

Costa Rica Sea Turtle Ecology Program

✦ Measure leatherback sea turtles

✦ River raft through tropical rainforest

✦ Restore threatened tropical habitat

This is an amazing opportunity to assist with a sea turtle monitoring project and be an active collaborator in international sea turtle conservation efforts.

Pacuare Nature Reserve, with four miles of beach and a 2,000 acre lowland tropical forest, is a protected sea turtle reserve on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica. The beach at Pacuare is of critical importance in terms of worldwide sea turtle nesting activity. The Costa Rican tropical lowlands are home to howler monkeys, three-toed sloths, toucans, reptiles, and other wonders of the natural world.

While in Costa Rica, students collect data with nesting sea turtles including carapace width and length, and number of eggs laid. Students develop a field based research project using the data they collect-such as the relationship between turtle size and nesting activity. This 12-day course includes over 50 hours coursework and instruction in subjects like sea turtle biology, rainforest ecology, and research methodology. Students also complete at least 20 hours of field research while patrolling the remote beach at the Pacuare Reserve.

After completing their field work, students meet their Costa Rican peers when they visit a local high school attended by local program participants. Students spend time together as peers, giving joint presentations, sharing research data, engaging in the powerful exchange of ideas and realizing their collaborative strength.

“ This was a most rewarding experience and one that I believe will live on in each of our lives.” ~Lee Coble,
CR '05 Teacher



▲ Measuring the carapace length of a female leatherback sea turtle.



▲ Traveling to the Pacuare Nature Reserve

Life examined.

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Sample itinerary subject to change

Partnering with:



Day 1 : Afternoon arrival in San Jose

- Get to know your instructor team
- Preview sea turtle biology

Day 2-6: Leatherback sea turtles at the Pacuare Nature Reserve

- Collect data about nesting sea turtles during nightly patrols
- Explore and investigate the rainforest ecosystem
- Restore turtle nesting habitat on the beach

Day 7: From the turtle reserve to the rainforest

- Travel northwest to a private rainforest reserve
- Meet the friendly staff working on biodiversity projects

Day 8-9: Rainforest Reserve

- Visit a heliconia garden and collect seeds for planting
- Hike rainforest trails in search of birds, reptiles, and mammals
- Plant saplings as part of a reforestation project

Day 10: Rafting the Pacuare River

- Raft the spectacular rapids of the Pacuare River
- Float through vibrant jungle canyons and past spectacular waterfalls

Day 11: Costa Rican High School Visit

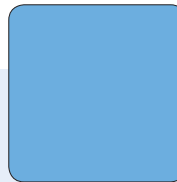
- Visit a local school attended by participating students
- Present the results of student-led research projects
- Play soccer or volleyball and practice Spanish with the locals

Day 12: Morning Departure from San Jose International Airport

DETAILS:

- Accommodations: 5 nights in beach cabins; 3 nights in rainforest bungalows; 3 nights in hotels
- Course dates: March - July
- Price: \$2,910 (accompanying teachers pay \$100)
- Price includes: All-inclusive
- Group size: Minimum 10; Maximum 20
- How to Apply: Send in an EPI application and \$200 deposit; applications online at:

www.ecologyproject.org



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