
Where are you canopy researchers?

Posted by NickfromWI - 10/27/2003 10:28pm

So what do you folks research? Who are your employers? How did you start in this line of work?

Inquiring minds want to know!

love
nick

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Posted by jmaher - 10/28/2003 08:41am

Nick---Most of the canopy researchers are hanging out on the scientific websites. They are not so much interested in climbing technique and climbing issues as they are in the research they conduct while climbing. I have spent the last two summers working with canopy researchers and I can tell you that most of them would be lost if they tried to get in on our conversations.

This is a problem in that most of the climbing technique that I have observed within the research community is rather scary. As an example: When I first showed up at the biological field station in Panama, no one there had even heard of double rope technique. The limited climbing that they were doing was strictly single rope and would never go beyond their entry pitch. They had no idea how to advance themselves through the canopy once they reached the top of their entry rope. I have always advocated a mix of SRT and DRT as the best solution to the climbing challenges presented in canopy exploration and research. My biggest concern, however, is that these types of climbers tend to give higher priority to their research than to the issues of safety and proper climbing techniques.

I think it would be a great benefit to everyone if there were a closer liaison between the scientific climbing community and the recreational climbing community. Both groups have a lot that could be shared with each other.

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Posted by Rod Justice - 10/28/2003 09:39am

Joe,

Could you give us all an idea of what kind of stuff the canopy researchers take up with them? Not so much their climbing gear, which sounds minimal (a concept foreign to me), but their research gear. Is it as simple as a camera, pen and paper or is it more involved? Do they have caches they leave up there or do they haul it all out every day?

Rod

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Posted by jmaher - 10/29/2003 09:10am

The research that is being done in the canopy is very varied and the equipment used is also quite variable. Some of the research involves nothing more than a notebook and a pencil, while other projects might require an entire team to get the gear up into the canopy. Most of the projects with which I have been involved were relatively small, usually involving only one or two students and/or researchers and minimal equipment. The most complex project involved the placement of a small portable platform in the canopy which was removed after several days of use.

One of the more interesting projects is a study being conducted by a graduate student from Auburn University and his assistant. The two are collecting data on the eyelash viper, which is an arboreal poisonous reptile. Most of the specimens found thus far have been on low branches and in small trees near the ground. Quite a few, however, have been found high in the canopy, the highest having been found at a height of nearly one hundred and thirty feet. The two researchers capture the specimens, collect data such as weight, length, time of day, height off the ground, type of tree, and so on, then release them again. Many of those captured have been captured before and the database of information on these creatures is growing. The equipment that these two researchers are using weighs in at about ten pounds, not counting

their climbing equipment and the equipment that one will usually carry along on a walk in the rainforest.

Another student researcher spent several days in the canopy with nothing more than pen, notebook, and binoculars and documented all the various creatures that she observed in the tree. In three days of observations (more or less) she identified over a hundred different creature, most of which were insects, but including such things as bats, frogs, a snake, and a number of different birds.

To answer the question, all I can say is that the amount of gear necessary depends upon the project itself and there is no set list of equipment.

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bird research

Posted by Patrick - 09/15/2004 05:18pm

Since you are interested in tropical birds and in tree climbing, you might consider the tree climbing expedition to Panama. Several of us went last January; it was incredible! There was a tremendous number of birds while we were there, and there are at least 2 platforms set up (~70' and 85' up in the tree) for observation, etc. You get a ton of great climbing experience, but in a low-stress environment.

Patrick

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Southern Applachian canopy research

Posted by wjenkins - 07/05/2007 12:55pm

I am interested in any forest reearch associated with special forest communities, canopy ecology, bird studies etc that may be going on in the Southern Apps, especially in Georgia. Anybody know of any such science being pursued? Thanks, Wayne

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Posted by Guardabosques - 07/10/2007 09:54pm

Do a Google search on "Tree Canopy Biodiversity in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park." I don't know if there is anything recent happening with this project, but it is interesting. GSMNP is a hotspot for canopy biodiversity.

GB

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