

Volunteer Program

Our goal is to support, strengthen and enhance our partner's conservation program by sending people who are interested in working and supporting the protection of Ecuador's native forests and ecosystems. We will supply correct and accurate information about our local conservation programs in order to maximize the volunteer experience and enable Ecuadorian non profits take full advantage of the resources each individual brings to the effort.

As a volunteer you will experience firsthand the difficulties of environmental conservation in the tropics as well as celebrate the results of your work. Our volunteers often returned to the reserves year after year and serve as conservation ambassadors when in their home countries.

How You Can Make a Difference:

Ecuador, despite its small size, is among the sixteen most bio-diverse countries on Earth. Ecuador has over 1,500 species of birds, more than 840 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 341 species of mammals. Of these, 14.2% are endemic meaning they exist in no other country of which 10.2% of these are threatened. Ecuador is also home to over 19,000 species of vascular plants, of which 20.7% are endemic.

Unfortunately, Ecuador has the distinction of having the highest deforestation rate and worst environmental record in South America. Oil exploration, logging, and road building have had a disastrous impact on Ecuador's primary rainforests, which now cover less than 18 percent of the country's land mass. From 1990 to 2000, Ecuador lost an average of 197,600 hectares of forest per year. In total, between 1990 and 2005, measuring the total rate of habitat conversion (defined as change in forest area plus change in woodland area minus net plantation expansion), Ecuador lost 19.2% of its forest and woodland habitat.

With the support from our volunteers, we currently work toward the conservation of biodiversity, reforestation, rural community projects, and sustainable development in Ecuador. Specifically we work in innovative programs in agro forestry, reforestation, organic production and sustainable aquaculture in mangrove ecosystems, includes carbon fixation, health and nutrition improvement, handicrafts commercialization and some other research projects in mainland, marine and island areas all over Ecuador.

Internship Available at La Hesperia Biological Reserve and Station (2009-2010)

Assistant Reserve Manager: Position available for a minimum of three months and six months is recommended. Qualified and motivated person will assist the reserve manager with her duties and with compliment the volunteer coordinator in his work. Room/ board and a stipend are offered. Call or write for details. This position may qualify as

study abroad for credit.

Research Assistant Opportunity Available in the Llanos of Venezuela

Project: "Behavior and demography of the Green-rumped Parrotlet (*Forpus passerinus*)".

Four field assistants are required, two from 1 June – 15 August and two more from 1 September - 15 December 2009 to work as part of a team on a long term study of behavior and demography of the Green-rumped Parrotlet. Duties will include mist netting, banding and resighting, nest checking, behavioral observations, audio-video monitoring, playback experiments and keeping detailed records. The ideal candidate would: have experience conducting field research with birds in tropical ecosystems; be interested in avian behavioral ecology; be willing to work long hours six days per week; enjoy work in a hot, humid environment; have a sunny disposition and be able to live under primitive conditions with few people on an isolated ranch; have a working knowledge of Spanish and a driver's license; be able to work without supervision; and enjoy but not become too distracted by the fabulous avifauna of the Llanos. Please submit resume, and phone numbers/email of three referees 2009 to Karl Berg:

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List of Volunteers 2009:

1. Kathleen Watkins (Web Designer): Jatun Sacha Biological Station and Galapagos Island preserve.

2. Amanda Rose Kessner (UC Santa Cruz): Six months internship at Fonmsoeam in the Esmeraldas province.
3. Sara, (UC Santa Cruz): Six months intership at Fonmsoeam

3. Peter Lu (Yale University): Three months internship at Bilsa Biological Station-Esmeraldas.
4. Stefan Petrea, Los Llanos de Venezuela
5. Brad Watkins, Cornell, Los Llanos de Venezuela (Sept-Dec 09)
6. Rocio Hernandez (Maine University), eights months internship at Fonmsoeam and Ecopar. (Dec 09-Aug. 2010).

Click on the specific reserve on the map to read more about our biological stations.

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