



Request for Proposals for Field Research: Ecosystems and Biodiversity of the Galapagos

Earthwatch Institute is an international non-profit organization with the mission to “*engage people worldwide in scientific field research and education to promote the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment.*” Earthwatch is currently seeking proposals from field-based researchers to provide grants to address questions on the ecology and conservation of the unique marine and/or terrestrial biodiversity of the Galapagos. The research should focus on understanding ecosystem health and connectivity and/or species interactions with the aim of informing successful ecosystem based management. We are looking to support projects that improve our understanding of local anthropogenic and climate change threats and that inform management efforts to ensure functional ecosystems on a remote island archipelago. Of particular interest are species with high endemism or biodiversity value, those that are important as a human resource, and flagship or high-profile species.

Earthwatch will only consider proposals for field research that have a strong rationale for requiring involvement of non-specialists (Earthwatch volunteers) in a variety of scientific tasks. Earthwatch volunteers are highly motivated citizens from around the world who are interested in improving environmental understanding. A typical project would engage a minimum of 30 volunteers over 3-10 teams per annum. Average team size is 4-12 participants and each team typically can spend 3-12 days in the field. Students are increasing becoming a priority audience for Earthwatch; therefore ideal projects have flexibility to engage audiences such as students (age 16+) and/or groups (15-30 participants). All projects are conducted in English.

Earthwatch encourages proposals that are interdisciplinary and/or transnational. Preference will be given to projects that directly contribute to environmental or social change on the ground and that have a strong community and/or educational component. Professionals from any nationality are eligible to apply. All necessary research permits must be secured by the scientists; Earthwatch is not able to provide permits. Researchers should have in-country experience in the Galapagos.

Concept Notes and Proposals

Concept Notes for projects starting in spring or summer 2013 will be accepted through January 27, 2012. Invitations for full Research Proposals will be communicated in late February. Applications are to be submitted in English. You can submit a Concept Note here: <http://fs22.formsite.com/EarthwatchResearch/ConceptNote/index.html>

Research topics that may be considered for funding include, but are not limited to:

- *Biodiversity and conservation of the terrestrial environment, particularly research on endemic vertebrates related to island ecology, including plant-animal interactions, and conserving the evolutionary processes that have shaped the unique biodiversity of the Galapagos.*
- *Biodiversity and conservation of the marine environment, including research related to coastal endemic species, sustainable fishing, or protection of migratory species such as cetaceans and sea turtles. No SCUBA projects can be supported at this time.*
- *Development of effective adaptive ecosystem-based management for species and habitat conservation.*

Grants

Annual grants are available to cover research related costs which can include equipment (<US\$1000), supplies, transport, support staff, food and accommodation during teams. The grant cannot cover scientist salaries, overheads, capital equipment. Grants are negotiated on an individual basis, but usually average around US\$20,000. Volunteer costs in the field (volunteer accommodation, food and transport in the field) will be budgeted for in partnership with Earthwatch. The field research proposals are tenable for three years, and potentially renewable in the fourth year.

Additional

- Comfortable accommodations for the proposed project must be located a reasonable travel distance from the research site(s) in order to travel back and forth daily.
- Time for scheduled recreational activities enabling volunteers to explore the surrounding area and experience cultural aspects are encouraged.

For additional information about Earthwatch's application process see our website:

<http://www.earthwatch.org/aboutus/research/scientistops/reqresprop/>

All questions should be directed to:

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