



## **Project name: Animal Rescue Center**

The animal rescue center is a non-profit foundation. The animals at the center have all been abused, neglected or abandoned. Some of the animals were orphaned when their parents were killed by hunters, others were rescued from animal dealers and some have been removed from families who had kept these animals in captivity. This project offers a unique opportunity for volunteers to work for and protect a large number of wild animals whilst living in a beautiful part of the Amazon rainforest.

The center was founded in 2006 by the Flores family. The family works with the local environmental police and ministry of environment to fight against wild animal trafficking and abuse, by rescuing the animals from their dire situations and rehabilitating them at the rescue center. There are currently 40 different species of animals in the center which include: ocelot, tayra, capybara, parrots, monkeys and caimans amongst others.



Over the past years, throughout the construction and development of the rescue, the Flores family has come to a deeper understanding of how the local people and culture impact the maintenance and conservation of the Amazonian flora and fauna. The heart and spirit that shines through the hard work of the family and its staff is a part of what makes the center so special. This project offers a unique opportunity for volunteers to work for and protect a large number of wild animals whilst living in a beautiful part of the Amazon rainforest.

### **About your location**

This project is located 10 minutes from the jungle town of Puyo. Travelling in bus from Quito will take you approximately 4/5 hours to reach. The volunteers will stay in small cabins with dorm rooms.

## **Weekly schedule and activities**

On Monday to Friday you will work from 8.00am to 12.00pm and from 2.30pm to 5.00pm. In the weekends you will work one day for a few hours because the animals still need to be feed.

## **Volunteers are needed to help in the following activities:**

- Day to day care of the animals
- Cutting up fruit, preparation of diets, feeding the animals
- Helping new arrivals adjust to the center
- General maintenance and cleaning
- Construction work; repairing and building new enclosures
- Cage and enclosure enrichment
- Assisting the vet when necessary
- Other activities such as gardening, improving trails, making signs for visitors

## **A day in the life of a volunteer**

*'Hi, my name is Stephany. I worked for 5 weeks as a volunteer at the animal rescue center. The day started with cutting fruit and preparing all the different diets of the animals. Then the group was divided into three smaller groups: Birds, Mammals and Monkeys. Before feeding the animals we went inside the cage to prepare the cage for the new meal. After this it was time to feed the animals their breakfast. Then we were free until 2.30pm and enjoyed a nice lunch.*

*In the afternoon we went to feed the animals their lunch and do some extra work. This could be anything such as general maintenance, helping the new arrivals to adjust to the center, repairing and building new enclosures, gardening or improving the trails. They also highly appreciated when I came up with my own ideas. It was an amazing experience to work with all the different animals in the center.'*

## **Own ideas**

Besides the daily tasks at the rescue center, your own initiative is always highly appreciated. If you want to contribute extra to the project, share your ideas with the volunteer coordinator of the project. In the Ecuadorian culture people might be a bit shy in telling you what to do. Therefore, it will make your volunteer period more worthwhile if you show initiative – both for your own personal growth and the project. The people at this project are always very open to new ways of helping the center: so think about what you are passionate about, use your creativity and go for it! For example, if you are good with a hammer, you could build a new cage or repair the existing ones. Perhaps you have experience with animal care and you would like to assist the vet. Every idea is very welcome.

## **Evenings and weekends**

In the evenings and most parts of the weekends the volunteers are free. In your spare time you can either relax at the project or visit the town of Puyo. In town you can go to a Botanical Garden, museum, waterpark or have a drink at a bar. It is also possible to visit Baños and do some extreme activities like rafting, zip lining or bridge jumping.

## **Mandatory volunteer requirements**

Minimum age: 18, if younger we require an approval letter of your parents

Minimum stay: 2 weeks

## **What makes a good volunteer?**

If you stick to the following guidelines, you will definitely be a great volunteer!

- Please remember that not all of the activities are “fun” but they are necessary for the well-being of the animals and the sanctuary. Also, the more involved you get in your work the more responsibility you will be given as a volunteer.
- Please check with your local doctor regarding any vaccinations that you may need before travelling to Ecuador; however rabies and tetanus vaccinations are recommended.
- This project is for animal lovers who do not mind getting their hands dirty!
- You are here to volunteer so please be committed and work hard.
- You must comply with your working hours, do not be late to work and if you are ill and are not able to work please contact the volunteer coordinator as soon as possible.
- Dress appropriately according to your project.
- It is prohibited to consume drugs during your volunteering period.
- If you do go out to party please do not turn up to work tired/hung-over as this is extremely disrespectful to the staff you work with.
- Be patient, sometimes cultural differences, language barriers or home sickness will affect you but please remember that sometimes in Ecuador things work at a slower pace so try not to get frustrated and use your own initiative to get on.
- Use your common sense; do not put yourself in any unnecessary risk or dangers.
- Remember that you are a guest and here to collaborate and to make a small difference.

## **Important Info**

### **Accommodation**

There are cabins with dorm rooms offering space for up to 24 people in total. There is a shared kitchen, bathroom and social area with TV and DVD player, hammocks and books. You will be provided with bedding and will even have access to a swimming pool and wi-fi. Accommodation is basic and it is your duty to keep your living area clean.

### **Transport**

From Quito it will take around the 4/5 hours to reach Puyo. In Puyo you have to take a taxi to the project, the ride will be around the 10 minutes and it should cost you \$3.00. There is no transport necessary to get to work every day because you will stay at the center.

## **Meals**

At the project you will receive three meals a day (from Monday to Friday). However in the weekends you have to arrange the meals yourself. There is a fully equipped kitchen available for you to use, or you can have dinner in town.

## **Donations**

The project is always happy with donations to improve the center. However, always contact our volunteer coordinator to check on the needs of the project.

## **Additional information**

### **Visa requirements**

Remember that your passport has to be valid for at least another 6 months upon arrival in Ecuador. When you arrive to Ecuador you will get a T-3 visa stamp, which will allow you to be 90 days within the country. Do you plan on staying longer than 90 days? Please apply for a 12-IX visa at the Ecuadorian Embassy of your home country, before leaving. This visa will cost you the local equivalent of \$200 and allows you to stay 180 days within the country. Ring your local embassy to ask for current requirements for this visa. Take this into account when buying your ticket, as the airline will not allow you to board the plane if your flight leaves after 90 days and you do not have a visa.

### **Vaccinations**

Before travelling visit your local travel doctor for more information on required vaccinations and recommendations. Do not forget to bring your original yellow fever certificate and vaccinations booklet as they may ask for it on border crossings to other South American countries. Especially Costa Rica and Brazil are known to request it upon boarding or otherwise you cannot enter the country.

### **Important documents**

Make copies of your important documents and leave them with your contact person back home. It's also a good idea to scan your important documents and email them to yourself and to your contact person back home. In this way you always have copies on your email of the most important documents.

### **Money and credit cards**

In Ecuador we use US Dollars and the easiest way to get them is by taking it out of a cash machine. Check with your bank that all your debit and credit cards work in Ecuador and what your daily limit is. If you want to bring cash dollars already from your home country, ask your bank to give you small notes, with the highest denomination being \$20. Not many stores will accept \$50 or \$100 notes. Bringing a credit card is useful, especially in emergencies. Check your credit limit before with your bank as with an emergency such as being operated in a hospital or having to buy last minute flight tickets you will need an amount of \$4000.