Ash Dykes - Traversing Madagascar: A World First

Monday 17 August, 2015

ADVENTURER OF THE YEAR ATTEMPTS WORLD RECORD: TO TRAVERSE THE LENGTH OF MADAGASCAR

1 MAN. 5 MONTHS. 8 MOUNTAIN SUMMITS. 1800 MILES.

"A lot of challenges will be thrown at Ash as he undertakes this expedition. It will be a real test of perseverance but I have no doubt he has the grit, determination and stamina to see it through. It will be a remarkable achievement." Sir Ranulph Fiennes

Adventurer of the Year 2015 winner, Ash Dykes, is embarking on the expedition of a lifetime: to become the first person in history to successfully traverse the entire length of Madagascar through its middle, taking on eight major mountain summits on his way.

This September 2015, Ash will take the first step of this incredible journey that will see him tough it out against unpredictable, and sometimes deadly, weather conditions and wildlife. (Watch the pre-expedition video here: https://youtu.be/QLzDLrAYcOE

Commencing from the island's most southern point (Cap Sainte Marie), Ash will trek across the Southern Desert, and hack his way through dense jungle and deciduous forests, as he heads towards the heart of Madagascar and tackles the deep gorges and high cliffs of the Ankarana limestone. The jagged rock is locally known as 'tsingy', meaning 'tip-toe', as it is notoriously difficult to cross by foot.

Ash will spend the remainder of this epic journey, following the spinal mountainous ridge that spreads almost the entire length of Madagascar, taking on eight of the highest mountain summits, including Madagascar's highest mountain - Maromokotro (2,876m). He'll then continue north until he reaches the tip of Cap'D Ambre, the most northern point of the fourth largest island in the world, to complete the expedition.

As well as dangers from harsh terrains and volatile weather conditions, Ash will need to cross crocodile infested rivers and will come face to face with snakes, scorpions and deadly spiders; an altogether different challenge that will mean keeping his wits about him at all times.

Over 90% of Madagascar's fauna and flora exist nowhere else on earth, and much of it is endangered. As Ash traverses Madagascar, he will have the unique opportunity to learn about the beauty, history and bio-diversity of the country.

Ash will learn from conservationists from the Lemur Conservation Network about the extreme challenges they face while working to protect Madagascar's unique lemurs—the world's most endangered group of mammals—from extinction. As part of his mission, Ash will search for one of the world's rarest primates—the northern sportive lemur—whose entire population is estimated at only 50 to highlight an issue that, so far, has received very little attention.

What's more, Ash will spend time with indigenous tribes that, due to their remote location, some will not have seen a foreigner for more than 60 years. This close up and personal view will allow Ash to immerse himself in their way and pace of life, providing a deeper understanding of how these communities survive and thrive on the island.

Ash Dykes, said: "Madagascar is a magical and largely unexplored island. This expedition is an opportunity to showcase its outstanding natural beauty whilst challenging and pushing myself to the limits in every way. Its terrain is unforgiving and conditions unpredictable, making it a tough challenge, but I'm determined to see it through. It's an opportunity to unlock Madagascar's mystery and share stories of its people and wildlife that would otherwise never be known."

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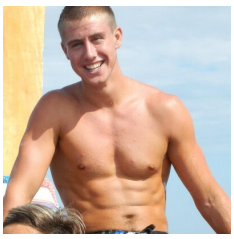
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