

Internship Handbook

Congratulations on being accepted into the Kids Saving the Rainforest internship program! We are so excited to have you join us in our important work rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife!

This guide will help you prepare for your time with us. Here is a quick checklist for some steps you still may need to take. Contact your Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@kstr.org for assistance or any questions you may have.

-Deposit: You will need to put down \$100 deposit to hold your space. The total internship fee is due prior to your arrival. You can make payments or pay all at once, whatever works best for you.

-Transportation: Have you booked your flight? Have you given us your flight information? See the transportation section of this guide for more tips on how to get to us!

-International Health Insurance: You will need to secure this and provide us with proof before you begin working with the animals. Your current provider may have something to offer you, or Allianz is a good option to look into.

-Health Checks/Vaccines: Review the required/recommended vaccines and health information and take care of this prior to your arrival. Do you have any medications you will need while you are here? Do you have any health concerns we should know about?

-School Requirements: Are you doing your internship with your university? Do you have any paperwork that needs to be filled out, and or do you need to meet with an advisor? How can we best work with your school program?

-Dietary Restrictions: Are you vegetarian, vegan, or gluten free? Do you have any special dietary requirements, such as allergies, that we should know about?

-WhatsApp: You will need to have a phone which connects with Wifi, and to download WhatsApp onto your phone if you do not have it already. Provide your Volunteer Coordinator with the number so you can be added to our group chat. This is our primary way of communicating as a team. You can get a SIM card for use in Costa Rica once you are here if you would like, but it is not strictly necessary. The cost is very low for the prepaid minutes, and it can be helpful when you are in town during your time off. We do not have cell service at our location and rely on WiFi connectivity.

-Follow us on social media: Following us on social media ahead of time is a great way to learn about us and get ready for your internship. If you'd like to help out social media posting while you are here, please let us know! <http://facebook.com/kidssavingtherainforest>

LETTER FROM CO-FOUNDER

Welcome to Kids Saving The Rainforest (KSTR).

It is a great privilege to have you as a volunteer. Over the past several years KSTR has grown from being a local organization to an international non-profit NGO with members in over 20 countries. We believe that your help will assist us to grow into an even larger and more impactful organization.

Our mission is to raise consciousness about the inter-connectivity between nature and humankind, and to help protect the flora and fauna of Costa Rican rainforests.

We believe that the rainforest is a storehouse of treasures. We vow to do everything we can to save it, and to save the future of our generation! We must save the rainforest, as it is our FUTURE that must be protected. With the vanishing rainforest go our future and our planet. We have to be the generation that makes a difference.

We appreciate the diversity each and every volunteer has to offer, bringing us closer to our goal to protect the environment.

We are committed to supporting you to find what you are looking for throughout your time with us.

Tropically yours,

Janine Licare

Co-founder and Spokesperson

Transportation

First things first, you have to get here! Here is a rundown on your transportation options:

-International flight into San Jose, SJO: Unless you are already in the country, this will be your first stop. When checking flights, be aware the ideal arrival time at our location is noon, and you will want to get here before dark (about 6 pm). We try to avoid late night arrivals as you will be entering a shared space with sleeping volunteers and interns. If you have a late-night flight, you can stay overnight in San Jose and head down to us in the morning. Several hotels, like the Holiday Inn Express, have free shuttle service to and from the airport.

San Jose is about 3.5 hours away from Quepos. You have a few options on how to make that journey.

-Private Taxi: This is the easiest, less stressful option. We can arrange a private taxi to be waiting for you when you exit the airport. We work with a fantastic driver named Rodney. He will hold a sign with your name and bring you right to our location. He will also track your flight and contact the VC in case there is a delay. The cost for this is \$150 cash paid directly to the driver. If you are being picked up at a hotel, the cost is \$170.

-Shared Shuttle: You will need to arrange this yourself, but the cost is about half of a private taxi. They will take you to Quepos, where you will need to take a taxi to our center (usually \$20). Some companies that offer this service are MonkeyRide and RideCR. It can be 3.5 hours, or much longer depending on where the drop-offs and pick-ups are of your fellow travelers.

-Domestic Flight: There is a small regional airport about a 15 minute drive from our location. The airline is called SANSA. Be sure to constantly check the status of your flight, because they are known to have last-minute cancellations of flights, etc. At the current moment I would not recommend this method of travel.

