IRES Wildlife Conservation Training Program in the Caribbean

Read carefully this 2-page form and send a signed PDF version to tci.fiu.edu along with the rest of the requested materials by Nov 19th 2021 at 11:59pm. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. Please refrain from inquiring about your application until the dates outlined in our website.

Program summary:
The research goal of this program is to investigate the status of endangered and charismatic terrestrial and marine species of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the threats driving their density and distribution. Students can choose to participate in one of two projects: Parrot Conservation or Cetacean Conservation.

Parrot conservation project: SVG has a rich biodiversity of terrestrial species that inhabit the island’s tropical forests. Among them is the vulnerable and endemic St. Vincent Amazon (Amazona guildingii), a species of national importance to SVG. This charismatic parrot with multicolored plumage has decreased significantly as a result of habitat loss, poaching, disease and trapping for the cage-bird trade. However, there’s limited information on the impact that these threats. The goal of this project is to assess the relative abundance and distribution of A. guildingii, investigate the main drivers of its decline, and identify the most effective mitigation strategies that could contribute to population growth. Students involved in this project will do foot surveys of parrot habitat, collecting data on detection cue (visual or auditory), activity (perched, flying, feeding, nesting), and when possible, number of individuals. They will also support the team in doing forest vegetation plots to characterize parrot habitat, and in-person interviews to assess the relationship between people, forests and parrots. This project will help develop local capacity to monitor parrots on-island, and will contribute to informing conservation management strategies of SVG national bird.

Cetacean Conservation project: More than 20 species of whales and dolphins (cetaceans) occur off St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and many of them are hunted (mostly short-finned pilot whales Globicephala macrorhynchus) for local consumption. Thus, several hundred small cetaceans are killed each year off St Vincent, but limited information exist on the magnitude of local whaling activities or on the abundance and population status of cetaceans in this region. Our project will aim at assessing the occurrence, relative abundance, and species composition of cetaceans off St Vincent and the Grenadines using small-boat surveys. In addition, we will participate in the ongoing monitoring efforts to assess small cetacean landings in the village of Barrouallie, where all animals killed are landed. Interview surveys will also be carried out to assess the socioeconomic and cultural importance of whaling in this archipelago, and on perceived trends in abundance of several cetacean species. Our research will help inform conservation management, and help develop local capacity to monitor cetaceans and whaling activities.
Eligibility

- Potential students must be U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or permanent residents of the United States
- Undergraduates and graduates scheduled to graduate in Fall 2022 or later are welcome to apply
- Applicants Must attend the entire 1-year program, including all Spring and Fall classes which will be on Fridays from 2-6pm on campus (FIU; note that classes won’t be every Friday, details provided upon selection)
- Applicants should have completed at least two semesters of coursework in environment-related topics.

Applicant information:

Name:
Address:
City, St, Zip code:
Email:
University:
Study level: Undergraduate _____ Masters _____ PhD _____
Major:
Year in Study:
Current GPA:
Career Goal:
Project of Interest: Parrot conservation: _____ Cetacean conservation: _____ Either: _____

Youtube link with video cover-letter:

______________________________________
Applicant Signature

____________________
Date