

Coastal Dry Forest Nature Reserve



This project works to protect Ecuador's dry tropical forest located on the coast of Ecuador. The reserve is located in Bahía de Caráquez, a coastal town in the Manabí province of Ecuador. Today only 2% of Ecuador's dry forest remains intact resulting in a loss of habitat for the native flora and fauna of the area. Many of the coastal forests have been deforested for agriculture and fragile habitats such as dry forests, mangroves and other wetlands have been lost or severely degraded. The western forests of the Ecuadorian coast are considered to be the most fragile in the world due to the high number of species found in such a small area and this reserve aims to preserve the forest whilst educating others about conservation practices. In the reserve to date more than 100 species of birds have been recorded, some 23 species of mammals, 7 species of reptiles, 4 species of amphibians and a variety of plant life. It has even been declared an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International and DarwinNet.

The reserve stretches across 110 hectares crossing many different ecological regions from sea level to mountains. The work of the reserve involves conservation, research, environmental education, sustainable development, and the promotion of natural resources in the region; it also supports the municipal authorities and civil society in Bahía de Caráquez, which has been declared an "eco-city".

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Volunteer tasks vary greatly depending on the needs of the reserve, the time of year, and the campaigns that are taking place, however activities can include:

- Reforestation - collect seeds, work in the plant nursery, clear sites ready to plant new trees
- Observation & research - collect, identify, classify and photograph native flora and fauna
- Organic Garden - sow, maintain garden and reap vegetables and fruits.
- Education - Teach English in the local schools and assist in environmental education.
- Ecoclub - once a week children from the local area participate in a conversation club where they learn more about the reserve, the local area and carry out fun educational activities. Volunteers help to organize the activities and plan the structure of the club.
- Trails - improve and maintain trails, build new trails, help with construction
- There are also a lot of Small, short-term projects throughout the year - with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the municipal, Corporación Nacional de Bosques Privados del Ecuador, Bosques Privados de Manabí, Department of Agriculture, the communities, etc.

WORK SCHEDULE

You will work from Monday to Friday and have your weekends free to explore the local area. Working hours are flexible depending on the tasks that need to be carried out, however generally you will work in the morning from 8am until 12 and in the afternoon from 2pm until 4.30pm. Every Thursday you will help with the Ecoclub that runs for 1 hour from 4.30pm till 5.30pm.

LOCATION

The project is located in a nature reserve located 10 minutes from the coastal city of Bahía de Caráquez. From Quito it takes about 7 hours to reach the city by bus.