-Tracopa Bus: The cheapest option is taking a bus from San Jose to Quepos. First you will need to take a taxi from the airport to the Tracopa Bus Station downtown. It takes about 30 minutes and the cost is around \$30. When you exit the airport you will see many, many taxi drivers vying for your fare, so you won't have a hard time catching a ride. When you get to the bus station, you will need to buy your ticket, which will cost about 5,000 colones or \$10. The attendant most likely will not speak English, so look up some key phrases ahead of time to prepare. If you take the **Directo** (which is a shorter route and does not make repeated stops), the ride is about 3.5 hours. The bus is comfortable and has A/C, and there is a stop halfway through for a bathroom break where you can purchase snacks and drinks. If you take the **Collectivo** the ride can be 5 hours, and the cost is slightly cheaper but not much. I do not recommend it for the ride down,

though on your way back to San Jose it is best as it goes directly to the airport, saving you the cost of a taxi ride. Either way, when you arrive at the Quepos bus station, you will then need a taxi from there to our center (\$20).

Here is the bus schedule from San Jose to Quepos as of April 2019:

Directo: 4:00 am (not on Sunday), 6:00 am, 7:30 am, 9:30 am, 12:00 pm, 1:00 pm, 2:30 pm, 5:00 pm.

Collectivo: 5:00 am, 6:10 am (not on weekends), 10:00 am, 2:00 pm, 4:45 pm.

A good website for Costa Rican bus routes/schedules is thebusschedule.com/cr

-Driving: Some of our interns may travel first, so you may be driving to us. Waze does NOT work and will lead you astray when trying to navigate to our location (Blue Banyan Inn). Google Maps will work.

If you are coming from San Jose, Jaco, Guanacaste, or anywhere north: Take Route 34 South past Jaco, Parrita, and Paquita. Keep left towards Dominical (DO NOT follow signs to Quepos and Manuel Antonio). On your left you will pass Maxi Pali and a cemetery. In about 20 meters you will see an entrance to a dirt road and a sign that says Blue Banyan Inn. Turn left into the entrance and continue straight through the palms for about 6 kilometers. You will see signs for Blue Banyan Inn and KSTR. After about 4 km. you will see a boulder that says "BBI." Turn right. Continue straight for and you will come to a second boulder. Turn right again. Follow this road straight until you reach BBI's parking lot on the left.

If you are coming from Domincal, Uvita, or anywhere South: Take Route 34 towards Quepos. After you see the hospital on your right, a few kilometers ahead you will see our sign. Take a right into the palms and follow the boulders/signs from there. If you come upon a cemetery or Maxi Pali, you have driven past the turn.

Taxis while you are here: We are located a 15 minute drive outside of Quepos, and 25 minutes to Manuel Antonio where you will find beaches and the national park. If you'd like to go into town during your time off, you will need to take a taxi.

-Rodney: 506-8842-3257. Rodney is very nice and does the majority of our driving for our tours and volunteers. He is extremely reliable. He drives a large van which can fit 8 passengers, so he is a good choice when you are going out as a group. He usually charges \$20.

Rodney stops working at 8 pm. If you are looking for a taxi later in the night, try **Diego** at 506-8827-1722 or Carlos at 506-8501-0497. He works until 12 pm. If you are catching a taxi from someone else, tell them Blue Banyan Inn, Kids Saving the Rainforest, or Finca Mono Azul (NOT Hotel Mono Azul). If they are not familiar with our location, we are near Finca Anita through the palms just after Maxi Pali.

-When you are in town, the **public transportation** system is very good. You can ride the bus from the Quepos bus station to Manuel Antonio for 335 colones. It runs every 15 minutes or so until 7 pm, then on the hour after that. It is just going in a circle turning around at the beach near the National Park, so you cannot get lost. If you sit at the bus station and a car flashes its lights or honks its horn, it is a pirata, colectivo, or “pirate” (unlicensed) taxi. They drive in a similar loop as the bus, from Quepos to the beach and back again, and the cost is 500 colones per person.

Packing List

Here is a list of some things you may find helpful to bring along with you. Keep in mind you will have limited storage space while you are here. You will have a wooden closet about a foot and a half wide/ 5 feet tall to store your things in, and a small area to padlock your valuables. We have many stores in the area, so if you forget something you can easily go to purchase most of the usual items you will need.

-Laptop- Our interns are asked to work on a special project while they are here (see the project section of this guide for more details) and many find a laptop indispensable for this task.

-Good non-slip closed toed shoes.

-Rain gear (jacket with hood, etc. We have an army of rain boots you can use so no need to bring these along.)

-Headlamp/flashlight (Lithium Ion LED is best)

-Phone with wifi capability and WhatsApp

-Camera if you want to document your time here.

