

Nicaragua Study Tour 2012

You have heard of the immense biodiversity of Central America, but nothing compares to witnessing all the species the rainforest has to offer. In this tropical wildlife study tour of Nicaragua, you can experience all the biodiversity, and also get involved in it with bird banding and ecotourism activities.

After travel to Nicaragua, the trip will start off in Finca de Esperanza Verde (Green Hope Farm),



where students will eat breakfast in the sanctuary of several tropical bird species such as keel billed toucans, swallow-tailed kites, parrots, and tanagers. A hike around the surrounding areas of the farm will reveal howler monkeys and several more bird species, while evening activities include a celebration of local folk music and dancing. Explore the shade grown coffee on Finca de Esperanza Verde, and even participate in bird banding using mist nets over several days.

The trip will then continue onto the drier climate of General Nestor's Farm where reptiles such as the basilisk lizard and several more birds will greet the group. At General Nestor's, students will learn about eco-tourism and its importance to the area. The following day, a trip across Lake Nicaragua will reveal the unique volcanic archipelago of Las Isletas. 365 volcanic islands were formed here 20,000 years ago from a single eruption of Volcan Mombacho, which students will get to hike to the rim of. This fertile archipelago has amazing biodiversity and is a great place for the students to explore. Hikes through the pristine Domitila Wildlife Reserve will accompany this portion of the trip, where students will find kinkajous, howler monkeys, and prehensile porcupines. Domitila is one of the best preserved dry tropical forests in Central America.

On the last two days of the trip, students can explore the town of Granada, Volcan Masaya, and Montibelli Private Reserve. Shopping and touring in Granada will be followed by a trip to stare into the crater of Volcan Masaya, and more wildlife at Montibelli. In addition to more bird species, several nocturnal animals could show their faces at Montibelli. Hiking and more mist netting will take place at Montibelli to wrap up a trip full of sights, hiking, and wildlife.



This trip will take place over Spring Break, from March 2-11. The estimated cost is \$3,200, including airfare, travel, lodging, and course credits. Three credits will be granted for successful completion of the course (Nicaraguan Wildlife and Nature-based Tourism). The trip is open to both undergraduate (FW 495) and graduate students (FW 595). For more information, contact Dr. Chris Moorman (chris_moorman@ncsu.edu).