



Ceiba
Foundation for
Tropical Conservation

Conservation Internships



in Ecuador

Handbook

Conservation Internships Program Handbook

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Welcome to Ceiba!

The Ceiba Foundation for Tropical Conservation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1997 to conserve and restore tropical habitats and their biodiversity. Ceiba's mission is to sponsor scientific research, provide public education, and support community-based actions that promote sustainability and protection of the environment. The name Ceiba derives from majestic tropical tree in the genus *Ceiba*, known as kapok trees, that are revered by humans and whose giant limbs support a profusion of plants and animals.

We focus on conservation of Andean cloud forests and tropical dry forests, emphasizing projects that empower local people and encourage them to actively participate in the sustainable management of their lands.



Program Description

Conservation interns work with Ceiba to meet the conservation and sustainable development goals in rural Ecuador. Non-credit interns stay a variable length of time (minimum 1 month) gaining knowledge about the environment and culture of Ecuador, and acquiring hands-on, practical experience in real-world conservation, education and development projects. Ceiba partners with two locally-owned forest reserves, one in the Andean cloud forest and the other on the Pacific coast, working with communities surrounding these reserves to support education and sustainable resource management. Interns will form relationships with Ceiba staff and members of the local community, providing for a mutually-beneficial cultural exchange, the potential for acquiring useful job skills, and exposure to the multidisciplinary nature of conservation. Furthermore, student interns can contribute tangibly as “ambassadors of goodwill” to Ecuadorian communities.



A variety of internships are available, ranging from reforestation, wildlife monitoring, environmental education, water quality, and community development. Your specific responsibilities will be spelled out in your internship agreement that will be tailor-made to cater to your interests and abilities, as well as the needs of Ceiba.

Although you will have a specific position, all interns may occasionally work together on certain projects, or contribute where needed to ongoing activities of Ceiba. As part of your application, you will choose the internship positions that most interest you, and select a 4-week, 8-week, or 10-week session. See the calendar for the available dates and application deadlines. If you are interested in an extended internship or independent research, contact us at volunteer@ceiba.org



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Location

Conservation Internships take place at Ceiba's project sites within the county of Jama, in Ecuador's coastal Manabí Province. Interns are to arrive at the Lalo Loor Dry Forest Reserve on the first day of their internship. They will become familiar with their internship site, either within the reserve or in the communities of Tabuga, Camarones, or Don Juan where you will be housed for the remainder of your internship. Tabuga is a small village of approximately 1,500 people, located along the coastal road 1 km from the Pacific Ocean. Camarones has about 500 residents, and is located about 5 km inland in the coastal hills. Don Juan is slightly larger, with around 4,000 residents and less than 1 km from the Pacific Ocean. They are just south of the equator and close to the Pacific Ocean. There is electricity and water, and in some areas, there are phones and internet. The kind people of this region are dedicated to small-scale agriculture, are hired as farm hands on one of the larger ranches, work in the shrimp-farming industry located in Coaque or Jama or are fishermen. Some people make bamboo furniture and crafts. Half an hour to the north lies the city of Pedernales (Pop. ~ 25,000), where there are stores, internet and restaurants. The county seat is Jama (Pop. ~ 7,500). It is a smaller, tranquil town where you can also find internet, small shops, and groceries.

Accommodation



You will be housed at the Lalo Loor Dry Forest reserve biological station. The reserve protects one of the last remaining tracts of tropical deciduous forest in the province. A wooden dormitory building nestled in the forest provides lodging for up to 28 people, and there is a communal dining room and outdoor classroom. There are cold water showers and dry composting toilets. There is no electricity in the dormitory, but the visitor center does have electricity and dry boxes so you can charge your electronics there. There is internet in the visitor center but please note that during business hours it is primarily for project-related use. There is an extensive forest trail system, and school field trips come from Tabuga and other towns. Three meals a day, Mondays through Fridays, are provided at the reserve. On weekends when kitchen staff is off, most interns leave the site to explore the surrounding area. If you stay on-site du, you are responsible for your own meals.

Program Staff

From the time you apply, to your arrival in Ecuador and your day-to-day activities on site, Ceiba staff will provide the support you need to ensure a fun and rewarding experience. Our staff includes:

- Program Administrator, USA: Yasi Rezai, yrezai@ceiba.org, 608-230-5550
- Executive Director, Ecuador: Carolina Toapanta, ctoapanta@ceiba.org 099-168-7330
- Education Coordinator, Ecuador: María José Rendón, mrendon@ceiba.org 098-865-0360

Work Schedule

You are expected to work at minimum 30 hours per week, but many interns put in more than this as their projects demand. Your day to day schedule may vary depending on specific activities or events that are happening at your site. Generally, interns work Monday through Friday, but sometimes community events or group activities you are involved in will take place on weekends and you will want to or need to be there. In any case, there will be ample free time to relax and explore the surrounding area, including the forest trails, the region's stunning beaches, and the nearby towns of Pedernales



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and Jama.

