and a giant rat, (7)\_\_\_ (8)\_\_\_ turn out to be the biggest rat in the world.

**they**

**could**

**which**

**where**

**their**

**when**

**more**

**from**

The discoveries are being seen (1)\_\_\_ fresh evidence of the richness of (2)\_\_\_ world's rainforests. The explorers hope that their finds will add weight to calls (3)\_\_\_ international action to prevent the demise of similar ecosystems. They said Papua New Guinea's rainforest is being destroyed (4)\_\_\_ the rate of 3.5% a year. Dr George McGavin Head Scientist of the BBC Natural History Unit who headed the expedition: "It was mind blowing to be there and it is clearly time (5)\_\_\_ pulled our finger out and decided these habitats are worth us saving." The team of biologists included experts from London Zoo, Oxford University, the Smithsonian Institution and the BBC Natural History Unit. They found the 3km wide crater populated (6)\_\_\_ spectacular birds of paradise and in the absence of big cats and monkeys, which are found in the remote jungles of the Amazon and Sumatra, the main predators are the giant monitor lizards while kangaroos have evolved (7)\_\_\_ live (8)\_\_\_ trees!

**as**

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**at**

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**SPELLING TEST**

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	grunting	11	camouflages
2	volcanic	12	caterpillar
3	vegetarian	13	international
4	expedition	14	mechanism
5	populated	15	chronicled
6	spectacular	16	dinosaur
7	kangaroos	17	noctuid
8	habitats	18	pristine
9	discoveries	19	tentacled
10	demise	20	predators

### LINKS

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth\\_news/newsid\\_8210000/8210394.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth_news/newsid_8210000/8210394.stm)

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/scientists-hail-discovery-of-hundreds-of-new-species-in-remote-new-guinea-465841.html>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/sep/07/discovery-species-papua-new-guinea>

### ANSWERS

GAP FILL: A lost world discovered in Papua New Guinea: A lost **world** of giant woolly rats, fanged frogs, grunting fish and tiny bear-like creatures has recently been discovered in Papua New Guinea. The exciting discovery was made by scientists and biologists in a **remote** volcanic jungle crater on the main island on the Pacific island. The scientists who came from the United States, Britain and Papua New Guinea arrived at their destination by **helicopter**. Stepping off it they found themselves on a **mist** shrouded **rim** of the **crater** of Mount Bosavi. When they climbed into the kilometre deep crater where few humans have been they soon found more than 40 previously unidentified species. They explored a **pristine** jungle habitat teeming with life that has evolved in total **isolation** since the volcano last erupted more than 200,000 years ago. The expedition which lasted five weeks discovered 16 new species of frogs which have never been seen before; at least three new fish species, a new bat breed and a giant rat, which could turn out to be the biggest rat in the world.

The discoveries are being seen as fresh evidence of the **richness** of the world's **rainforests**. The explorers hope that their finds will add weight to calls for international action to prevent the demise of similar ecosystems. They said Papua New Guinea's rainforest is being destroyed at the rate of 3.5% a year. Dr George McGavin, Head Scientist of the BBC Natural History Unit, who headed the expedition said, "It was mind blowing to be there and it is clearly time we pulled our finger out and decided these **habitats** are worth saving." The team of biologists included experts from London Zoo, Oxford University, the Smithsonian Institution and the BBC Natural History Unit. They found the 3km wide crater populated by **spectacular** birds of paradise and in the **absence** of big cats and monkeys, which are found in the remote **jungles** of the Amazon and Sumatra, the main **predators** are the giant monitor lizards while **kangaroos** have evolved to live in trees! (V1)

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