



## STRI Internship: Introduction to Neotropical Research and Culture

**Application deadline: January 30, 2012**

Notification of acceptance: March 15, 2012

Program dates: June 1 – Aug 15, 2012

### About the Internship

Twelve applicants will be selected to participate in a 10-week long program of summer research and cultural experiences in Panama. This internship will give interns the opportunity to meet and interact with scientists from around the world, gain hands-on experience in their area of academic interest, and delve into Panama's rich culture.

### What will interns do?

Interns will be partnered with a research mentor based on their research interests. Throughout the summer, interns will work closely with their research mentor, becoming an integral participant in the scientist's larger research agenda. The intent is for the intern to gain the confidence, techniques, and skills needed to conduct their own scientific research independently.

Interns will also have the opportunity to participate in activities aimed at increasing their general scientific and cultural knowledge of the Neotropics and of Panama. These activities, including organized seminars, workshops, and field trips, have been designed to supplement and enrich the interns' research experiences.

Lastly, because we seek applicants from both within and outside of Latin America, we hope this internship experience will facilitate the learning of another language (English or Spanish) and develop in interns a greater understanding of other cultures through shared experiences with other program participants.

### Program Goals

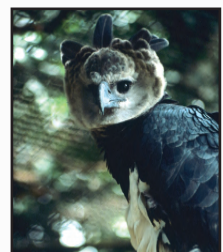
To provide interns with an opportunity to do mentored in depth research in the tropics



To encourage interns to pursue research careers in biology, especially tropical biology



To give interns greater exposure to languages and cultures outside of their own



To increase interns' awareness of Panama's rich biodiversity and ongoing efforts to conserve it

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## Award

Interns will receive a \$1000 airfare allowance, \$200 research allowance, plus \$250 per month to cover miscellaneous personal expenses. Interns at facilities not providing meals will receive an additional \$300 per month food allowance. Housing costs and most costs associated with organized activities will be covered.

## Eligibility

This internship is intended for exceptional undergraduates, recent graduates (post-bachelor's), and early-stage graduate students with a demonstrated interest in pursuing a career involving scientific research, and in particular, tropical biology. Applicants with at least some knowledge of both English and Spanish are highly encouraged to apply.

Placement depends upon the availability of a match between the applicant's interest and a new or ongoing project supervised by a scientist at STRI. Applicants are encouraged to directly contact potential research mentors early in the application process to confirm that their research interests are compatible.

Awards are based on merit and potential for achievement, without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age or condition of handicap of the applicant.




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### Why come to the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute?

Working at STRI is an amazing opportunity. The institute is one of the largest research centers in the Neotropics, home to more than 40 staff scientists and visited by over 900 additional scientists each year. The world-renowned, sophisticated research conducted at STRI spans diverse aspects of biology, including:



- Natural history
- Ecology
- Anthropology
- Paleontology
- Paleoecology
- Evolutionary biology
- Molecular phylogenetics
- Biogeography
- Marine biology
- Animal behavior
- Neurobiology
- Conservation biology
- Soils sciences
- Archaeology
- Physiology of tropical plants and animals

We encourage interns not to regard their intern experience a one-time visit to STRI, but to consider STRI as a place where they may want to conduct their master's or doctoral research & beyond.

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## A little information about Panama...

### Diversity

Panama is the southernmost country in Central America. The unique location of Panama, at the joining of North and South America, and the high number of endemic species in the country results in Panama having the highest species diversity of all countries in Central America. The types of habitats found in Panama are equally diverse, including deep and shallow ocean, beaches and mangrove swamps on both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, lowland rainforest, dry forest, cloud forest, and more.

### Climate

Panama experiences one wet and one dry season each year, with the wet season lasting from about May until December. During the rainy season, there are frequently spectacular thunderstorms in the afternoon, but it's usually clear in the morning as well as at night. The temperature of Panama varies little. Air temperature is on average 80 degrees F (~27 degrees C), although it can be much colder in the highlands, especially at night.

### Language

Spanish is the official language of Panama. Scientists working at STRI generally speak English or Spanish or both.

### Currency

Panama's currency is the US dollar. They do mint their own coins, called Balboas, that are the exact denomination and size of US coins but have different images on them.