Expected outputs

From every internship will have specific goals and products that you will strive to accomplish during your stay. These will be outlined in your specific internship agreement. **If you are obtaining credit** from UW-Madison or another educational institution, we will assign you a “grade” using a typical A-F scale. Your evaluation as an intern will largely be based on your active engagement and positive contribution to the project you are participating in, as well as timely completion of the products listed below:

Written Report:

The written report can take several forms, but must include a summary of your internship activities and copies (both printed and electronic) of any and all materials you produced during your internship. These materials may include datasets, pamphlets or booklets, training manuals or lesson plans, posters of fliers, photographs, products, etc. Include an introduction to the organization and project, detail on the activities you engaged in, and the results of your work. Also include a discussion of outcomes including how your work contributed to the goals of the project and more broadly to conservation in general, and suggested actions to advance the program. The written report is due to your supervisor (via email) within one week of the end of your internship, although we prefer to receive it on your last day.

Presentation:

Before you leave your site, you will give a 10-minute presentation, preferably *in Spanish*, to your supervisor and members of the community on your internship experience and accomplishments. This presentation provides an opportunity to show others what you have accomplished, and share stories and images of your experience with Ceiba staff, community members, and other interns.

Internship Evaluations:

Your supervisor and/or community partner will submit an evaluation of your engagement and performance as an intern. Additionally, after your internship is over, we ask you to please fill out an online evaluation form. These evaluations help us gauge the value and effectiveness of the internship program, and allow us to make adjustments that ensure our internships provide a rewarding experience.



Health and Safety

The health and safety of participants in our program is of primary concern, and we take every precaution to ensure that the potential for illness and accidents is minimized. However, you will be living and traveling in an environment that may feel very unfamiliar and it is up to each individual to exercise caution, good judgment and common sense. The following information is provided to enhance your safety and enjoyment during your time in Ecuador. As a developing nation Ecuador does not have the same high standard of sanitation we enjoy in the U.S. and Europe, and there are certain diseases and ailments that are more common in developing tropical countries against which one must take proper precautions. If basic precautions are followed, however, it is very unlikely that you will become seriously ill.

Personal Safety:

Although Ecuador is part of the developing world, you will find Quito to be surprisingly modern. Like any large urban area (nearly 2 million people) street crime is all too common, and as a relatively wealthy “gringo” you are a target and the following precautions should always be heeded. Be alert and exercise

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common sense. Avoid travel after dark, and if you must, travel only in groups, avoiding poorly-lit or isolated areas. Don't display large amounts of cash or jewelry, take care with cameras and backpacks, and do not accept invitations of any kind from strangers. If you feel endangered, enter the nearest business and ask them to call a taxi, or the police to escort you. Whenever you go somewhere, let a friend know where you are going and when you expect to be back. Pick pocketing is the most common form of crime, so when traveling on buses and other public transportation, do not let your possessions out of your sight, or better yet, keep them on your person. These are all precautions that any seasoned traveler, or resident of any large US cities, will already have adopted. This advice is not intended to scare you; Quito is a wonderful city full of warm, generous and honest people; the Ecuadorian countryside also is a terrific place to travel, and you will find the locals you meet everywhere are friendly and polite. However, as in your own city or town, knowing the risks and how to manage them is the first step to staying safe. The rural areas of Jama county are much safer; violent crime is much less common, but poverty is rife so unguarded belongings may be stolen. If you are a woman, a common annoyance is unwanted attention from men; such "machismo" unfortunately is a normal part of the culture, and it is best if you simply ignore it or calmly but firmly indicate that such attention is unwelcome. If you have difficulties with machismo, talk to your supervisor.

Vaccinations:

The best way to prevent the most serious illnesses is by getting vaccinated prior to traveling to Ecuador. Please check the CDC or WHO websites for the most updated health recommendations before you come to Ecuador. Note that all interns are **required to have been vaccinated for Covid-19**. We cannot in good conscience enable our interns to carry coronavirus to host countries, where it would pose additional burden on limited medical resources and risk exposure of isolated groups. You should also check that your vaccinations against tetanus, typhoid fever, and hepatitis A and B are up to date. If you are visiting the Amazon or the coast, it is recommended that you take anti-malaria pills. Anti-malaria pills are no longer readily available in Ecuadorian pharmacies so be sure to visit a travel doctor and bring the prescription with you. Malaria, dengue, chikungunya, and leishmaniasis -- all insect-borne illnesses -- are best prevented by avoiding contact with the mosquitoes that transmit them: wear long pants and sleeves and apply insect repellent. For any and all medical advice, please consult your doctor or public health service for the most recent information regarding vaccinations for travel to Ecuador.

