WILDLIFE MONITORING INTERN

Description: **Collect data on wildlife populations in threatened coastal dry forests through camera trapping, road surveys, and field observations.**

Project summary: Interns participating in wildlife monitoring have a number of projects to choose from at the Lalo Loor reserve, and in other forest areas along the coast (also see Conservation Corridor internship). Ceiba is monitoring wildlife populations in the region around the Lalo Loor Dry Forest Reserve, and the impacts of human activity on wild animals. One project uses camera traps (trail cams) to photograph wildlife that uses the forest and trails. To date, we have recorded the presence of a surprising number of large vertebrates, including ocelot, jaguarundi and margay cats, deer, racoons, tayra, and much more. The second project addresses the effect of automobile traffic on the mortality of wild animals moving across the landscape. Interns will conduct regular surveys of wildlife mortality on the coastal highway that passes in front of the entrance to the Lalo Loor reserve. Weekly surveys are conducted by vehicle; animals are identified and their location recorded by GPS. By identifying roadkill "hot spots", we plan to make recommendations for mitigate wildlife mortality.

What you'll do:

- Conduct weekly roadkill surveys and enter all data into a database
- Use GIS software to map mortality incidents, and identify high-frequency mortality zones
- Identify hotspots of wildlife mortality along the road for the proposal of mitigation strategies
- Collect camera trap data, identify species captured, and enter into database
- Maintain and reposition cameras according to sampling protocol
- Build a database of individual spotted cats, that can be recognized by spotting patterns
- Estimate regions of the Lalo Loor reserve that are heavily used by wildlife
- Collect data on forest structure and characteristics to analyze preferred habitat for different species

What you'll learn:

- Standard methods and experimental design for terrestrial wildlife surveys using camera traps
- Geographic data collection and processing using GPS and GIS
- Field identification of neotropical animals
- Data organization, management and analysis

What we seek: Knowledge or experience in wildlife ecology, or interested and willing to learn; willing to hike long distances in rugged conditions and conduct field work, often in hot weather; knowledge of Excel; organized and attention to detail.