

## Costa Rica Team Leap

### Teaching & Turtles

#### Overview

Dive into a Costa Rican &quot;Pura Vida- (&quot;pure life-, a national slogan!) by joining a team of Leap volunteers on projects that will take you to the heart of this amazingly diverse country. Depending on the time of year and length of your stay you will experience two or three incredible environments: Your time will be divided between the Pacific Coast with it-s palm fringed beaches, world renowned surf and rich Latino culture and the Caribbean Coast, a region of lush tropical rainforest, turtle nesting sites and African influenced heritage.

**Pacific Coast** For 4 weeks you-ll live with families of El Silencio, a village carved out of pristine Rainforest with views all the way down to the Ocean. With your help, the community aims to become totally self sufficient and provide a good standard of living for all of it-s members- and look after it's many adopted monkeys and wildlife in the animal rescue centre! Your donation and volunteering will help towards improving schools, education, water supplies and farming initiatives and ensure the development of this unique community!

The second Pacific Coast phase is at Matapalo, a 10km stretch of sandy beach famous for it-s incredible sunsets and proximity to Rainforest. For 3 weeks you-ll be living in comfortable team house just off the beach working alongside local conservation professionals to protect female sea turtles, their nests and hatchlings laid at Matapalo. Volunteers can help with a conservation club for local children, teach English at the nearby primary school and also collaborate with Matapalo high school English Club.

#### Caribbean Coast

The other 3 weeks of the placement you will be based at Quelonios del Caribe conservation station, close to Tortuguero on the mouth of the famous Pacuare River (which boasts the best white water rafting in Central America!). This area is one of the most bio-diverse locations on earth, home to over 400 species of tree and 2000 species of plant, where you can encounter jaguars, tapirs, river otters, ocelots, manatees, sloths and monkeys.

Turtles abound in this region, and among those found nesting here are the Leatherback, Loggerhead, Hawksbill, and Green turtles, which are threatened with extinction.

Here you will help protect these turtles and help improve the quality of life for the local communities who live alongside them. You'll work alongside conservation experts monitoring the beach for nests, collecting and measuring eggs as well as nurturing baby turtles before they are released back into the wild.

You'll also help at the community butterfly gardens, aiding in the research of butterfly development and species preservation, assist in self-sustainable organic vegetable gardens, as well as the construction of community trails.

#### How you Help

Helping Who El Silencio Eco-lodge, Elementary School of El Silencio Community, Pacific Wildlife

## Costa Rica Team Leap

### Teaching & Turtles

Conservation Centre, Matapalo high school, Barra de Pacuare township and the turtles which nest on both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts.

Helping How

Community Projects:

El Silencio

- At the elementary school you can teach English, dance and handicraft skills to the primary school children.
- Help entertain the children in the kindergarten - drawing, playing, singing songs etc.
- Assist with the organisation of the Environmental Education Centre.
- Paint the community centres - school, church etc.
- Play volleyball and soccer with the local kids.
- Work at the local dairy and agro centre.

Matapalo

- Teach English at the High School and Primary School
- Help to run a conservation &eco-club- for local kids.

Quelonios del Caribe

- Work in the organic gardens
- Help with trail building
- Based in the Barra de Pacuare township and surrounding area you will help to generate new food sources and livelihoods for the local community, to deter illegal turtle egg trade and improve local-s health. These projects include plans for fish and shrimp farming, composting projects including worm cultivation, animal husbandry via raising both chickens and hogs, organic and natural gardening.

Conservation Projects:

El Silencio

- Based at the Wildlife Conservation Centre, look after the rescued ocelots, monkeys and exotic birds.
- Build feeding platforms, nest boxes and fences.
- Reintroduce animals back into the wild.
- Reconstruct bridges and trails, clean cages and maintain the animal shelter.
- Typical animals at the rescue centre include: ocelots, monkeys, agoutis, anteaters, and exotic birds like parrots.
- Prepare diets and feed animals.

Turtle Projects at Matapalo and Quelonios del Caribe

- Take part in a training presentation that qualifies you to work directly with marine turtles.
- Participate in nightly beach patrols for the protection of marine turtles.

