



Position Description: Resident Naturalist Intern

Position: Resident Naturalist Intern
Location: University of Georgia Costa Rica
San Luis de Monteverde, Costa Rica

Requirements:

- Minimum bachelor's degree (Exceptional undergraduates will also be considered)
- Interest in natural history, ecology, wildlife, botany, environmental sciences, and related fields
- Degree in the natural or environmental sciences preferred
- Fluency in English required
- Conversational Spanish skills highly desired
- Teaching / guiding experience preferred
- Experience living abroad preferred
- Enthusiastic attitude and strong work ethic
- Flexibility in working environment and schedule
- Strong initiative and ability to work independently, as well as part of a team
- Excellent mental and physical condition
- Availability for a minimum of six months
- Travelers' insurance (proof required following acceptance)
- First aid certification (proof required following acceptance)

Application Checklist

Completed application packets will include the following:

- Completed application form
- Cover letter of interest
- Curriculum vitae / resume
- Two letters of recommendation
- Official university transcript

Accepted applicants will be required to provide the following:

- Proof of travelers' insurance
- Proof of first aid certification
- Proof of valid passport

Completed applications should be addressed to Ms. Lindsay Stallcup, Academic Programs Manager:

Mail:
UGA Costa Rica
Apartado 108-5655
Santa Elena de Monteverde , Puntarenas, COSTA RICA

E-mail:
progCR@uga.edu

FAX:
(011 506) 2645-8050

Position Description

General Overview

Resident Naturalist interns at the University of Georgia's Costa Rica campus (UGA CR) are dedicated, motivated individuals with a passion for natural history, teaching, and guiding. Resident Naturalists lead a variety of nature-based activities and academic programs for student groups and eco-tourists of all ages and educational backgrounds.

Resident Naturalists have the opportunity to advance their training in the fields of tropical ecology, natural history, environmental education, sustainability, conservation, agriculture, Costa Rican culture and Spanish. Interaction with guests from around the world both formally and informally allows Resident Naturalist interns the opportunity to fine-tune their skills in public relations and public speaking.

This is a high-energy position and requires excellent interpersonal and customer service skills, in addition to expertise in natural history and related fields. Interns spend days and evenings learning and teaching in a socially and environmentally unique atmosphere at the base of the magnificent Monteverde Cloud Forest.

In addition to their primary duties as facilitators and guides, Resident Naturalists will have the opportunity to participate in on-going projects on and around UGA Costa Rica. Naturalists are also encouraged to develop their own individual projects within their areas of interest, which may include anything from community service activities to scientific research. Please see below for more information on research and independent projects.

Responsibilities

(1) Guiding and Teaching

Resident Naturalists are the principal instructors for our nature-based activities and academic programs. Naturalists function as guides, teachers, and facilitators, helping our guests to learn about forest ecology, local flora and fauna, local culture, and more. For a complete list of the activities offered at UGA Costa Rica, please visit

http://www.externalaffairs.uga.edu/costa_rica/index.php/site/activities/-/campus.

(a) **Guided nature walks.** Examples of the most common guided walks include:

- Guided natural history hike
- Night hike
- Bird watching
- Botanical garden and medicinal plant tour

(b) **Natural history talks or hands-on workshops,** including but not limited to:

- Introduction to tropical plant families
- Insect collection and identification workshop
- Introduction to cloud forest ecology
- Ecology and diversity of birds, reptiles and amphibians, mammals, and other groups

(c) **Other based talks and workshops,** including but not limited to:

- Costa Rican history and culture
- Spanish
- Sustainable tourism

- (d) **Facilitation and translation** for a variety of workshops led by UGA CR employees and local experts. Including but not limited to:
 - Cow milking
 - Cooking (on campus or in a local home)
 - Dance workshops
 - Tree planting, greenhouse work, and maintenance of reforested areas, related to the Carbon Offset program and Three-wattled bellbird Biological Corridor
 - Sustainable and coffee farm tours at neighboring farms
- (e) **Informal interaction with guests and groups.** In addition to interactions during activities and workshops, intern staff members interact informally with guests in a variety of settings: over meals, in the evenings, over a cup of coffee on the porch, etc. This is a great opportunity for our guests to get to know staff members, and vice versa. It's also an opportunity for naturalists to share and exchange knowledge in an informal setting. Finally, by talking to our guests and getting to know their specific interests, we can help them to make the most of their visit.