-Work clothes you don't mind getting dirty and sweaty in. Many wear lightweight pants and t-shirts. If you will be working in the clinic, scrubs are the preferred choice.

-Some nicer outfits to wear into town.

-Bug spray (Picaridin is best, DO NOT use Eucalyptus based repellent)

-Sunscreen

-Bathing suit

-Supplies for us! If you have some extra space in your suitcase, we can always use more supplies! It is nearly impossible to have things shipped here, so we rely on volunteers and interns to bring us supplies. If you can help contact your Volunteer Coordinator for more info on this.

INDEPENDENT PROJECTS

We ask that our interns complete a special project while they are here with us. You will be asked to give an informal presentation to the group before you leave, telling everyone about your project and what you achieved or learned. We would like to have something written to keep after you leave.

Sometimes interns are working on a thesis or dissertation, and their projects center around this work they need to do. Others pick a project that they are interested in or passionate about or select a project from our list. Start thinking about yours now, but you may be inspired by something once you get here and start working with the animals.

Here is a list of some possible projects:

- Start a tree nursery.
- Start an herb garden for the coatis.
- Help organize and plan for Kid's Camp
- Forage for wild foods.
- Make a map of wild foods found/add to forager's map.
- Pick a specific animal. Do observation/ethograms.
- Make arts and crafts to sell in the store.
- Research different enrichments. Make hand-outs with instructions that can be compiled into a booklet for volunteers to reference. To start, one for each enclosure would be amazing.
- Start a fundraiser.
- Help with our social media.
- Take photos to share to our drop box.
- Make a document with activities in an easy, attractive format.

Clinic Projects:

- Collect physical and biological normal parameters per species
- Chart with data of medical doses per species
- Collect bibliographical data of what are the normal parameters per species: Hemogram, Blood chemistry, physical parameters (weight, temperature, heart rate, pulse, and respiratory rate), anatomy, biology, diet, etc.
- Have a chart with the medications we have in the clinic with the doses for most common species that come in the clinic, and when to use them
- Protocols for management in specific scenarios Management in case of emergencies like trauma, electrocution, new baby mammal, new baby bird, etc

Tours

We offer two-hour guided tours of our wildlife sanctuary every day except for Tuesday. They begin at 9 am and go about 2 hours. We inform the public about the work we are doing rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife, and educate them on responsible, ethical tourism regarding issues such as not feeding or touching wildlife, the dangers of the pet trade, etc.

All interns are required to give tours. The frequency will vary, but interns can expect to do *at least* one tour a week, and more during the busy seasons. If you are able to give tours in more than one language, let us know as this is a huge help! You will be paid \$10 for every tour that you give, so it is a good way to earn extra cash to spend during your time off!

You will be taken on a guided tour of the sanctuary upon your arrival, and will shadow a few times prior to giving your own. A tour script will be provided by our Volunteer Coordinator for you to study, but it only acts as a guide. We encourage you to make the tour your own, and share some of the great stories you will be gathering as you work with the animals!

The tour is the primary fundraiser for our organization, so the time you spend giving tours makes a huge difference and allows us to continue our important work of rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife. It is a wonderful opportunity to educate people who have come to Costa Rica and can be a fun and enlightening experience to share your passion with people from all over the world! Thank you for your help in providing this invaluable service to our tour guests.

General Rules and Regulations

- No drinking alcohol during work hours. No alcohol (opened or not) in any department facility
- No smoking by buildings or facilities, only in designated smoking areas
- No drugs allowed on property (including cannabis)
- No tolerance for any type of sexual harassment
- No outside guest permitted without staff consent
- Wear closed toed shoes when in the sanctuary
- No loitering or socializing in the facilities outside of work hours
- No music where there are animals: Sanctuary, Clinic, Rehab, and Nursery.
- No selfie photos/videos of rescue center animals
- No touching/petting animals, especially rescue center animals.
- And work related concerns/observations must be discussed with Head of Department first. Any personal/social concern must be discussed with Volunteer Coordinator.
- Days off must be coordinated with Head of Staff.
- If you are not feeling well please do not go near the animals and tell the Volunteer Coordinator so they can find someone to cover your shifts
- No contact with any primates if you are herpes simplex positive during the time of an outbreak.
- Be respectful of the guests of BBI and the other volunteers. After 10 PM there will be no loud music, yelling, or loud noise of any sort.
- Curfew of 1am
- Let the Volunteer Coordinator know if you plan to spend the night off-campus

All volunteers must adhere to the rules and are subject to dismissal if they do not comply.

