

Los Amigos and CICRA Visitor Orientation Packet



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1. Visitor Registration

If you have not yet filled out the registration form on our website, please do so at http://amazonconservation.org/ourwork/research_cicra.html.

2. Recommended Packing List

Clothes:

Field Clothes:

- 2 light weight long sleeve shirts (synthetic suggested)
- 2 light weight pants (synthetic suggested)
- 3 pairs of socks (wicking socks suggested)
- Day Pack

Other Clothes:

- 1-3 pairs of pants
- 2 pairs of shorts for soccer/running
- Socks and underwear
- 3-5 light t-shirts/tank tops
- Fleece/sweater for *friajes* (cold snaps)
- Sun hat
- Hiking boots (suggested)
- Sandals
- Running shoes (if you want to play soccer or go running)
- Rubber boots (can be purchased in Puerto Maldonado or borrowed from the station)

Medicine:

- First Aid Kit (Band-Aids, Neosporin etc.)
- Benedryl
- Pepto-Bismol
- Non-prescription anti-diarrhea medicine
- Anti-fungal cream
- Anti-itch cream
- Cold medicine
- Tylenol/Aspirin/Ibuprophen
- Thermometer
- Broad Spectrum Anti-biotic (ex. Cyproflaxin)
- Camphorated Rubbing Alcohol (for chiggers)

Accessories:

- Sun glasses
- Head lamp
- Binoculars (even if you are not a birder)
- Re-chargeable batteries and chargers*
- Converter for 220 V
- Alarm clock
- Waterproof watch
- Computer (optional, a few public computers are available)
- Camera (recommended)
- Swiss army knife
- Water bottle
- Lighter

Other:

- Laundry Detergent (for hand-washing, biodegradable strongly preferred)
- Personal toiletries (biodegradable if possible)
- Books (consider donating to our library)
- Plastic bags and/or dry bags
- Silica to keep electronics dry
- Bug spray**
- Needle and thread (for holes in your clothes).
- Multi-vitamins
- Padlock (to lock your valuables)
- Food***

Women:

- Yeast infection and urinary tract infection medications
- Feminine products
- 2 Sports bras

NOTE: This list has been created for those who are staying for long periods of time. You may not need everything on here, but it is still a good guide to get an idea for what you might need.

* There are no battery-recycling operations in Madre de Dios. If you choose to use non-recyclable batteries, please bring them home with you so that they may be disposed of properly.

** Approximately 30% DEET is suggested for the field. Natural bug sprays can be great for around camp (ex. Bert's Bees non-DEET).

*** Nonperishable goods such as tea, coffee, chocolate and Gatorade powder. Must be stored in Tupperware to protect them from insects and animals as plastic bags do not work

3. Visitor FAQ (please see the price table below the FAQ for any questions regarding cost):

Where should I stay in Puerto Maldonado?

We recommend the Cabaña Quinta hotel, which is a block from the ACCA office. Rooms there are about \$20/night and there's wireless internet and a good restaurant. They also have a free shuttle service from the airport to the hotel. Reserve at:

http://www.hellomadrededios.com/cabanaquinta_hotel/

Or, contact our PEM office with your arrival and departure dates requesting a reservation. The PEM office is at Jr. Cusco 499, Puerto Maldonado, Peru. Phone: (51) 82 573-237

How do I get to the station?

You have three options for travel:

- 1) The CICRA boat which leaves from Laberinto and takes between 5 and 8 hours to reach the station (please contact Jesus Ramos jramos@conservacionamazonica.org to schedule the CICRA boat).
- 2) A *colectivo* (water taxi) which leaves daily from Laberinto and takes between 5 and 12 hours to reach the station (recommended if you have to arrive at the station on a day when the CICRA boat cannot take you, or you are not carrying much with you). Be sure to advise the *colectivo* driver that you are traveling to CICRA.
- 3) CICRA has a small airstrip, and you are welcome to fly to visit us (contact Jesus Ramos, jramos@conservacionamazonica.org to coordinate your flight details).

What is Laberinto, and how do I get there?