(2) Day-to-day operations (logistics, administration, etc.)

- (a) **Guest check-in and check-out.** Naturalists, along with other intern staff, meet and greet new guests and groups, help them get settled into their rooms, and provide a general orientation. Intern staff may also help at check-out, making sure that keys are returned, the guest book gets signed, etc.
- (b) **Logistical support for academic programs,** such as opening classrooms, setting up projectors, etc.
- (c) **Gift Shop.** Naturalists (and other interns) assist guests with purchases in our Gift Shop.
- (d) **Guest activities.** Resident Naturalists assist with organization of guest activities – for example, helping guests figure out which activities they'd like to participate in; calling to set up farm tours or cooking classes; calling taxis; informing the kitchen about early breakfast times; etc.
- (e) **Customer service and community relations.** All staff members at UGA CR (interns and full-time staff alike!) strive at all times to achieve excellence in customer service and community relations.
- (f) **Assisting other departments** (kitchen, housekeeping, maintenance) as needed. This may take the form of helping with trail maintenance; washing dishes; helping housekeeping staff; assisting in the botanical garden; library inventory and cleanup; and more.

(3) Program development, research, and independent projects. Resident Naturalists will have the opportunity to assist in the development of new activities and programs, as well as helping to fine-tune and improve existing activities. Examples include:

- (a) **Development of new talks or workshops,** either on assigned topics or based on the intern's own expertise and special interests.
- (b) **Research and independent projects.** Examples may include, but are not limited to:
 - **Long-term research and data collection.** Current projects include: monthly UGA CR / upper San Luis bird census; monthly phenology survey; long-term climate and weather data; and maintenance and monitoring work related to the Carbon Offset and Pájaro Campana (Three-wattled bellbird) Biological Corridor projects.
 - **Assisting graduate students or other researchers** with their work, when available.

- **Individual projects.** Intern staff members are encouraged to develop an independent project during their stay at UGA CR. This can take many forms – developing an independent research project; community service (teaching English or computer skills, or helping with the community library); volunteer work with local farmers; development of new academic programs; and more.
- (c) **Assistance with UGA study abroad programs.** Resident Naturalists may accompany UGA study abroad programs or other academic groups on field trips, primarily within the Monteverde region, but occasionally elsewhere in Costa Rica.

Compensation

Room, meals, laundry, and internet (approximate value of \$250/month) are provided in return for the services provided by Resident Naturalist interns. Special rates to stay at the Campus are also available to family members during the Resident Naturalist's term at UGA Costa Rica.

One of the greatest benefits provided by the Naturalist position is undoubtedly the opportunity to grow, both personally and professionally. Interns will advance their training in a diverse array of fields; refine leadership and teamwork skills; improve fluency in Spanish; learn about and be immersed in Costa Rican culture; and much more.

Training and Evaluation

Upon arrival, the Academic Programs Manager, General Manager, and acting Resident Naturalists will provide training for incoming Resident Naturalists.

Training takes many forms:

- **Lectures, workshops, and activities** led by the Academic Programs Manager, General Manager, guest speakers, and/or local experts.
- **Visits to local attractions** designed to enhance knowledge in specific areas (e.g., Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, Butterfly Garden, Bat Jungle, Frog Pond, and more).
- **Informal training** is an important component of the training that Resident Naturalists receive. Examples of informal training include:
 - “Shadowing” more experienced Naturalists as they guide hikes or lead workshops with student groups and other guests
 - Quizzes and practice hikes, talks, and workshops
 - Weekly presentations on the “species of your choice”
 - Participation in ongoing activities such as: monthly bird counts, phenology surveys, “Species of the Day” records, and more.
- **Independent training and continuing education.** Interns are expected to take the initiative to continually further their own knowledge, through reading, research, and hands-on experience. The Academic Programs Manager will provide guidance and direction if necessary.

Naturalists are evaluated informally throughout their stay, and formally after one month, three months, and at the conclusion of their contract. At the end of their stay, Resident Naturalist interns in good standing will receive certification from the University of Georgia Costa Rica program as having successfully completed the Resident Naturalist program.

Dates and Deadlines

The Resident Naturalist intern position requires a minimum six-month commitment. Positions are available year-round, applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

For more information and to find out about current availability for intern positions at UGA Costa Rica, contact Ms. Lindsay Stallcup, Academic Programs Manager, at progCR@uga.edu.