

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCHERS AT THE LOS AMIGOS FIELD STATIONS AND CONSERVATION CONCESSION

April 2009

Before you arrive

1. Before planning your travel, send a research application to the Research Coordinator, Adrian Tejedor (atejedor@amazonconservation.org). The application should include a description of the proposed research, the planned dates and location of your fieldwork, the number of researchers and assistants involved, and the principal investigator's CV. Permission to carry out research is granted based on the quality of the proposed research, the extent to which it complements ongoing research, and the availability of space at the stations during the proposed dates.
2. Researchers who work in the concession or elsewhere in the vicinity of CICRA must have all permits required by Peruvian law. Principal investigators must present a copy of their permit to the ACCA office in Puerto Maldonado before traveling to CICRA. These rules do not apply just to foreign researchers, but also to ACCA grant recipients and Peruvian students. The only exceptions are course participants and researchers carrying out brief exploratory visits. ACCA can assist with the permit application process, but does not obtain permits for researchers; that is the responsibility of the principal investigator of each project. ACCA works with researchers and the National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA) to ensure that researchers in the concession meet requirements of INRENA for reporting, renewing, etc., when permits expire. Please visit INRENA's website for more information.
3. Researchers who set traps for vertebrates in the concession or elsewhere in the vicinity of CICRA are required to file a trapping plan, separate from their INRENA permit, with the Research Coordinator. The trapping plan should detail how and where the researchers plan to trap each species, or group of similar species, and for how long. The trapping plan must be approved by the Research Coordinator, in consultation with the Science Committee, before trapping can begin. All vertebrate deaths that result from trapping or trapping-related work, must be reported promptly to the Research Coordinator, with a plan for avoiding similar accidents in the future. The Research Coordinator and Science Committee reserve the right to cancel trapping permits at their discretion.
4. On the CICRA website please consult the list of items we recommend you bring (and not bring) to the station. ACCA can loan tools and other station equipment to researchers, but only in coordination with the Research Coordinator or the Station Manager. Researchers bringing a lot of electronic equipment or peculiar-looking field gear into Peru should consult with the Peruvian customs website to avoid problems with customs on arrival; import fees can be exorbitant. ACCA can provide some information and advice regarding bringing gear into Peru, but

cannot guarantee against problems with Peruvian customs or help resolve problems if gear is impounded.

5. Researchers should bring their own first aid kits and medicines, and will be asked to sign a liability release form before traveling to CICRA. Researchers who will have field assistants living at the station for several months are strongly encouraged to provide them with first aid kits and health and accident insurance. ACCA will do everything within its power to respond to emergencies, but is not legally responsible for your health and safety, and does not generally provide medicines and medical care to visitors. The cost of an emergency medical evacuation will likely be in the thousands of dollars and will be charged to the patient. We strongly recommend that you carry medivac insurance.
6. Once your research application and INRENA applications are approved, the Research Coordinator will put you in touch with ACCA's Puerto Maldonado office. ACCA staff there can help arrange your travel from Puerto Maldonado to the stations, and settle any questions about costs and billing not answered by the current fee schedule. ACCA can reserve hotel rooms and arrange taxis in Puerto Maldonado, but cannot arrange your travel arrangements elsewhere in Peru.
7. If you have any extra textbooks or books on biology to spare, please throw them in your luggage and bring them down for the Los Amigos library.

Once you're here

For all researchers:

1. Glad you're here.
2. In the forest and at the field stations, keep your impact on plants, wildlife, and other research projects to a minimum. If your work requires flagging areas, tagging trees, building platforms, or leaving other semi-permanent materials in the forest, let the Research Coordinator know where they are, why they are there, and how long they will be there. No trees or saplings should be cut in the vicinity of CICRA or the conservation concession without the permission of the Research Coordinator. Under no circumstance should anything be marked by slashing trees. Mark flagging with your initials or some other indication of the project it belongs to; flagging without initials will be removed. Please don't use blue flagging, as it has been used extensively by a large phenology project at the station. All equipment, flagging and other materials must be removed at the termination of work; ACCA will remove unauthorized materials. Projects that require extensive manipulations or impacts will be restricted to designated areas.
3. If you find that an established trail at CICRA needs cleaning, is inaccurately marked on the trail map, or is missing some of its 25-m trail markers, please make a note of it on the trails bulletin board in the dining room. If you want to propose

- a new permanent trail, please discuss it with the Research Coordinator before clearing it. If you travel off the established trail system, please do not use a machete.
4. Hunting is not allowed. Fishing is allowed only in the Rio Madre de Dios. Keeping pets at the stations or nursing wounded or orphaned animals there is not allowed.
 5. If you find that your research at CICRA is leading you towards significantly new activities that aren't described in your research application or INRENA permit, consult the Research Coordinator. In some cases, he may request that you submit a written addendum to your original workplan, describing your new research plans. If your project requires additional researchers or assistants not named in your original proposal, please fill out the research application form for each of them and advise the Research Coordinator of their arrival dates well in advance.
 6. Once you're at the stations, research-related questions should be directed to the Research Coordinator. Questions about living conditions at CICRA should be directed to the Station Manager, Jesús Ramos (jramos@conservacionamazonica.org). Questions about logistics and rules regarding living at CM1, CM2, or inside the concession should be directed to the Concession Manager.
 7. This research manual is updated quarterly. Although most rule changes will be announced at station meetings, we recommend that long-term researchers refresh their memories by reading the manual each time it's updated.

