

**The OSI-Panthera expedition is in sight,
let's get ready together!**

Hello everyone, dear "Pantherists",

Following your registration on one of the OSI-Panthera expeditions, Tailing the Snow Leopard, it is important that everyone is ready. To help you in this, we have provided a short summary of the things to take into account in your preparations.

*It is important to mention that **from the beginning of the expedition season until October, Bastien and Anne-Lise, who are the program managers, will be on the ground in Kyrgyzstan.** After this, we will therefore rarely be available to answer your emails.*

This is why we ask you to get underway with your preparations and contact us now if necessary.

During our absence, the OSI-Panthera telephone line will be redirected, as far as possible, to a scientific educator who knows the terrain in Kyrgyzstan, and if not, to an OSI member. They will be able to inform you about some of the technical aspects but will know less about the administrative aspects.

Should you need to, we ask you to contact us by mid-May on the OSI-Panthera number to review your preparations and answer any questions you may have.

If this is not necessary, here is all the information you need to consider now.

The document is long ... but please read it to the end (even if in several sittings) to make sure you have all the information!

Good luck and happy preparing.

From now until your departure, do not forget to continue hiking and horse riding, especially off the beaten track, to arrive at the expedition in a fit state!

Enjoy your adventures in the Kyrgyz Celestial Mountains!

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Before your expedition:

1) OSI Contact Form:

Your **contact form** to complete is here:

http://www.osi-start.org/modules/participant/liste_participant.php

- As soon as you register, we will need a **copy of your passport** (a clean scan and not a picture please!) in order to organize the military permit that will allow you to access the expedition area in the regions of Sarychat-Ertash and Pamir Alai.
(Please check that it appears in miniature on your OSI form online and, if not, send it to us as soon as possible by email!)
Important reminder: the date of your return to your country must be 6 months before the expiry date of your passport.

- In the process, we need a maximum of 1 month before your departure (ideally before **mid-May**) **after being provided with all the information** we asked from you in the **OSI online form**.

The 30 tabs on your form should turn **green** (not stay red) which will confirm that you have completed the necessary information. Remember to validate each step.

To insert images, such as the copy of your **passport (required)**, **the file must be a .JPG of less than 10 MB**. If the download is successful, you will see the miniaturized image; if not change the format of your document.

Also remember to inform us of **your flights** (company, flight number, time) so that your supervisor can pick you up at the airport and bring you back at the right time for the return (→ "public transport" and not "by my own means").

An **explanatory tutorial** is available here, if needed: http://www.vacances-scientifiques.com/Gestion_des_Participants_-_Mode_Emploi.pdf

This is a general form for all OSI stays, including children's stays, hence some of the questions. However, we ask you to answer everything so that we have all the information needed in case of emergency and for the organization of the stays.

2) Other administrative information:

- Please note that a **deposit of 30% of the participation fees must be paid to us in the week following the registration so that we can reserve your place**.
The full balance of the expedition costs must be paid in full 1 month prior to departure (even if you pay in installments).
- You must have a **valid passport**. A **visa** is not necessary for most countries within the European Union, if you are staying in Kyrgyzstan for less than 60 days (check on a case-by-case basis).

However, it should be noted that for Kyrgyzstan, **the date of your return to France must be 6 months before the date of expiry of your passport.**

- We also need a **medical certificate**, within 3 months of your departure, with the following statement:

"Mrs. / Mr. _____ does not present a contraindication to life in an isolated environment and the practice of hiking and riding in the high mountains."

- Lastly, if you want the amount of your airline ticket to appear on your usable tax receipt at N + 1, remember to send us by email (to your referent who registered you on the expedition, preferably) **the invoice of your plane tickets** accompanied by the following wording *"I waive the reimbursement of expenses incurred, I consider these expenses as donations to the NGO"* (legal formula while knowing that the NGO should in no case reimburse you)!