Earthquakes

Costa Rica experiences a lot of earthquakes, although most of them are small. Still, if you are not used to this, it can be alarming. Refer to the earthquake evacuation sheet of the volunteer center in case one happens.

Weather

Thunderstorms can be frequent and severe, especially during the rainy season (April to November). If you hear lightning, it is best to stay indoors and avoid open areas. We will find indoor activities to do during a storm.

Snakes

Due to our location in the rainforest, we will sometimes get wild snakes on the property. The majority of these are harmless, but a few species are venomous, even deadly.

- Watch where you step, and never put your hands where you can't see
- Always carry a flashlight/torch in the evenings
- Wear closed-toed shoes at night
- Report any snake sightings to a member of staff
- Never try to approach or touch a snake, even if you think you know the species
- Immediately report any bites. YOU WILL GET TREATMENT as we have a plan in place for this, but it is best not to wait.

For more information talk to the Volunteer Coordinator

HEALTH AND SAFETY

As an intern with KSTR, your safety is our utmost concern. Working with non-domestic animals presents unique challenges. The following rules and guidelines are set forth to minimize the risks of handling wild animals in the tropics. It is essential that these rules be regarded as the bare list of **ALL of the possible dangers. Each individual must use common sense and respond to each circumstance with proper caution. YOU are the key to a safe and successful experience with us!**

Before volunteering at the KSTR, volunteers/interns MUST HAVE:

- Tetanus shot is MANDATORY (proof needed prior to arrival)
- Rabies shot is not necessary but recommended if you are a vet student/clinic intern
- TB Testing is not mandatory but recommended
- Have proof of medical/travel insurance
- Make us aware if you carry the Herpes Simplex Virus (if you get cold sores), this is because if you have an **active** cold sore you cannot come into contact with any of our primates, as this virus can be transmitted to them and can be fatal.
- Read intern/volunteer handbook taking special note of Rules, Safety and Protocols

Health concerns for volunteers

Even though the animals at the Sanctuary have bi-annual physical exams and fecal exams they may still get sick. Transmission may occur via air, food, water, contact with other animals or people, or fomites (microbes carried in shoes, new enrichment device, etc.).

There are diseases that can be transmitted by animals to people (these are called zoonotic) and from people to animals (antropozoonotic). They can transmit viruses, bacteria, parasites and fungi, such as: *Salmonella*, *Yersinia*, *E. coli*, tuberculosis, fecal parasites, fungi, papilloma virus, herpes virus, scabies, etc. Please make sure not to touch them and wash your hands thoroughly after having been in their cage.

Humans can transmit disease to the monkeys. **If you feel any symptoms of sickness stay away from the monkeys until you feel completely better.** Humans with viral infections cannot work with the monkeys, even if symptoms of the virus are not present. Measles and the Herpes Simplex virus (the virus that causes cold sores) can be fatal to monkeys. People with any immune suppressing diseases are more susceptible to get any disease, so you must be more careful when working with the wildlife.

****Please inform us about any condition such as diabetes, epilepsy, etc. and how we can help in case of emergency.**

We have an emergency kit for humans located in the restaurant, but it is essential that you bring your own medication if you suffer from any illness.

If you are feeling unwell at any time, please tell the VC or another member of staff.
(Even if you do not want medical attention at the moment)

RULES ABOUT HANDLING THE ANIMALS

The monkeys and wildlife here belong in cages. Legally, we cannot have them loose or anywhere other than their enclosures. If you observe an animal is sick or acting abnormally, please let the vet know immediately so we can check it and rehabilitate it. We may take it out from the enclosure and bring it into the clinic.