For researchers at CICRA:

1. Breakfast is served between 6 and 7, lunch between 12 and 1, and dinner between 6:30 and 7:30. If you need to eat at a different time or want to take a box lunch to eat in the field, sign up on the whiteboard in the kitchen the night before. If you need something in the kitchen or pantry, ask the cooks' permission before taking it.
2. The tap water in the station is untreated. It's fine for showering and brushing your teeth, but not for drinking. Drinking water is available in the dining hall.
3. The electricity in the station is 220 V. It comes from solar-powered battery banks and gas-powered generators. This means you're sharing a limited amount of energy with several other people. Please be efficient and considerate. Before you leave your room (or fall asleep), turn off lights, fans, and unneeded appliances. Blackouts are fairly common, so it's wise to keep a flashlight at hand. If there is a problem with the energy system, notify the Station Manager rather than trying to fix the problem yourself.

4. The station operates a 3 kW generator from 6 to 9:30 PM. Because this is the only time of day in which the energy supply exceeds the energy demand, please take advantage of these hours to recharge computers and batteries. 220-to-110 V converters are strongly discouraged, because of the station's limited energy resources. Please throw away used batteries in the recycling bin in the dining hall, not in the regular trash.
5. Wireless internet service is generally available from 6 AM to 9:30 PM. To use the wireless connection, configure your computer to obtain an IP address and identify servers automatically.
6. You're welcome to take books from the CICRA library to your room or lab space, but please sign them out and return them promptly.
7. Especially windy rainstorms can get the indoors of all the station buildings wet, so keep computers, cameras, books, etc. safely put away.
8. Dormitories and cabins should be as quiet as the tomb between 9 PM and 6 AM. Use headphones if you listen to music.
9. Lock your doors when you're not home. The maid who cleans your room has a key of her own.
10. Whenever you go into the field, indicate on the signout board where you will be working and when you expect to return. Whenever you leave the stations, take water, flashlights, a first aid kit, a compass, and a trail map.
11. If you're at loose ends when the weekly grocery boat arrives on Friday afternoon, please help carry things up to the station. It's a punishing job for the CICRA staff on their own, but it goes quickly when everyone pitches in.

Additional notes on safety

1. The most dangerous aspect of working at Los Amigos is traveling to and from the stations. Most river travel in Madre de Dios is safe and routine, but weather and river conditions are unpredictable and in the event of an accident, rescue operations are largely do-it-yourself. When traveling upriver from Laberinto, do your part to ensure that your boat leaves early in the morning and arrives well before nightfall. Always wear a life jacket on the river, regardless of whether you can swim or not. Wear shoes you can get off quickly. When the boat is moving, do not speak to the boat driver or his scout, or move around more than necessary. Smoking is not permitted anywhere near the boats, in part because they carry 50-gallon drums of gasoline.
2. Most station buildings are highly flammable. Don't leave lit candles unattended, and don't smoke indoors. Take note of where the fire extinguisher is located in

the building where you sleep, and know how to use it. In the event of a raging fire, forget the fire extinguisher and get everyone out.

3. Never go swimming alone, no matter how good a swimmer you are.
4. Don't go wandering off trail unless you know what you're doing.
5. Don't handle snakes or other wild animals unless you know what you're doing.
6. Think twice about carrying a machete with you on the trails; accidents are common and can be serious.
7. Illegal drugs are not allowed.
8. Wear shoes or boots after sundown, not flip-flops. Poisonous snakes have been spotted around the stations, and a snakebite after dark will require a dangerous evacuation.

When leaving the stations

1. ACCA is keenly interested in the research carried out in the concession and in the long-term fate of the data collected here by researchers. Please help us build the concession's science database by sending datasets, reports, publications, photographs, GPS points, maps, Powerpoint presentations, and other products of your research to the Research Coordinator. Researchers are also encouraged to post contributions or links to the ACCA website.
2. Researchers are welcome to store equipment in the stations, and should coordinate with the Research Coordinator or Station Manager. The stations will make a good-faith effort to protect stored equipment, but will not be held responsible for damage or disappearance of gear.
3. Don't forget that your INRENA permit requires you to submit reports, publications, etc. to INRENA shortly after it expires. Please send a copy of your INRENA report to the Research Coordinator as well.
4. If you or your research assistant leave the stations temporarily, please let the Puerto Maldonado office, the Station Manager, and the Research Coordinator know your return date a few days in advance.