

Ecuador Field School



Ecuador, a land of rainforest and cloud forest, high altitude plains and snow-capped mountains, sun-kissed beaches and enchanted islands lost in the vast waters of the Pacific Ocean. A land of contrasts; of hot, steamy jungles and cold, arid deserts; lush green forests, teeming with life and bare, tortured volcanic islands where life struggles for its very existence. Ecuador, one small country with endless diversity in landscapes, flora and fauna. What an idyllic place for anyone with a passion for nature, what a perfect place for a biologist!



Ecuador – the perfect place for a tropical biology field school, don't you think? And that is why groups of students from the University of the Fraser Valley Biology Department, along with several faculty members, head to the amazing biodiversity that is Ecuador. We spend our time gallivanting in the lowland rainforests of the Amazon and frolic up in the clouds of the Andean mountainside. Of course, it is all work and no play for our industrious students. While in the cloud forest, student carry out independent research projects, investigating such diverse

subjects as hummingbird feeding preferences and how leaf cutter ants bury their dead. In the lowland rainforest, we meet with the indigenous Quechua people of Ecuador and learn about the ecology of the area from the local people. We see how these people integrate tourism and sustainable agriculture into their lives in the forest and learn about the flora and fauna of the area from their first-hand experience of living in the forest.

We do, of course, also immerse ourselves in the life of the forests. OK, so some of us may not be so happy about some of the wildlife that we may have to interact with, especially all the hairy, eight-legged arachnids that call the jungle their home. But the rainforest is home to a myriad of life, including endless varieties of fascinating insects, birds and butterflies of a rainbow of colours, tree frogs with their luminous eyes and the smallest, cutest monkeys that you ever did see, all living intimately in the lush and vibrant green of the forest vegetation.

So, anyone want to join us on our tropical adventure? Have your cameras ready, your insect repellent handy and your spirit of adventure ready to go. Ecuador, here we come!

