

SeaWorld & Busch Gardens and Discovery Cove Fellowship Program 2009

Fellows may be awarded one of these expeditions



Sharks and Rays of Monterey

Since 1946, sharks and rays off the California coast have been targeted by fishermen. Though the hunting has stopped, these animals are widely misunderstood. This team helps preserve the sharks and rays of Elkhorn Slough and Monterey Bay by learning more about them. Wading into the slough in a wetsuit and boating out over Monterey Bay Marine Canyon, participants will help capture, measure and tag seven species, including leopard sharks and bat rays.



Lions of Tsavo

In the dry woodlands outside Tsavo East National Park, Kenya, lions kill hundreds of livestock each year, driving ranchers to hunt them or convert land to cropland or charcoal production. If Kenya is to maintain safe havens for its legendary biodiversity, we must find ways for lions and humans to coexist. On this project you'll search for lions from a project vehicle during the evening, late night, and early morning drives. When you find lions, you'll keep track of individuals and scan for prey. You'll also help photograph lion whisker patterns for identification and videotape and record behavior. While on patrol, you'll monitor the distribution and abundance of more than 100 species of wildlife to help secure government protection.



Whales of British Columbia

Join gentle grey whales in their Canadian summer feeding areas in Clayoquot Sound and surrounding waters off the west coast of Vancouver Island to help researchers design better ways to protect them and see if they're being affected by climate change. Spend days on the water in a sea-kayak or on a converted fishing boat searching for whales and mapping their prey with sonar and underwater video. Unwind by exploring coves and islands by kayak, or by enjoying the maritime charms of the small village of Ahousaht, on Flores Island, where you'll be based.



Tracking Brazil's Elusive Jaguars

You will use 4x4 trucks to explore world-class Emas National Park, home of 55 species of mammals, 60 species of reptiles, and more than 370 species of birds. Your team will work with Jaguar Conservation Fund's team to radio-track jaguars and discover their habits and needs. You will conduct a mammal census, collect and analyze scat, and perform behavioral observations. In recreational spare time, you can enjoy swimming and bird watching in the unique Cerrado environment.



Songbirds of the Tetons

You'll search for migratory birds' nests and relocate color-banded birds, providing much-needed information on seasonal survivorship and productivity. Some teams will spend one morning at the bird-banding station and will have the opportunity to observe birds up-close as project staff remove them from mist-nets and band them. Other teams will assist with vegetation measurements near bird nests. In the evenings you'll enjoy dinner followed by a speaker or time to relax and socialize.



Meerkats of the Kalahari

Under the direction of experienced field staff, you'll help observe six habituated colonies of meerkats in South Africa's Kuruman River Reserve. You'll learn how to radio-track, conduct focal sampling, use a Global Positioning System, and weigh meerkats. The data you collect will help researchers evaluate how cooperative breeding affects the survival of both pups and helpers. You will also investigate interactions between the meerkats and a klepto-parasitic bird species, the fork-tailed drongo. Supplementing the meerkat studies, you'll help conduct biodiversity, invertebrate, and plant surveys.