## Costa Rica Team Leap

### Teaching & Turtles

- Assist in cleaning the immediate surrounds of nesting zones.
- Identify and account for turtle tracks on the beaches.
- Search for turtle nests.
- Count numbers of eggs found in each nest and relocate the eggs to a secure egg nursery.
- Monitor relocated turtle nests; monitor nest temperatures.
- Assist in freeing baby turtles for their initial journey to sea.
- Take biometric measurements of turtles.

#### Matapalo

- In addition to turtle projects (above) work on trail building.

#### Quelonios del Caribe

- In addition to turtle projects (above) assist in butterfly garden activities, breeding Blue Morpho butterflies.
  - Keep the area constantly cleaned
  - Collect cocoons, relocate cocoons to a safe "nursery", tally the number of caterpillars produced, locate and monitor eggs and caterpillars in their primary stages of development
- Eco-tourism

El Silencio has an eco-lodge where, tasks will vary from day to day depending on the host-s needs.

- Teaching English to the lodge staff.
- Maintenance of the lodge including the rebuilding of bungalow decks.
- Tending to the Medicinal Plants Garden.

## Your Base

### Your Team

Maximum of 16 volunteers per departure. Anyone aged 18-27 can participate

### Accommodation and Meals

Whilst on the Caribbean phase you will live alongside your team mates in Quelonios del Caribe Station, a large building with good-sized bedrooms and bunk beds. It has a power generator that is switched on for two hours per day, thus, cameras, phones and even laptops (!) can be recharged in your rooms. In El Silencio you will stay with a family in the community, (one volunteer per house). The rooms and houses are basic but comfortable with a simple bed & wardrobe. You will have to share a bathroom with other family members and although hot water is available in some houses, it cannot be guaranteed. Most houses have electricity.

In Matapalo the whole team will stay in a big house, located 200m from the beach in an area of mangroves, just in front of a large lagoon. There will be shared bedrooms with plenty of bunk beds, running water and electricity. There is a common room, kitchen and eating area and all meals will be provided Monday - Friday. The cuisine is typical Costa Rican food. You will be well fed throughout your placement. A typical breakfast might be rice & beans, or scrambled eggs, cheese, tortillas with

## Costa Rica Team Leap

### Teaching & Turtles

a hot drink. Lunch and dinners would typically comprise of rice, beans, vegetables with beef, chicken or fish. Spaghetti, chicken with vegetables, guacamole, different types of salads, tortillas, sweet plantains and local food made of tubers. Drinks typically include tropical fruit juices, water and hot drinks such as coffee, tea or chocolate.

#### Local Towns

When in El Silencio Londres is a 45 minute drive away and Quepos is 1hr away. In Matapalo the nearest large town is Quepos, 22km away. There are internet cafes, banks, bars and restaurants in Quepos. The nearest town to Quelonios is Bataan, located 25 minutes by boat and 20 minutes by car, the Coastal city of Limon is a further 2 hours by road.

#### Wildlife

Both areas are rich in wildlife however Quelonios del Caribe is one of the most bio-diverse locations on earth, home to over 400 species of tree, 2000 species of plant and expect to encounter jaguars, tapirs, river otters, ocelots, manatees, sloths and monkeys. Turtles abound in this region, and among those found nesting here are the Leatherback, Loggerhead, Hawksbill, and Green turtles plus an array of exotic birds like parrots, cormorants, hawks and ibis. Weather Always hot and humid. The wet season is between May and November but in mountains and forests it can rain anytime. You can expect the mornings to be nice and sunny and rainstorms in the afternoons, lasting as long as an hour or more - you are in a rainforest after all!