Altitude:

While you will spend only a short time here, the city of Quito is at 9,350 feet (2850 m) of elevation. Altitude sickness, your body's response to lower oxygen concentration at high altitudes, can affect anyone and is characterized by headache, fatigue, dizziness, trouble sleeping and occasionally stomach upset. If you know you are prone to altitude sickness, consult your physician. Prescription drugs now are available that mitigate the negative effects of altitude when taken before traveling to high elevation. In any case, you can minimize the symptoms of altitude sickness by drinking plenty of water before and after your arrival, avoiding alcohol and caffeine, taking aspirin and iron supplements, and avoiding overexertion.



Motion Sickness:

If you are prone to motion sickness during bus travel, you may want to bring motion sickness medication. The road over the Andes connecting Quito to the coast is very curvy!

Medical Insurance:

All participants are required to have active medical insurance that covers them during their stay in Ecuador and includes emergency evacuation. Ceiba does not provide any medical insurance coverage to program participants. In any case, you should make sure your current health insurance provider covers you while you are overseas. Bring your insurance card(s) with you to Ecuador. Participants are

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responsible for paying their own medical and/ or evacuation costs should the need arise. Health care is inexpensive in Ecuador and we recommend you carry \$50-100 in addition to your spending money, in case you require services of a local clinic or pharmacy for minor illness or medication.

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Internship Positions

We have a variety of internship opportunities available, and these positions change as projects advance and new activities are taken on. See all current available internship positions at:

<https://ceiba.org/study-abroad/internships/internship-positions/>

How to apply

Non-credit vs. For-credit internships:

If you are not seeking academic credit for your internship, Ceiba accepts internship applications on a rolling basis up until the deadline for each of our 4 to 10 week internship sessions (see Calendar and Costs, below). Academic credit is available for our 8-week summer session *only* through a partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Madison. To receive 6 academic credits through the University of Wisconsin-Madison, there are a couple of extra steps to apply and additional costs involved.

Application procedure:

To apply for an internship, please complete the following steps:

1. Read this Handbook so you know what outputs are required to obtain credit* for your internship.
2. Search the [Internship Opportunities](#), and select at least a FIRST and a SECOND choice that interest you, as well as the SESSION you desire (4-10 weeks; see Calendar below). **IMPORTANT:** While we try to keep opportunities updated, activities or projects may change, and not all positions are available for every session. Therefore, it is *incumbent on each student* to specifically request updated information about current projects and activities. It is up to you to understand what your duties will be before you commit to an internship.
3. Fill out Ceiba's [Internship Application](#); be sure to complete all 3 steps. Students seeking academic credit from UW-Madison must also fill out an application through UW's [International Academic Programs \(IAP\) website](#).
4. Fill out Part I of the Internship Agreement form and sent it to the [Ceiba Internships Coordinator](#). The coordinator will put you in contact with your on-site supervisor who must fill out Part II of the form, sign it, and return it to you.
5. Submit the signed Internship Agreement form to the [Ceiba Internships Coordinator](#). Although you may submit this agreement *after* the application form, a **signed internship agreement form is required in order for you to be accepted for an internship!** If you are applying through UW Madison, this form is required by the application deadline.

**Please note: Credit is provided by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and requires additional application steps. Those enrolled in other universities who wish to receive credit must arrange this with their adviser at their home institution.*



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Calendar and Costs

All internships are unpaid. Prices include lodging, three meals a day Monday through Friday, and coordination, training, and scheduling with the on-site supervisor. The majority of these costs go directly to the Loor family to help maintain the reserve. As a conservation non-profit, we are unable to cover costs of accommodating interns.