1. Do not enter the Sanctuary by yourself or allow others to enter without permission.
2. If you are giving a tour and have to go inside a cage, make it quick and please do not interact with the animals. **No one else is allowed inside the cage.** No one is allowed to touch the animals. This is dangerous for the person and for the animal, and it is also illegal.
3. Do not enter the Clinic or Rescue Center without vet approval. The animals should have very little contact.
4. **Photos can be taken from outside the cage without flash.** The experienced volunteer can enter the cage with the camera and take several pictures from inside.
5. **Leave cell phones, personal listening devices and cameras outside the enclosures** (except in above circumstances). Voices and other noise should be minimized.
6. **Tie back long hair and remove all accessories and jewelry.** This could cause injury and could also encourage the animals to climb on you (which should be avoided).
7. We should not address monkeys as people, “my babies” or pets. They are wild animals and should be addressed as so, and we don't want to encourage the pet trade.
8. Do not smoke or drink while doing your job.
9. Chemicals with strong odors (cleaners, disinfectants or detergents) should never be used inside the cages, or on items you will place in the cages.
10. Refrain from wearing bug repellent, perfume or scented personal hygiene products. Many animals, especially mammals, have a highly developed sense of smell. The smells could be distracting, unpleasant or initiate an unwanted behavior.
11. **If you feel any symptoms of sickness please stay away from the monkeys until you feel completely better as you can transmit illness to them. Let the Volunteer Coordinator know to cover your shifts.**
12. **Wash your hands before, between cages and upon completion of your task.** Also wash clothes and shoes accordingly. This helps reduce the risk of zoonotic diseases between animals, from the animals to you, and from you to others.
13. Appropriate clothing to work in the sanctuary: closed shoes such as hiking shoes, tennis shoes, or rubber boots. No flip flops. Long shirt and pants are recommended.

PROTOCOLS FOR PREVENTING BITES AND ESCAPES

Remember that when you enter an animal's cage, you are essentially a visitor in their home. Be respectful of the animal's space and aware of their body language and vocalization.

These monkeys in the sanctuary are used to humans and in general their first instinct will not be to fight, but they will be curious about you. They are individuals and their behavior can change rapidly and without warning. **Remember, all animals can bite!** Females in estrus or with offspring and males during the breeding season may be more aggressive. Always approach every animal as if you expect it to be aggressive.

Follow these rules before entering or approaching the cages:

1. Do not go to the sanctuary by yourself. Always go with an experienced partner.
2. Bring a walkie-talkie with you. Be calm and confident.
3. Count and identify the location of the monkeys and make sure they are away from the door.
4. When entering cages with smaller animals, 1 person can enter and the other can watch from outside ready to help if necessary.
5. When entering cages with larger animals, carefully use the shift cage, making sure it's secure.
6. Enter and exit as quickly as possible, using quiet, slow, efficient movements. Make sure to keep door secure at all times and lock behind you when leaving. **Double check the locks!**
7. Avoid prolonged eye contact, loud noises, sudden movements, or open-mouthed smiles.
8. Do not let the monkeys jump on you. If it happens, try to lure them off with food, or gently try to nudge them onto a branch. Get a member of staff to help.
9. Do not let a monkey pull your hair, hit, or scratch you, from within, or reaching through a cage. When possible, walk away, turn your back, or spray with water if needed to dissuade.

If an animal gets aggressive:

1. Try to create or maintain a good distance.
2. Try to exit the cage right away.
3. Have your partner twist the hose and spray water between you and the animal

If you are being bitten or otherwise attacked:

1. Your partner should use the water hose
2. Call the Biologist, Vet or Zookeeper right away so that they can properly remove the animal. They are trained and the best people to assess and handle the situation.

If an animal escapes:

1. Get away from the animal.
2. Use your walkie-talkie to call for help from a KSTR Staff member.
3. While you are waiting, keep your eyes on the animal but keep a safe distance.
4. We will attempt to attract them back into the cage with food.

5. If necessary, the animal may be grabbed with gloves, towels, blankets, nets or a trap.

*Do not try to do this yourself, as they are very fast and will bite!

Days Off

You will be assigned one day off a week by your department supervisor. In addition, you will get one extra bankable day off for each month you work that you can use with the discretion of your supervising manager. If you wish to work an entire week and bank your days off, you must arrange this with your supervisor.

We are located on the Central Pacific Coast of Costa Rica, and there is a huge range of activities to keep you busy on your days off! You can:

1. Relax by our lovely pool.
2. Hike on the property on a rainforest trail.
3. Go to Manuel Antonio and/or Quepos and enjoy the many varied activities offered there. There are great restaurants, beautiful beaches, wildlife tours, rafting, hiking, ziplining, horseback riding, massages/facials, fishing, kayaking, surfing, swinging bridges, and more! From a relaxing day sitting in the sand to a ten-in-one adventure, there is something for everyone. If you'd like advice on what to get up to, ask your Volunteer Coordinator.
4. Hop aboard a catamaran! Head out to the open ocean on a luxury boat where all food and drink are included in the cost. Whale watching and snorkeling are available on the ships seasonally.
5. Take a day trip! Quepos bus station is the hub for the area, and you can easily and cheaply visit lots of great locations such as Dominical, Jaco, Uvita (the famous Whale's Tail beach in Marino Ballena National Park), and more.