

Media advisory, David Quammen will deliver a lecture at UCSD

April 29, 1996

MEDIA ADVISORY

EVENT: David Quammen, an award-winning novelist/essayist who recently completed an eight-year book project on evolution and extinction of island species, will deliver a lecture about this subject at UCSD.

DATE/TIME: 8 p.m., Wednesday, May 8

LOCATION: Mandeville Auditorium; UCSD campus (see attached map)

BACKGROUND: In 1987, David Quammen received a Guggenheim Fellowship to research a book about islands, and the evolution and extinction of species. The product of Quammen's travels and research is a book titled "The Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in the Age of Extinction" published this spring by Scribner, and already critically acclaimed in the New York Times and Smithsonian magazine.

As part of his research, Quammen tromped through some of the world's most remote and extraordinary ecosystems; he encountered some of the world's most spectacular creatures and spoke to some of the world's most respected field biologists. His travels have taken him to the most endangered animals on the planet, from the giant reptiles of Komodo to the lemurs of Madagascar, from the giant tortoises in Mauritius to the birds-of-paradise of New Guinea. Among other things, his research confirmed that islands not only are conducive to evolution, they are also especially conducive to extinction. Since evolution requires long stretches of time, and extinction can occur fast, the foreseeable result is not optimistic for island species preservation.

Quammen, a visiting professor at UCSD, will talk about both the splendors and jeopardies of island ecosystems. His lecture, titled "On the Trail of the Dodo," will feature slides of giant reptiles, flightless birds, faraway places. He'll also discuss the modern revolution in ecological thinking that has awakened scientists to the significance of islands.

MEDIA OP: Members of the media are invited to interview David Quammen and listen to his talk.

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