

Animal care and park maintenance in Ecuador

Project Overview

Do you have a passion for animals and conservation?

This project really does have it all. It is an animal rescue centre whose main objective is to rehabilitate the animals so that they can be released back into the wild. Several dozen species live at the centre at any one time and you will be working closely with these along with general maintenance at the park.



Trip Highlights:

- Helping the team at the park to care for the animals
- Exploring the surrounding area in your free time - Otavalo market is a must!
- Learning about this fascinating country and her people

- Weekend activities - horse riding, mountain biking, paragliding!

Detailed Itinerary - First Week

Day 1 - Sunday - Arrival into Quito International airport (code UIO)

Today you will be met at the airport (known as Mariscal Sucre International Airport to those in the know!) and taken to your arrival accommodation. It takes about 15 minutes to travel from the airport to your accommodation, time to start practising your Spanish!

If you aren't able to arrange a flight to get you into Ecuador on the designated arrival day then we'd recommend you fly in a day early. We can arrange an early airport pick-up for you including one night's accommodation, give us a call for more information.

Day 2 - Monday - Orientation

The orientation kicks off this morning and will take you through what it's going to be like at your project, do's and don'ts, how to stay safe and it's also your prime opportunity to ask any burning questions that you haven't yet had answered. After the orientation you'll have time to explore, relax and prepare before traveling onto your project tomorrow.

Day 3 - Tuesday -Travel to the project

Today you will travel to your project and leave behind the hustle and bustle of Quito and head for the hills. Guayabillas is situated in the Northern part of Ecuador and will take around 4 hours so don't forget your book or your mp3 player for the journey, unless of course you would prefer to practise your Spanish and chat to your neighbour on the bus! You will be met at the end of your journey and taken to your project which is located approximately a 15 minute drive from Ibarra at the foot of the Imbabura Volcano. You will have time to settle in to your accommodation and meet the family at the project ready for your work starting tomorrow!

Days 4 to 6 - Wednesday to Friday - Getting stuck in!

The accommodation is at the project site so you will not have far to go, maybe having a little longer in bed! Over your time at the project you'll be cleaning cages, feeding the animals, general maintenance around the park and reforestation. Be prepared to be flexible and get immersed in whatever is needed by the project and be prepared to get your hands dirty!

Days 7 and 8 - Saturday to Sunday - Free time

We're sure you'll be exhausted after your hard work so the weekend is now time for you to do as you wish! You can explore the surroundings and if you fancy some souvenir shopping why not try the famous Otavalo market? Local indigenous communities come here to sell their many wares but don't forget that you must haggle with them, it is great fun and if you haven't done this before you will soon get the hang of it! If chilling is more your thing then you may just want to take in the tranquil surroundings at the accommodation or visit the beautiful lakes in the area. If you are feeling more energetic then maybe some horse riding, mountain biking, volcano trekking or paragliding may be more up your street?

Following weeks

As you'll be in Ecuador for at least another week you'll be getting stuck into the work at the project and helping look after these amazing animals hopefully being able to see some being released back into the wild. You will also be helping with visitors to the centre, including school groups where the importance of conservation is taught.

Your last day at the project- Sunday

Your last day at the project will come around more quickly than you realise and it will be time to head back to Quito for an overnight stay which will be arranged by our in country team.

Your last day - Monday

Today will be the day that you head off to the airport for your flight home or onwards for further travel. You may have decided that as Ecuador is such a diverse country that you will just have to stay longer!

Fast Facts

Project Information

- Project Duration: Min 2 weeks - Max 12 weeks
- Project Costs: £659.00 for 2 weeks, £140.00 for every week thereafter
- Location of project: *Bosque Protector Guayabillas, Tercer Parador about 15 minutes drive from Ibarra, 4 hours from Quito by bus*
- Arrival Airport: *Quito (airport code UIO)*
- Activities: *Various types of work with animals, including helping with feeding, facilities maintenance and also reforestation.*
- Working Hours: *You will work Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 12.3pm and then from 2pm to 5pm.*
- Getting to the project: *On site so a short walk to the project*
- Requirements: *Minimum age 16 with parents consent form*
- Other: *Semana Santa (Latin America Holy week) will be from March 26th to April 4th 2010 and April 15th to April 24th 2011, you may have some disruptions to the placement during this time*

What's Included

- Accommodation: *Shared room in homestay accommodation, please note that this is based on a mixed sex room.*
- Food: *All meals, (breakfast, lunch and dinner)*
- Airport Pickup: *Included on arrival date. Ask us for details if you're arriving early!*
- Training: *In-country orientation*
- Support: *Pre-departure helpdesk, Local in-country team and 24hr emergency support*

What's not included

- *Flights, Insurance, Visas, Return Airport Transfer, Local Transport*

Country Guide - Ecuador

A little bit of history...

