Ryan's Major: Zoology

Program: Ceiba Tropical Conservation Semester: Galapagos, Andes and Amazon, Spring

Academic Life: The classroom component mainly took place in Quito, Ecuador for the first month. The rest of the program consisted of traveling to different geographic locales in Ecuador, such as dry forest on the coast, the Amazon, Galapagos, and other various places for internships. In those locales the learning mainly consisted of hands on learning, or using the field to do assignments that tied into the subjects we were learning about. This was a great advantage of the program, as it allowed the students to see and handle plants, insects, and animals that otherwise would only be seen in textbooks. The group was entirely American with the majority of students from UW-Madison and three other students from other universities in the US. The classes were taught by two professors that helped create the Ceiba Foundation, who also traveled with the students.

Housing: In Quito I was in a home stay with a family of four; a father, mother, and two sons in their 20’s. Another Ecuadorian student also lived in the home. The family was very nice and accommodating, and didn’t hesitate to help me whenever I needed something.

Ryan's Fieldwork: It was at the Lalo Loor Dry Forest reserve on the coast of Ecuador, just below the equator near Jama. I followed and observed mantled howler monkeys for demographics and behavioral ecology.

How Ryan Adapted for Fieldwork: I adapted my communication because I speak very basic Spanish. All the workers on the reserve spoke only Spanish and so I had to adapt to that. I loved it and came away with a practical knowledge of Spanish that I didn’t learn while in the class.

“I gained a much greater appreciation of a culture and group of people that I otherwise knew nothing about.”