3) General and additional information:

Traveling by plane:

- For your **plane tickets**, the sooner you buy them, the more likely you are to get the best rates.
Remember, you must **arrive** at Manas Airport, Bishkek early in the morning of **the first day of the expedition** (so depart from home the day before if you want to make a stopover!). And **leave on the last day of the expedition** very early in the morning. It is a small airport; flights usually arrive early in the morning and also leave very early, so do not be surprised.
Before validating your tickets do not hesitate to ask us for advice if you have any doubt about the dates and times.
- We will meet each of you on the **first day of your expedition at Manas airport in Bishkek**. Your scientific educator will meet you at baggage reclaim, in the area of the airport accessible to the public.
If you want to arrive before or after the expedition that will not be a problem. Simply notify us so that the scientific educator concerned is informed and can set a meeting place. We advise you all the same to stay after the expedition so you will have chance to communicate with the locals!
- Remember to **print your electronic tickets** in case you are asked at the check-in desk luggage from the departure airport!

- With the time difference (**4 hours ahead in Kyrgyzstan**), you will all arrive **in Bishkek between 4am and 7:15am (local time)**! So you must have slept a little before ... Try to rest during the journey ...
- For the flight, we advise you to bring a **small picnic** for lunch, as well as a small treat for the waiting time at the airport. Evening meals are served on Aeroflot and Turkish Airlines companies, but not on Pegasus! So plan what to eat if you do not want to buy something on the spot ...
- I would like to remind you that all **liquids** (drugs, shampoo and other small bottles), as well as **scissors, knives, nail files, and other small things** of this kind are not allowed in the cabin! Be careful to put all these items in your big backpack (and not in your little one!).
- It is possible that **baggage traveling in the hold** makes a longer stopover than expected and that it is not there to your arrival at the airport of Manas in Bishkek. It's rare but possible ... (about 1-2 per season on our groups).
It is impossible for companies to predict when luggage will arrive (from a few hours late to several days). However, we will not be able to delay the departure of the group for the expedition. Bear in mind, however, that we spend the first day in Bishkek.
To anticipate this, we propose that you take anything that is really essential to your expedition in your cabin baggage and on you: your mountain shoes, warm clothing (polar type/down jacket), your windproof and waterproof garments (Gore-Tex type), your sleeping bag, your sunglasses, your binoculars, your camera, your medical treatments and your bank card!
The chance that this happens to you is very low, but if this is the case and you have this essential equipment, your expedition will not be impacted. The rest is superfluous and you can buy it where necessary!
And finally, remember that your backpacks should not exceed **15 kg** for bags in the hold (and if it is only **12-13 kg**, it's even better for the horses!), and **8 kg** for the one you will keep with you in **hand luggage**! (*Attention*: for people traveling with Pegasus Airlines, carry-on baggage must not exceed 5 kg!) Do not overload on clothing, you can wash it in the river, and that will save our faithful little horses!

Administration:

- For all departures of French citizen abroad, a portal named **Ariane** (<https://pastel.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fildariane/dyn/protected/accueil/formAccueil.html>) has been set up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to report you for free and easily to the French authorities. Please, check it for your own nationality. Do not hesitate to sign up. We recommend it!

- For **French minor participants**, do not forget that it is now compulsory to have **authorization to leave the country**. We ask that you do the necessary paperwork <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1359> and to slip the appropriate documents in your child's bag alongside their passport. Please, check it for your own nationality.

Logistics:

- Since 2017, we subscribe for you to a **mountain and isolate environment medicine organism (IFREMMONT)**. Thanks to their SOS MAM service (<http://www.ifremmont.com/sosmam.php>), they ensure remote medical advice services during our expeditions. They also provide relevant **documentation for the preparation of high mountain expeditions**, notably the famous Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). OSI-Panthera expeditions in Kyrgyzstan are located below 4,500m high. Our groups are generally spending nights around 3,200m high. We will however be in an altitudinal range where people can be affected by AMS. Doing a bit of reading on the subject is consequently quite interesting.
<http://www.ifremmont.com/documentation.php> Moreover, if it's the first time you are sleeping higher than 3,000m high, be aware that it is possible to do an effort test and a hypoxia test for prevention. This is highly recommended **if you're older than 50 years old and if you have sleep apnea. For interested people, or people who already experienced AMS**, be aware that IFREMMONT offer mountain medicine **teleconsultations**. Else, at least talk to your physician when you're making your medical certificate (least than 3 months old) and that you will establish you **first-ai kit**.
- Here is the link to the **list of materials**; make sure to check everything <http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/Documents-de-preparation-de-l.html>
Take a look, even if you have been keeping an eye on it, since we have probably made a few changes recently for the sake of improvement.
- With regard to the **charging of your camera batteries**, or other electronic devices, we recommend taking spare batteries with you, as well as a small "Powerbank" or "Powerstick" type charger. We will not have a solar panel available for our participants, only a flexible panel and 2 batteries of this type for the satellite phone and scientific equipment (GPS, camera traps, computer, etc.).
- If you wish to take a look at the experience of the **OSI-Panthera team**, here is the link: <http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/L-Equipe-PANTHERA.html>
- With regard to the email address of your scientific educator, know that they are only available by email from the moment of departure, so if you have questions, you can reach **Anne-Lise or Bastien** on **+33 9 72 30 55 95 before the end of May**. Once the

season has launched, we will ensure that the OSI-Panthera line is redirected to one of our scientific educators who know the field but are less comfortable on administrative points. If it's really not urgent you can write to this address: direction@osi-panthera.org one of us will answer you between 2 expeditions.

- We have taken care to write an **article with the most recurring questions (FAQ)** during your expedition preparations and the responses of our team. We suggest you take a look. You will certainly find some answers, maybe even to questions that you have not asked yet! <http://www.osi-panthera.org/Foire-aux-questions.html>.
- While you are on the website, make sure to **re-read the description of the expedition** in which you are participating (<http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/Documents-de-preparation-de-1.html>). You might have some final questions to ask over the phone. This is the opportunity to ask them before the big departure!
- Once in the heart of the Kyrgyz mountains, during the expedition, the team will be able to give updates every 2-3 days thanks to a satellite phone. Your scientific educator will send messages so that we can adapt your news on the website www.OSI-Panthera.org, or see more exactly on the **logbook** here: <http://osi-panthera.org/-Kirghizie-66-.html>.
(I'll let you select the one that corresponds to your expedition!)
You can therefore give this link to family/friends/relatives who would like to follow your adventures.
Remember to warn them that they will not be big reports, and that they will not be on a daily basis; they will be relatively brief messages, but will reassure our loved ones, and allow them to share in our adventures ...
- In addition, we will inform you of the number of the **satellite phone**, not so that your families call us (the telephone will be turned off as it is really a device that must be available if there is an emergency, so we cannot afford to drain the battery for personal communications, especially because of the cost!). However, there is another way to communicate. The website <https://sms.thuraya.com/> can send free SMS to our satellite phone. Your family/relatives/friends/spouses (1 or 2 people, no more please) will be able, once in a while, to write to you. Be warned, however, that often we do not receive all the messages; remember to alert them to this so that they do not panic. That is not the goal! It is therefore important that they do not expect an answer from you. Remember also to specify that they must not put any punctuation or special character, only simple letters (without accents) and points.
We will give you the number when the time comes.

Knowledge of Kyrgyz culture, snow leopards and Kyrgyz fauna:

- For reading enthusiasts, you will find several novels related to our Kyrgyz adventures at this link: <http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/Romans-albums-et-films.html> ...
- For those wishing to find out more about the snow leopard see the following link <http://www.snowleopardnetwork.org/sln/ListBibliography.php>
- For those wishing to learn a few words and/or Kyrgyz expressions before the big departure, we have written a small French/Kyrgyz/Russian lexicon. It will allow you to interact with local people from the beginning of your expedition. http://www.osi-panthera.org/Documents-de-preparation-de-l-Expedition.html#outil_sommaire_4
- For those who would like to read some thematic fact sheets in French:
 - <http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/Presentation-des-Felides-Elements.html>
 - <http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/Habitat-de-la-panthere-des-neiges.html>
 - <http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/Proies-et-concurrents-de-la.html>
 - <http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/L-Aigle-royal-en-Kirghizie.html>
 - <http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/Pantheres-des-neiges-premiers.html>
 - <http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/Suivi-des-populations-de-grands.html>
 - <http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/Liste-Avifaunistique-Aout-2009.html>
 - <http://www.OSI-Panthera.org/Petites-notes-de-terrain-ou.html>
 - <http://www.osi-perception.org/Le-piegeage-photographique-ou-voir.html>
 - <http://osi-panthera.org/La-communication-vocale-chez-les-animaux.html>
- For those who wishes to see Kyrgyz fauna videos, we wrote an article with the different species spotted by our camera traps: <http://www.osi-panthera.org/Videos-pedagogiques-sur-la-faune-kirghize.html>.
- Finally, for some cultural **news** and politics in Kyrgyzstan go to the Novastan newspaper website: <http://www.novastan.org/region-kirghizstan/>