For thousands of years before the Incas arrived from Peru to expand their empire, advanced indigenous cultures made Ecuador their home. They fought hard to hold on but from the 1400s the Inca's succeeded in developing its civilisation into neighbouring territories. The Incas were not immune from shifts in power and, during the same year the Spanish set foot on Ecuadorian soil (1526), the Inca Empire was divided for the first time when Inca ruler Huayna Capac went against tradition by leaving his empire to two sons rather than one. After years of fighting, Atahualpa defeated Huascar to become ruler of the empire. His position was short lived and the Inca Empire was all but confined to a place in history when in the 1530s the Spanish laid down the foundations to rule the country. Under Spanish rule, Indians and Mestizos (people of mixed indigenous and European descent) suffered forced labour and several uprisings ensued. Liberator Simón Bolívar helped secure independence for Ecuador, which was fully achieved by 1830.



Against a backdrop of violent rivalry between liberal and conservative factions, an unstable political climate dominated the 19th century and was marked by a quick succession of rulers. The 20th century brought mixed fortunes. The country's development was hampered by the collapse of the coco market in the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s but it achieved stable civilian rule and increased banana exports from 1948 to 1960. Recession and social unrest led to an anti-communist military government taking power in the early 1960s and it wasn't until 1979 that democratic constitutional measures were put into play. Indigenous groups now have a voice and influence on politics but the country has a lot of economic ground to cover and high levels of unemployment. On an environmental level, Ecuador is rich in biodiversity but has one of the highest deforestation rates in South America.

Best time to go...

The diversity of Ecuador does not fit neatly into four seasons. As a general note, it has a dry winter from June to September and a wet summer from December to April. For hiking in the highlands, the best time is during the cool winter. For exploring the jungle (the Oriente), there isn't a temperate period as it's often thick with humidity, while the sierra can get chilly and coastal areas are warm year round. The Galápagos Islands experience hot, rainy weather from January to April and its waters are comfortably warm during this time, making it ideal for snorkelling. During the rest of the year the water is on the chilly side at around 20°C (68°F) or lower. The surfing season is typically December to February. The biggest celebration days are Christmas, Semana Santa (Easter week), Inti Raymi (June 24), and Independence Day (May 24). Expect an influx of visitors during these periods and from June to August when the vacation season is in full swing.

Getting around...

There's no better way to see the snow-capped Andes than to fly. The flight from Quito to Cuenca alone takes in the sight of volcano after volcano. With great views aside, flying in Ecuador is affordable and also convenient; you can get to where you want to go in usually no more than half an hour's flying time. The country's main airlines like Tame offer daily services to the main towns and cities, usually departing from Quito or Guayaquil. It's also the best way to get to the Oriente, with other modes of transport unable to access the area. Flights to the Galápagos Islands, however, can be pricey and flying time from Ecuador is around 3 hours. Depending on your destination but particularly for flights to the Galápagos Islands and the Oriente, there is a system in place whereby foreigners are required to pay more than double what Ecuadorians pay. It's also worth noting that seats are not reserved and are given on a first come, first served basis. Reconfirming a flight 24 hours before is imperative as it's not unknown for airlines to refute your reservation if it hasn't been confirmed ahead of departure.

Buses are a cheaper option and although most long distance journeys take a day or less, it can feel longer due to the road conditions. Buses usually leave from central terminals and it's best to buy a ticket at least a few hours in advance to reserve a seat. Local buses are often very cheap but also very crowded. Taxis are a good option for short journeys or day trips out of cities if hired for the day and can be cheaper than car rental. Taximeters are in existence but not always switched on so it's best to agree on a price before the journey begins.