

Monkey & Sea Turtle Research Assistant

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Employer	Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program
Location	Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea
Posted	May 23, 2017
Closes	Jul 22, 2017
Sector	Academic / Research, Nonprofit
Field	Conservation science
Discipline	Biological Surveys, Biology, Ecology, Ecosystem Services, Marine, Wildlife Biology
Job Level	Entry level
Employment Type	Temporary / Seasonal, Volunteer
Salary Type	Unpaid

Start date: November 2017; 5 months commitment.

The Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program (BBPP) is seeking volunteers to assist with data collection primarily on the ecology of primates and nesting sea turtles in our two research camps on the southern beaches of Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea. BBPP will engage field assistants for a period of 5 months during the upcoming dry season, beginning in November and lasting through March. Field assistants are expected to devote at least 40 hrs/week to the project, but due to the nature of the project and living conditions, hours will likely be considerably more.

Field assistants work under the supervision of BBPP Research Camp Managers, Drexel & UNGE Researchers, the BBPP In-Country Manager, and Dr. Mary Katherine Gonder (BBPP Director). They are encouraged to participate in all aspects of field research during their stay on Bioko Island and may explore additional opportunities to participate in educational outreach projects with local school children as well as training exercises with local wildlife patrols.

Primary research activities include tagging nesting sea turtles, gathering reproductive output data on leatherback and green turtles, conducting large mammal

biomonitoring surveys, and fecal collection for microbiome analyses. Turtle surveys are conducted every night until 5 am. Assistants will walk an average of 10 km/night while patrolling the beaches. Primate surveys will be conducted during the day for 2 weeks each month along established BBPP transects together with a trained team of local survey workers. Sampling of primate and other mammal feces will also be conducted during the day, but will occur off-trail with the use of a handheld GPS unit. Participation in other research projects are possible and encouraged.

Due to accessibility, tourism, hunting and other factors, the dynamics differ between the two field camps. Volunteers working at Moaba, located 5km from the nearest road, will participate mostly in the following activities: aiding in the facilitation of short-term ecotourism visits to research camps as part of a small-scale, locally lead ecotourism initiative; monitoring nesting beaches nightly as part of BBPP's marine turtle research program; and aiding park management authorities in conservation activities and monitoring. Conversely, Moraka is located 13km from the nearest road and is visited less frequently. Volunteers at Moraka will focus their efforts on marine turtle monitoring research, primate surveys, and sample collections. However, assisting in all aspects of the project is possible throughout the season.

Our field sites are in remote areas with no road access. Researchers and field assistants must hike in and out of the field site(s) when necessary along extremely rough terrain. Researchers and field assistants will be living in tents, cooking over fire, and using water from nearby

streams. Field assistants are also required to participate in daily upkeep and maintenance of the camp, including preparation of meals. The diet is very limited due to lack of electricity/refrigerators. There is no internet connection, but cell service is available yet unreliable. A satellite phone will be available in case of an emergency. The camp does have generators to charge research equipment, which may be used for occasional personal items.

This is an unpaid (volunteer) position. However, BBPP will provide housing (tents), food and local transportation. You are expected to provide international transportation to and from Malabo, Equatorial Guinea (\pm \$2000 for a round trip flight from US), medical and evacuation insurance, appropriate immunizations (yellow fever) and medications (anti-malarial medications). Non-US citizens will need to apply for a visa to enter Equatorial Guinea. We will try to obtain a letter of invitation through the local university in Malabo but cannot guarantee a visa.

Qualifications:

- Field assistants are expected to be at least 21 years old.
- Field assistants are **REQUIRED** to have:
 - B.A. or B.S. in biology, ecology, environmental science, or related disciplines
 - Spanish language proficiency (Spanish is the national language of Equatorial Guinea).

- Prior field experience in biology, ecology, environmental science, or related disciplines.

- Physical fitness and a positive attitude towards physically exhausting work in a hot and humid climate. All assistants should be prepared for very demanding and time consuming work.

- Preference will be given to applicants who have experience in remote locations in developing countries and experience camping and hiking in wilderness areas.

- A desire to pursue a career in conservation biology/ecology is preferred.

Applications:

Please send a cover letter, CV and contact information for 3 references to Dana Venditti at dmv52@drexel.edu. The cover letter and/or CV should clearly detail applicants' level of Spanish proficiency.

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