

LA MARINA WILDLIFE RESCUE CENTER

Project Background

La Marina is a privately funded Animal Wildlife Rescue Center. It was first created by the Rojas Ramírez family as a private refuge for maltreated wild animals. Later on, because of the high costs of maintenance, it opened to the public as a zoo, in order to receive help from visitors. Finally, the current generation of the Rojas family transformed the zoo into a Wildlife Animal Rescue Center.

Today, under the direction of Juan José Rojas and Martha Elieth Ramírez, the center strives to conserve, protect, reintroduce, and raise several wild species that have been removed from their natural environment as a result of repossession, hunting, habitat destruction, and the ignorance of humans.

In 2006, La Marina was a winner of the Ford/Jaguar Cars International Conservation Award established by the Jaguar Conservation Trust, a grass roots program dedicated to providing grants and funding for projects that promote the preservation of the company's namesake and its habitat. It also has an environmental education program to promote awareness among local citizens.

Why Volunteers are Needed?

La Marina Wildlife Rescue Center is home to approximately 400 animals housed in enclosures and over 100 animals free to roam the 27 acre (11 hectares) property. The more than 80 species of animals found here include: spider monkeys, tapirs, types of birds such as green macaws, scarlet macaws, toucans, various reptiles (snakes, crocodiles, iguanas, etc.) and different types of felines or big cats.

The center has six main programs:

Breeding – The aim is to return to nature the off-springs of animals that were removed from their habitat.

Liberation – Animals born in La Marina that show innate characteristics necessary for surviving in the wild enter a rigorous program where they are taught how to obtain food and survive on their own.

Reintroduction – Animals that enter the center are placed in quarantine, rehabilitated, and if they are fit, released into protected areas.

Rescue – Many animals threatened by humans have been rescued and the center has prevented and denounced harmful activities such as illegal deforestation and hunting.

Conservation – Animals with no hope of returning to their natural habitats receive daily care, feeding and affection.



La Marina receives no funds from the government, depending only on private funds and donations. Limited by a tight budget, the center has been working hard to improve the conditions of the animals little by little.



Volunteers play a very important role helping to take care of the animals, feeding them, cleaning cages, other infrastructure maintenance, and guiding tourists who visit the center.

Where is the Project?

La Marina Wildlife Rescue Center is located within the Alajuela province of Costa Rica. The closest town is Aguas Zarcas de San Carlos. It is also close to la Fortuna and the Arenal Volcano.

It takes about 2 1/2 hours or so by public bus from San José (the capital City) to get there.

What do Volunteers do?

Volunteers may undertake a range of tasks to take care of the animals and improve their living conditions.

Volunteers:

- Prepare food for the animals
- Feed the animals
- Clean cages
- Build enclosures
- Help maintain facilities
- Guide tourists



Abilities and experience of the Volunteers

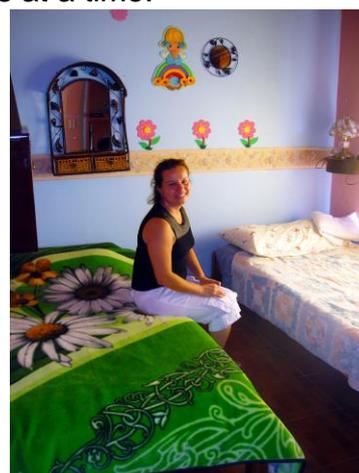
Volunteers must commit to work in this project for a minimum of 2 weeks. They must be willing to work 5 days/week, Monday-Friday, from 7:30am – 3:30pm. Volunteers must love working outdoors. They should be healthy and have a great disposition to learn and be eager to help in different tasks as required. A great love for animals and nature makes this experience most rewarding.

How many volunteers at a time?

This project has facilities available for 15 volunteers at a time.

Facilities

Volunteers stay with local families, in a private room and shared bathroom. The host families



live approx. 2 km or less from the rescue center. Volunteers may walk or commute by public bus.

Meals

Included in the program are three daily meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner. The meals are based on a Costa Rican diet, food is fairly basic, includes rice, beans, corn, meat, pasta, vegetables and seasonal fruits.

Internet

There is WiFi available at the project



When is it best to go?

This project is open for volunteers year-round.

How long is the program and what are the available dates?

The minimum stay at the program is 2 weeks and it is possible to stay up to 3 months. Open year-round.

Language requirements:

To participate in this project, it is better that volunteers have a basic knowledge of Spanish. Project coordinators at CRLA do speak English and some staff members at the rescue center also speak English.