Laberinto is a small port town from which the CICRA boat and *colectivos* leave. The town is about an hour's ride from Puerto Maldonado (PEM). You can book a private taxi, or ask the PEM office to book one—this is convenient if you are traveling with a lot of gear or a large group. Alternatively, you can take a moto-taxi to the public taxi stand and take a collective car (around 5 people) to Laberinto. The public taxi will let you out a distance from the port, so if you are carrying a lot of equipment, or it is your first time, it is best to direct the driver to take you to the port itself. If taking the *colectivo*, it is best to arrive at Laberinto's port by 7:45 or 8:00 am, so you should plan to leave PEM by 6:30 am or 6:45. If taking the CICRA boat, it generally leaves at 8:00am as well, but you will be advised of the departure time in advance, and should plan your car ride to Laberinto accordingly.

What can I expect the weather to be like?

Generally, it is around 70°F (21°C) at night and 85-95°F (29-35°C) during the day and very humid. During the dry season, June to August, it can go for days or weeks without raining. Occasionally during this time, cold weather fronts called *friajes* come through and drop the temperature to 40-50°F (4-10°C) for a few days. In the wet season, it usually rains for at least a few minutes per day; sometimes it rains for a few days straight.

Do I need to take malaria pills?

Whether or not to take malaria pills is a personal choice. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) considers this area a malaria risk area, and your doctor will recommend you take them. However, there has not been a case of malaria here for at least 5 years, and many researchers chose not to take them. This is because they are expensive and can have side-effects.

Service	Price
<i>Public taxi from PEM to Laberinto</i>	9 Peruvian soles/person
<i>Colectivo from PEM to Laberinto</i>	40 Peruvian soles/person
<i>Private taxi from PEM to Laberinto</i>	50 Peruvian soles
<i>ACCA boat from Laberinto to CICRA</i>	25 USD/per person (300 USD for a private boat)

4. Upon Arrival

Food and Water

Breakfast is served between 6:30 and 7:30 am, lunch between 12 and 1 pm, and dinner between 6:30 and 7:30 pm. When the window is open you may go up at any time and collect your meal. 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 the hatch is closed when you finish with dishes or cups, you must wash them yourself.

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. Tea, coffee, hot chocolate, crackers and cookies are available in the center table of the dining hall all day. If you need something in the kitchen or pantry, ask the cooks' permission before taking it. Make sure any food brought is stored properly in Tupperware because insects and animals bite through plastic bags. Please ask to store food in a cupboard in the kitchen.

If you're not busy when the weekly grocery boat arrives, 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.

Dietary restrictions:

The station is equipped to feed vegetarians, although we recommend that you inform us before coming if you do not eat meat. If you have any other dietary restrictions (allergies, kosher, halal) please inform us well before your arrival. It is possible that you may need to bring dietary supplements to CICRA; we will advise you if this is the case.

Trails and Maintenance

Attached is a map of the station. All trails are marked with a name and number and have small orange markers every 25 meters. Whenever you go into the field, indicate on the sign-out board, located on the wall of the laboratories, where you will be working and when you expect to return. Whenever you leave the station, take water, flashlights, a first aid kit, a compass, and a trail map.

Please be aware that some researchers have set up traps and other research projects in the middle of the trails. If you see orange tape blocking the trail, just go around the area. 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, Adrian Tejedor, before clearing it. If you travel off the established trail system, please do not use a machete.

5. Researchers:

Before Arrival

Application Process

Before planning your travel, please make sure that your research application has been approved by 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.

Research Permits

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 not only apply to foreign researchers, but also to Peruvian grant recipients and 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 INRENA (now DGFES-ATFFS) to ensure that researchers in the concession meet INRENA's requirements for reporting, renewing, etc., when permits expire. Please visit INRENA's website at www.inrena.gob.pe for more information.

Required Vertebrate Trapping Plan

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 station's 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, along 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.

Flora, Fauna, and Marking

Please try and 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. Hunting is not allowed. Fishing is allowed only in the Madre de Dios River. Keeping pets at the stations or nursing wounded or orphaned animals there is not allowed.

Packing

In this packet is a suggested packing list. ACCA can loan tools and other station equipment to researchers, but only in coordination with the Research Coordinator or the Station Manager, Jesús Ramos (jramos@conservacionamazonica.org). Researchers bringing a lot of electronic equipment or peculiar-looking field gear into Peru should consult the Peruvian customs website to avoid problems with customs upon 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.