2022 Four Week Session Internships - \$1200

Session Number	Start Date (Arrive BSLL)	End Date (Depart BSLL)	Application Deadline
F1	January 3, 2022	January 28, 2022	December 3, 2021
F2	January 31, 2022	February 25, 2022	December 31, 2021
F3	March 20, 2022	April 15, 2022	February 25, 2022
F4	April 18, 2022	May 13, 2022	March 18, 2022
F5	May 30, 2022	June 24, 2022	April 29, 2022
F6	June 27, 2022	July 22, 2022	May 27, 2022
F7	July 25, 2022	August 19, 2022	June 24, 2022
F8	August 22, 2022	September 16, 2022	July 22, 2022
F9	October 3, 2022	October 28, 2022	September 2, 2022
F10	October 31, 2022	November 25, 2022	September 30, 2022

2022 Eight Week Session Internships - \$2100

Session Number	Start Date (Arrive BSLL)	End Date (Depart BSLL)	Application Deadline
E1	January 3, 2021	February 25, 2022	December 3, 2021
E2	March 20, 2021	May 13, 2022	February 25, 2022
E3	May 30, 2022	July 22, 2022	April 29, 2022
E4	July 25, 2022	September 16, 2022	June 24, 2022
E5	October 3, 2021	November 25, 2022	September 2, 2022

2022 Ten Week Session Internships - \$2500

Session Number	Start Date (Arrive BSLL)	End Date (Depart BSLL)	Application Deadline
T1	January 3, 2022	March 11, 2022	December 3, 2021
T2	May 30, 2022	August 5, 2022	April 29, 2022
T3	October 3, 2021	December 9, 2022	September 2, 2022

What to bring

This list includes required (*) and recommended gear and clothing for your trip to Ecuador.

- Binoculars (required for projects monitoring birds and monkeys)
- Biodegradable multipurpose soap
- Camera and plenty of film or memory cards
- Daypack or fanny pack
- Decent clothes to wear in Quito
- Flashlights (we recommend one head lamp and one handheld flashlight)
- Hat or cap
- Insect repellent (25% DEET is sufficient)
- Notebook and pens/pencils
- Lightweight, long-sleeved shirts for field work and at night
- Lightweight, long pants for field work and at night (cotton is best, synthetic works but is hot)
- Motion sickness medication (e.g., "Dramamine," for bus travel)
- Pocket knife
- Raincoat or poncho
- Rubber boots (Required for work in the forest. Mid-calf to knee high - these are best purchased once in Ecuador)
- Sandals or flip flops
- Small, personal first-aid kit (Band-Aids, antacid/anti-diarrhea, antibiotic ointment, insect bite relief)
- Socks (many!) long enough to tuck your pants into



- Spare batteries (these can also be purchased in Quito, but are more expensive)
- Spare prescription glasses or contacts, if you wear them
- Sturdy walking shoes
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Sunscreen (SPF 30 or stronger)
- T-shirts - plenty!
- Towel
- USB memory stick
- Warm clothing for Quito and high elevation sites (temperatures may dip below freezing at high elevation!)
- Water bottle (at least 1 liter)
- Wristwatch (preferably water-resistant, with stopwatch & alarm)
- Ziploc bags (for protecting binoculars, cameras, snacks, etc.)

Suggested Reading

Below we have included a list of recommended background reading, arranged alphabetically by category. These books have been selected to enhance your understanding of the tropical environment and culture you will find in Ecuador. Your internship supervisor might also share other reading or preparatory material with you that is specific to your internship.

Tropical Ecology & Environmental Science

- Forsyth, A. and K. Miyata. 1984. *Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rainforests of Central and South America*. Charles Scribners Sons.
- Kane, J. 1996. *Savages*. Vintage Books.
- Kricher, J. 1999. *A Neotropical Companion*. Princeton University Press.
- Kricher, J. 2011. *Tropical Ecology*. Princeton University Press.

History & Culture

- Perkins, J. 2005. Confessions of an Economic Hit Man. Plume.
- Darwin, C. 1909. Voyage of the Beagle. National Geographic.
- Galeano, E. 1997. Open Veins of Latin America. Monthly Review Press.
- MacQuarrie, K. 2008. Last Days of the Incas. Simon & Schuster.
- Mann, C. 2006. 1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus. Vintage Press.
- Striffler, S. 2009. The Ecuador Reader: History, Culture, Politics. Duke University Press.

Travel Guides

- Ades, H. 2013. The Rough Guide to Ecuador. Rough Guides.
- Pearson, D.L. and L. Beletsky. 2010. Travellers' Wildlife Guides Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. Academic Press.
- St. Louis, R. 2015. Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. Lonely Planet Publications.

Field Guides

- Emmons, L.H. 1990. Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide (2nd edition). University of Chicago Press.
- Gentry, A.H. 1993. A Field Guide to the Families and Genera of Woody Plants of Northwest South America (Colombia, Ecuador and Peru). Conservation International.
- Ridgely, R.S. and P.J. Greenfield. 2001. The Birds of Ecuador: Field Guide. Cornell University Press.



The Pacific Coastline in Jama County, Manabí, Ecuador