

QUITO, ECUADOR

JOSEPH APP

Program: Ceiba Tropical Conservation Semester, Spring

Joseph's Majors: Conservation Biology; Geography

Academic Life: Less than half of the experience takes place in Quito in a traditional classroom setting. Most of the program takes place in the field where classes are still given. Terrestrial ecology ended in the Amazon at Tiputini where we had our field exams and finished our research projects. Marine ecology finished up in the Galapagos with similar exam and research projects. It was all quite phenomenal. My field work involved collecting caterpillars and also checking bird nests for a long term phenology study. It was near the town of Cosanga in the cloud forest on the eastern slopes of the Andes above the Amazon Basin.

A Unique Experience: Living in an underdeveloped country such as Ecuador provides a context you can get no other way. Traveling to the cities and rural places, you see a very broad spectrum of society and ways of life.

Life Lessons: I would say I feel very comfortable traveling in Latin America and communicating in Spanish. This provides so many opportunities for future research and study, and travel in general. It was also a humbling experience. I am very privileged to have had the experience to see Ecuador. I heard more than once from Ecuadorians that I have seen more of their country than they have.

Advantages: Practical experience in real world conservation projects is difficult to come by, especially ones that are successful. Knowing how to work with locals and cater to their needs and their visions is not always a priority of conservation organizations and that leads to failure. I feel more able to partake in successful asset based conservation development now.



Joseph (lower right) with peers checking bird nests in the cloud forest at Yanayacu Biological Station.

“Seeing the most biodiverse places on Earth also gives an insight into what is being lost.”