Other information:

- In order to be informed of the OSI-Panthera program news via our web site you can create an account for our newsletter <http://www.osi-panthera.org/Newsletter-sur-les-Traces-de-la-Panthere-des-Neiges.html>. Thus, from time to time you will receive emails with the new articles (we also update as soon as possible old ones).
- Be also aware that, still in the participative spirit that leads our expeditions, you can also engage in the enrichment of the OSI-Panthera website by submitting articles related to the program subjects on topics you know <http://www.osi-panthera.org/Contribuez-sur-le-site-OSI-PANTHERA.html>.

- If you have any cool places where you think you can leave an **OSI-PANTHERA poster or flyer** do not hesitate, you can download them here <http://OSI-Panthera.org/Documents-publicitaires-OSI-PANTHERA.html> and we can also send you on request
- As for **Facebook** fans, do not hesitate to visit our page www.facebook.com/osipanthera where we share a few posts regularly, and on which you will find some videos/photos/ and articles about the project.
- In the same theme, you can also subscribe to our **YouTube** page <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkjNHUD1PsVL-XaZ2Mgb0g>.
- In addition, the **school of French Francevasion of Bishkek** started a project named "nomadic book" a few years ago, proposing book exchanges that have traveled such as the ones you might have brought to Kyrgyzstan for your expedition ... So do not hesitate, if you want to leave us a book at the end of the expedition, we would happily take them to the school.
- Small piece of good news, in case you have not all already heard.
In 2014 and 2015, for every participant registered on an OSI-PANTHERA expedition in Kyrgyzstan, part of the financial contribution went to a Kyrgyz child so that he could participate on a scientific expedition in the *Sarychat-Eratsh* reserve for free. Thus, **in August 2014 and 2015**, we took two small groups of 8 and 7 Kyrgyz children/teenagers, aged 14 to 17, to the nature reserve, to discover this nature at the gates of their city and learn how to study the Snow Leopard.
In 2016, thanks to the support of our participants and their many donations, we sent 2 Kyrgyz youths on 2 expeditions to the *Sarychat-Eratsh* reserve and 3 young people on an expedition to the *Naryn* reserve for free, to promote **cultural and intergenerational exchange**, as well as **environmental awareness**. All this with the Western participants also present on the expedition!
Your financial participation has greatly reduced in 2017 and 2018 compared to previous years, and we need you in order to send these young Kyrgyz on the ground. When you register for an expedition, you can choose **to make a donation** according to your means, to **help in the participation of a young Kyrgyz on the expedition!**
With each of your contributions, we can either organize an expedition specially dedicated to Kyrgyz teenagers, or set up an awareness-raising day for the protection of the environment and therefore of the Kyrgyz natural heritage. For every 400 € of donations, a Kyrgyz teenager will participate for free on a Tracing the Snow Leopard expedition in one of the nature reserves that we explore in Kyrgyzstan, with our team of mentors!
If this year, we are not able to organize an expedition for young Kyrgyz, we will use your donations, for example, to renovate a hut in one of the reserves. By bringing a

minimum of comfort to the local guards, they are more present in the reserves and thus more able to protect these territories.

A donation is also possible for the purchase of additional photographic traps, long views or other scientific material, if you wish.

