

Artists, scientists to study remote French island off Mexico

February 29 2012



A view of Clipperton Island in 2005. Twenty artists and scientists from eight countries set sail Thursday for Clipperton Island, an isolated French atoll off Mexico's Pacific coast, to investigate effects of climate change and the island's history.

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Named after British pirate John Clipperton, the uninhabited island, also known as the "Island of Passion," is some 2.3 square miles (six square kilometers) in size, has no drinkable water and is home to poisonous crabs and rats.

"The Clipperton Project aims to create a new kind of discourse and presentation of climate change, using Clipperton Island as a prism through which this broad theme can be seen," said Jonathan Bonfliglio, the British project leader, on Monday in [Mexico City](#).

Participants will carry out art works and scientific research on their return.

The expedition sets sail from Mexico's northwestern port of La Paz in three sail boats, returning on March 30.

Clipperton has undergone claims from various countries in the last two hundred years, mostly France and Mexico.

Some one hundred [Mexicans](#) are believed to have lived there at the start of the 20th century, receiving supplies from the mainland. Provisions declined when the Mexican Revolution broke out, in 1910, provoking sickness and famine. A US vessel rescued the last survivors in 1917.

France claimed the island in 1931 and Mexico has since sought to take it back.

It is rich in guano, a [fertilizer](#) containing the excrement of seabirds.

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Citation: Artists, scientists to study remote French island off Mexico (2012, February 29) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2012-02-artists-scientists-remote-french-island.html>

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