### Time Out

Time In Those choosing a 6 week placement will fly out along with others who have chosen the 10 week option. The whole team will travel and work together, but those doing 6 weeks will return to the capital at the end of the 6th week, whilst 10 week volunteers remain there until the end and complete the final project phase. At the start you will all be met at San Jose airport and driven by a bilingual driver to the Hotel Rosa del Paseo for two nights in San Jose to relax, explore the city and have an orientation lunch with the staff at Travel Excellence before being escorted on public transport to your first project location. Between the Pacific and Caribbean phases you will be escorted back to San Jose and spend a night at the Hotel Rosa del Paseo before being transferred to the next phase by public transport. At the end you will have a further one night in the hotel in San Jose before flying home.

The order of projects is dependent on the time of year, we have designed the to best suit local turtle nesting seasons and school term dates\*:

January: Matapalo (3 weeks) /El Silencio (4 weeks) /Quelonios (3 weeks) April: El Silencio (4 weeks) /Matapalo (3 weeks) /Quelonios (3 weeks) September: Quelonios (3 weeks) /Matapalo (3 weeks) /El Silencio (4 weeks)

\* Turtle nesting season on the Caribbean coast runs from 15 Feb to 15 Oct, on the Pacific coast the season is between 1 June and 15 January, taking note that towards the end of the season only baby turtles would be seen by volunteers. Costa Rican school term runs from February to 30th June and then from 15th July to 15th December. Therefore, school holidays are mid December to end of

## Costa Rica Team Leap

### Teaching & Turtles

January, one week over Easter and 2 weeks at the start of July. During school holidays it is possible to work with the children by arranging extra curricular, 'drop in- activities with the local children, like games, songs, drawing and learning English. Time out

Weekends are free to travel and explore. Top Trips

White Water Rafting on the Savegre River (Class III), fishing, surfing, jungle canopy tours on zip wires (!), visits to the nearby beaches of Dominical, Matapalo and El Rey, horse riding and one day or overnight visits to the Manuel Antonio National Park, soaking up the Reggae culture.

### Cost

#### Dates

2010 for 10 or 6 weeks

September 2nd

2011 for 10 or 6 weeks

January 4th, March 31st, July 4th (6 weeks), September 1st Once on the placement it is possible to switch from 6 to 10 weeks on receipt of the extra payment.

#### Costs

Up until 31st August 2011

6 weeks £1881

10 weeks £2724 Includes:

Donation to the project currently £80. Half of this donation will automatically go towards the Quelonios phase and you can choose how you want the remainder to be spent in either community.

Selection and briefing on all aspects of the scheme.

Orientation and debriefing with Travel excellence staff in San Jose.

24 hour emergency back-up, management and support by UK team and in-country Placement Manager, with reliable communications and infrastructure.

Safety and induction course on arrival.

Host Employers Liability Insurance.

Airport pick up at start and drop off at the end, transfer to and from the placements. Transport between project phases and transport during placement when required for project purposes.

Food and accommodation throughout.

4 nights in San Jose staying at Hotel Rosa del Paseo

#### Not included:

International flights, departure taxes (payable in USD), visas, travel insurance, medical expenses (reclaimable through travel insurance), soft drinks/beer etc and independent/weekend travel e.g. food and accommodation whilst away from the placement location and any excursions not listed above. We are happy to arrange flights through STA Travel (ABTA 99209 & IATA 9122411) who are well known for offering good value.

#### Exchange Rates

Please note that as we are paying the project host in US Dollars to cover all in-country costs, and the cost of the placement is set so far ahead, if there is a big change in the exchange rate or fuel increase then we reserve the right to increase the cost of the scheme, as per our Booking Conditions,

## Costa Rica Team Leap

### Teaching & Turtles

but will absorb any minor fluctuations, and will give plenty of warning if we have to raise prices slightly.

#### Donation To The Community

Included in the cost of the scheme is a donation set at the level indicated above. We have agreed with the Project Leader that you can choose how, as a group or possible even individually, you want this donation to be spent ensuring you leave a lasting legacy. Given the average monthly wage is approximately £35 per month the donations do actually go far and in the past Leapers have paid for a child-s school fees, bought materials to build medical clinics etc or playground equipment. In addition to the donation the community use the remainder of the money we pay them on your behalf, to pay the host family and &lsquo;pool- the rest for the benefit of every family in the community.