- Finally, it's all the more important, if you have a **passion that drives you** (magic tricks, yoga, astrology, photography, etc.), and you feel the urge to share it with the group, do not hesitate to share it with the rest of the team (or at least your supervisor) and prepare a little something, equipment, anecdote, etc. to enjoy the duration of the stay through sharing! Everyone will be delighted! If you are passionate about botany, entomology, geology or anything else and want to advance the project by making a small **inventory**, a map or other, you will be very welcome to do so. However, do not forget to dive into the Kyrgyz species now because some are very different from our local species and you may regret not being prepared ...!

When you're back from your expedition:

- You will find the **end of stay document** to fill in, which discusses your stay on this link: <http://www.vacances-scientifiques.com/Bilan-de-votre-Sejour.html>
We want to thank you in advance for the time that you give to filling this in, and we will analyze all the information you can share with us with great interest.
- We ask that you **send us all of your "scientific" photos** highlighting wildlife monitoring (photo trapping), feces, etc.) but also **all the naturalistic photos** that you have taken during the expedition (fauna, flora, entomology, ornithology, etc.). A small selection of your **best expedition memories** will also be appreciated on the agreement that we can use it for conferences, expedition submissions on the website and elsewhere. You will be able to create an account on our platform OSI-photo so that your name remains associated with your photos. <http://www.osi-photos.org>
- If you wish to share your return with your loved ones while having a small video support available, we have made a **DVD** named "*Za PANTHERA, carnet d'expé*". You will find the corresponding order form here: <http://OSI-Panthera.org/Documents-publicitaires-OSI-PANTHERA.html>
- At the end of the season, we will send you a summary of the year and **annual reports by areas studied** so that you can get some perspective not only for the past season but also for the following years.

Events in the autumn and at the end of the year:

1) Post-camps & GA of the participants:

- At the end of October, the OSI-Panthera program's supervisory team, as well as all the teams of the other OSI programs, meet in the Drôme to carry out their assessment of the season (inquire with Thomas for the precise details of this year's meeting). On the same weekend, we propose to our participants for expeditions and other trips, to join us at what we call the General Assembly of the participants, a moment of reunion, while being the occasion to work and to give feedback to the educators on how to make the projects last, improve them, etc.

To know the schedule of the weekend, you can read this page, under the heading "Post-Camps AG des Participants": <http://www.vacances-scientifiques.com/Participez-de-l-interieur.html>

For those who would like to join us, we ask for a financial participation (which includes full board from Saturday morning to Sunday 4pm in the center). This amount, as with your expedition, will be added to your tax receipt, thus limiting your expenses to 34% of the total amount.

Should you need to stay an extra night, contact Thomas at the contact details listed below, and he will explain the operation.

The address of the venue is:

*Centre Musiflore
Combe de Garaux
26460 CRUPIES*

(Appears on Mappy as the following address: Centre Musiflore Des Centres Musicaux Ruraux - Gareux et Ouche, 26460 Crupies).

A link to the carpooling site that all educators of OSI will use for the occasion will be sent to you to make the most of the journeys!

2) Presence at the UN:

- At the beginning of December and lasting a full week (inquire with Thomas for the precise details of this year) we meet for the famous "**Geneva Forum**" at the Palais des Nations at the UN, in Geneva, with all OSI members, program managers and motivated participants. This enables us to interact with other NGOs, associations, companies, governments, etc. If you wish to participate and value the OSI-Panthera program, let us know.

*Should you have any questions from what we have discussed here, do not hesitate to contact **Thomas, our representative** (since we are still in Kyrgyzstan!) At +33 (0) 1 85 08 36 30 or contact@vacances-scientifiques.com.*

Other:

- If you want to organize small **conferences** to present the OSI-Panthera expeditions and share your experience, do not hesitate to let us know and we will try to help you.
- Be aware that we have created a **page on the *Lilo* search engine**. It is a search engine that can finance social and environmental projects through your research on the web. You can support the program by doing your usual research on the web and allow us to buy new camera traps for example! <http://OSI-Panthera.org/Ca-ne-vous-coute-rien-et-ca-nous-aide.html>