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.

Medical Tips

Visitors to the station should arrive in good health, with a well-supplied first aid kit, and with a clear understanding of what they can expect. The site is remote and well-trained doctors are several hours away by river. Station staff will do everything they can to help in the event of minor or major emergencies, but staying healthy at the station is the researcher's responsibility, not ACA's. Following are some common sense tips.

1. Make sure your vaccinations are up to date. For recommended vaccinations, see www.cdc.gov and choose "traveler's health." Malaria prophylaxis is not recommended, since the disease is not present in Madre de Dios.

2. Read up on leishmaniasis. Leishmaniasis is a parasitic disease transmitted by the bite of some species of sand flies, and contracting it is a possibility in Madre de Dios. You can obtain more information at www.cdc.gov. There is no vaccination for leishmaniasis, but wearing long sleeves and pants, and using repellent while in the forest, will reduce your chance of infection. If during or after your work at Los Amigos you notice an open sore or scab that doesn't heal, get yourself tested for leishmaniasis.
3. Outwit the chiggers. They're a common nuisance at the station and can make your time here unpleasant if you're not prepared. To avoid them, keep out of tall grass and brush, sit on your poncho in the forest, or treat your pants with a sulfur-and-talcum powder mix, or pyrethrin. If you get them, you can kill them with Destolit (a topical permethrin cream) or a rubbing-alcohol-and-camphor mix (*alcohol alcanforado* in Spanish). All of the above are available in pharmacies in Puerto Maldonado.
4. While you are here, it is likely that you will encounter a diversity of interesting wasps and bees. Unfortunately, these encounters also mean a higher likelihood of getting stung. The station has a supply of EPI-pens, but we recommend that you carry your own, especially if you know of a pre-existing allergy.

Travel Arrangements

Once your research application and INRENA permit 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.

Research

Once you're at the station, research-related questions should be directed to the Research Coordinator, Adrian Tejedor (atejedor@amazonconservation.org). 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, Augusto Mulanovich (amulanovich@conservacionamazonica.org).

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 work plan, 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.

Environmental Impact

CICRA is trying to reduce, recycle and reuse materials that accumulate at the biological station. All waste products from CICRA are sent to an overflowing dump in the community of Laberinto. Because of improper construction, waste primarily ends up in the Madre de Dios River. Before you come let the Research Coordinator know what list of materials/equipment you plan to bring.

Find out if the station already has some of these items or reusable alternatives available for your use. Bring only what is necessary for your work at CICRA and do not bring excessive quantities of things you will not use during your stay. Bring non-toxic and biodegradable materials, such as soap, detergent, and shampoo. These items end up in the septic system and eventually flow to the river.

If you are using toxic chemicals for your project, make sure you contact the Research Coordinator and Station Manager to find out how you need to deal with the waste while at CICRA. If possible, look for less-toxic alternatives for your project...they probably exist!

NEVER POUR TOXIC CHEMICALS ON THE GROUND OR DOWN THE DRAINS.

Remember that CICRA is a small biological station in the wilderness and is not equipped to deal with toxic waste. All leftover chemicals you brought in must leave the station with you when you leave.

For all researchers working with animals in any kind of medical context, you are responsible for depositing medical waste (needles, syringes, drugs, cotton, etc.) in the designated container. However, some drugs and medical materials cannot be processed at the station and you must verify whether you can dispose of your material at CICRA or if you need to take it with you when you leave.

Be aware that when you are completely finished with your research and without plans of returning, you are responsible to take **all** of your materials out of CICRA, especially toxic or harmful substances. The exceptions to this rule are: 1) if you have arranged for another research to take some of your equipment for their research and this person becomes the “responsible party” for the equipment or materials; 2) You make a donation of equipment or materials to the biological station that is accepted and verified by the Research Coordinator and Station Manager.

CICRA Library

Los Amigos is home to a library of over 500 biology and conservation books. If you have any extra textbooks or books on biology to spare, please throw them in your luggage and bring them down to help augment the library. We are always looking to grow our reference sources for researchers.